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May 28, 2010

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

Thank you for your leadership in introducing S.3433, the Clean Coasts and Efficient Cars Act of 2010. Congress should act to protect all of America's coasts, including Alaska and the entire Gulf of Mexico. This legislation begins that aim by protecting the coasts of the Atlantic, Pacific, Central Gulf, and Eastern Gulf of Mexico from a catastrophe like the British Petroleum oil rig blowout, which has spilled tens of millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. Significantly, the bill recognizes an important step we can take to reduce demand for oil - raising fuel economy standards for gasoline powered vehicles.

Although we use 25% of all oil produced, United States oil reserves represent only 3% of the global total. We import about two thirds of the oil use. Even if we opened every square inch of the Outer Continental Shelf, we would still need to rely on imports to fulfill our oil needs. It is a false claim that offshore drilling will increase energy security - but more drilling can and will destroy ecosystems and coastal economies. A strategy to increase energy security for this generation and the future will only succeed if the focus is on developing renewable energy, increasing efficiency and reducing oil demand in our transportation sector. By increasing fuel economy, this legislation will reduce our demand for dirty oil, whether it is obtained from foreign countries or risky offshore drilling.

The continuing British Petroleum disaster in the Gulf is a striking example of how drilling offshore is not worth the risk. Now is the time for Congress to act to protect our coasts and to promote American energy security by addressing standards for vehicles. Again, we thank you for introducing the Clean Coasts and Efficient Cars Act of 2010, which offers real, commonsense solutions for reducing the demand for oil while protecting our oceans, coastlines and coastal economies.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

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