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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ERIC C. CONATON, STAFF DIRECTOR

March 27, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
The President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to give full consideration for and submit forthwith a nominee for the post of Director of Operational Energy Plans and Programs at the Department of Defense (DOD).

As you know, Section 902 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417) requires the President to appoint and the Senate to approve a nominee for this office who will be responsible for (1) providing leadership of and facilitating communication regarding operational energy plans and programs within DOD and the services including management of oversight and accountability functions; (2) establishing the Department's operational energy strategy; (3) coordinating and overseeing the planning and program activities of DOD and the services related to the operational energy strategy, and; (4) monitoring and reviewing all operational energy initiatives in DOD.

Each of the military services has appointed a senior official to coordinate operational energy strategies within each branch. However, absent the Director of Operational Energy required by Section 902 to oversee and coordinate efforts across the Department, there continue to be substantial disconnects among the services and other parts of DOD which undermine this important initiative and hinder DOD's ability to coordinate and implement cross-cutting operational energy priorities.

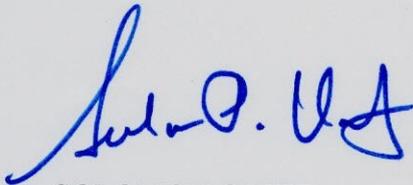
As you are aware, fuel and water account for nearly 70 percent of the supplies our military needs to position for battle. Last year, DOD transported more than 68 million gallons of fuel each month to forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although we have begun utilizing systems that are reducing consumption and increasing efficiency, such as solar arrays and the Project Eskimo program, we have committed to doing so only on small, demonstration scales. There remains no single decision-maker responsible for identifying opportunities, determining a course of action and implementing effective changes related to operational energy.

The need to fill this position was recently highlighted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. According to the GAO report released earlier this month entitled *DOD Needs to Increase Attention on Fuel Demand Management at Forward-Deployed Locations*, "DOD lacks an effective approach for implementing fuel reduction initiatives and maintaining sustained attention to fuel demand management at its forward-deployed locations. Moreover, DOD faces difficulty achieving its goals to reduce dependence on petroleum-based fuel and its logistics 'footprint,' as well as operating costs associated with high fuel usage, because managing fuel demand at forward-deployed locations has not been a departmental priority and fuel reduction efforts have not been well coordinated or comprehensive." During testimony, GAO's Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, William Solis, attributed the lack of focus and coordination to the need for a Director of Operational Energy.

With 75 percent of our military's energy consumption needed for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, there is an urgent need for a single coordinating authority to develop a strategy, investigate solutions and oversee the implementation of a coordinated operational energy plan. Once a Director is appointed to this important post, we can make real progress toward rethinking the way we sustain our force's energy needs in-theater and determine new ways to maintain our readiness through responsible energy solutions.

We strongly urge you to submit, at the earliest possible date, your nominee for Director of Operational Plans and Programs to coordinate the Department's operational energy needs and comply with Section 902 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2009.

Sincerely,



SOLOMON ORTIZ
Member of Congress



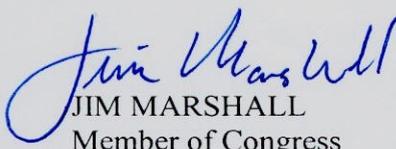
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Member of Congress



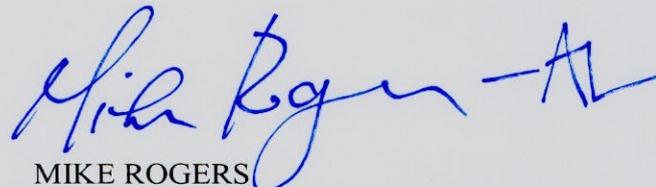
GABRIELLE GIFFORDS
Member of Congress



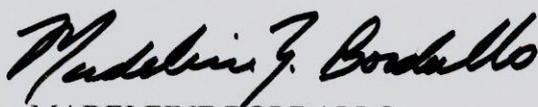
FRANK LOBIONDO
Member of Congress



JIM MARSHALL
Member of Congress



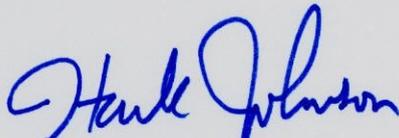
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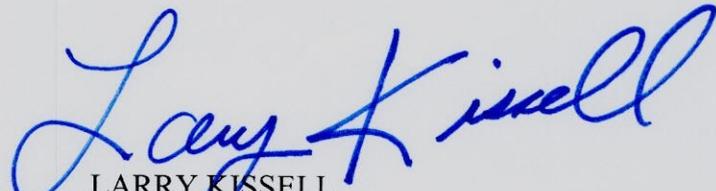
JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



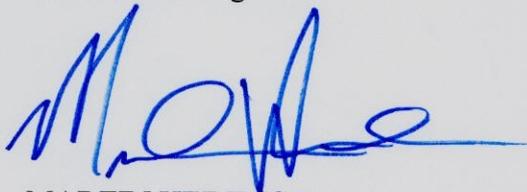
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