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9 July, 2008

Honorable Senator Claire McCaskill
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

Dear Senator McCaskill

Claire

As I travel across our state visiting with Missourians, one of the topics that invariably comes up is the skyrocketing price of gasoline and the toll these massive increases in energy and fuel costs are taking on family budgets.

Gas prices are at record highs and the majority of our oil comes from other nations, nations that often are neither friendly to the United States nor our interests. The national economy is weakened and our security is undermined as a result

Missourians need the federal government to take substantive action relative to gas prices. Unfortunately, our national policies are our own worst enemy. Our national tendency is to treat oil as toxic menace best kept buried far underground instead of as a natural resource to be responsibly gathered and effectively used. Oil rich areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) have been declared off limits by those who refuse to recognize that advances in technology ensure we can explore for this resource in an environmentally-sensitive way.

Some have even argued that we should not explore in the ANWR because we would not benefit from the resources that exist there until ten years from now. Unfortunately, this same argument was made ten years ago.

Missourians need the federal government to authorize oil exploration and drilling in the ANWR. Allowing drilling there will better allow the free market to work.

Missourians also need the federal government to allow and promote domestic drilling, both within the continental United States and off shore along the continental shelf. Like the ANWR, exploration in these areas has been stifled by opponents who do not want America to access its own energy resources, pushing us into greater reliance on foreign

oil. Advances in technology ensure that drilling in these areas is safe, and geologic data reveals significant untapped oil reserves.

Missourians also need the federal government to make it easier to build new refineries in the United States.

Upon hearing the news that Chrysler is planning to close two manufacturing plants in St. Louis, I spoke with the corporation's leadership and learned that high gas prices were one of the primary factors in this decision that will eliminate over 2,000 jobs in St. Louis.

I know that you hear similar concerns from Missourians. It is time to get serious about boosting our domestic oil supply, production, and refining capacity. It is time that we drill more and refine more, thereby increasing supplies, reducing gas prices, and reducing our reliance on foreign sources of oil.

I ask for your leadership and quick action in addressing these issues. Many members of our delegation such as Senator Bond have been strong supporters of using domestic energy and Representatives Akin, Blunt, Emerson, and Graves co-sponsored HR 6107 (The American Energy Independence and Price Reduction Act) that will establish and implement the exploration, development, and production of the oil and gas resources of the costal plain of Alaska. However, Missourians need a unified voice in Washington on this critical topic. Specifically I ask that you support efforts to allow drilling in the ANWR, that you support expanded inland and off-shore drilling, and that you work to create a regulatory environment that will encourage rather than hinder production and refining efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Blunt". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt Blunt