

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Inouye, and Stevens:

We support passage of a comprehensive energy bill and believe that the public interest would be best served by a House-Senate conference where the issues can be fully aired and discussed.

We agree that CAFE standards must be increased and support aggressive yet achievable new standards, and we are willing to work with you to find a compromise that accomplishes this goal. While we support efforts to go to conference, for the same reasons we opposed the Senate provisions on CAFE, we would strongly object to a conference report that adopted these provisions because they would have a needlessly detrimental effect on the auto industry and its workers.

We have identified four issues raised by the Senate-passed bill that we believe are among the most significant issues to be resolved satisfactorily in a final energy bill conference report.

*Separate standards for cars and trucks* – We believe it is critical that the existing statutory distinction between passenger cars and light duty trucks be maintained and believe this can be done consistent with the goals of the Senate-passed bill. We support aggressive new fuel economy standards for all vehicles, including trucks, but applying a car standard to trucks fails to reflect trucks' inherently heavier, larger, work qualities. Concerns that manufacturers could "game" the system can be addressed by establishing a requirement for a combined mile per gallon standard for the overall fleet while allowing the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to set separate standards for cars and trucks.

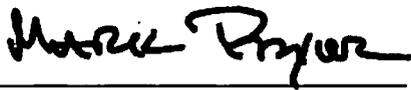
*Anti-Backsliding* – The Senate-passed bill eliminates the longstanding distinction between foreign and domestic passenger car fleets, thereby jeopardizing small car production and jobs in the U.S. We support inclusion of an anti-backsliding provision that would have the benefit of assuring continued small car production in the U.S.

*Overall Combined Standard* – The requirement for an overall combined CAFE standard of 35 miles per gallon by 2020 is overly aggressive and beyond the capability of manufacturers without significant economic hardship. We believe that a combined standard of between 32 and 35 mpg can likely be met, however, if the timeline for meeting these requirements is stretched out by two years.

*Flexible Fuel Credits* – The Senate-passed bill does not include an extension of the flexible fuel credits under current law that provide incentives for production of these vehicles and for production of ethanol. The credits will expire in 2010 if not extended. We believe that these credits should be extended to 2020 to ensure increased production of these vehicles and biofuel.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on these important issues. We believe we have a real opportunity to make significant strides in improving energy conservation and fuel economy so as to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and to do that in a sensible way that would support American manufacturing and American workers. We continue to support aggressive yet achievable new fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks and look forward to working with you to accomplish that in a way that would not have a detrimental effect on manufacturing and jobs in the U.S.

Sincerely,



Mark Pryor



Christopher S. Bond



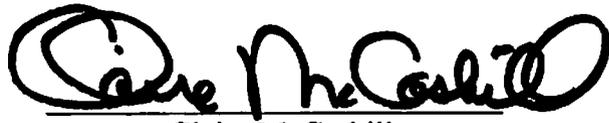
Carl Levin



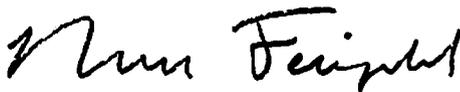
George V. Voinovich



Debbie Stabenow



Claire McCaskill



Russell D. Feingold

cc: The Honorable Jeff Bingaman  
The Honorable Pete Domenici