

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

March 5, 2012

The Honorable Gary Gensler  
Chairman  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20581

The Honorable Bart Chilton  
Commissioner  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20581

The Honorable Mark Wetjen  
Commissioner  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20581

The Honorable Jill Sommers  
Commissioner  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20581

The Honorable Scott O'Malia  
Commissioner  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20581

Dear Chairman Gensler, and Commissioners Chilton, Wetjen, Sommers, and O'Malia:

We are writing to urge you to immediately enact strong position limits to eliminate excessive oil speculation as required by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010. As you know, the Dodd-Frank Act mandated that your agency promulgate and enforce such limits no later than January 17, 2011. We are disappointed that, more than a year later, the Commission has not fulfilled this important regulatory duty.

Congress determined that speculative position limits are an effective and critically important tool to address excessive speculation in America's oil and gasoline markets. It is one of your primary duties--indeed, perhaps your most important--to ensure that the prices Americans pay for gasoline and heating oil are fair, and that the markets in which prices are discovered operate free from fraud, abuse, and manipulation.

There has been a major debate over the last several years as to whether spikes in oil prices are caused entirely by the fundamentals of supply and demand or whether excessive speculation in the oil futures market is playing a major role. It is clear to us that debate has ended. Exxon Mobil, Goldman Sachs, the Saudi Arabian government, the American Trucking Association, Delta Airlines, the Petroleum Marketers Association of America, and even a report last year from the St. Louis Federal Reserve have all indicated that excessive oil speculation significantly increases oil and gasoline prices. According to a February 27, 2012



article in *Forbes*, excessive oil speculation “translates out into a premium for gasoline at the pump of \$.56 a gallon” based on a recent report from Goldman Sachs.

The facts bear this out. According to the Energy Information Administration, the supply of oil and gasoline is higher today than it was three years ago, when the national average price for a gallon of gasoline was just \$1.90. And, while the national average price of gasoline is now over \$3.70 a gallon, the demand for oil in the U.S. is at its lowest level since April of 1997. Nor is the global supply of oil at issue. According to the International Energy Agency, in the last quarter of 2011 the world oil supply rose by 1.3 million barrels per day while demand only increased by 0.7 million barrels per day. Yet, during this same period, the price of Texas light sweet crude rose by over 12%. Meanwhile, oil speculators now control over 80 percent of the energy futures market, a figure that has more than doubled over the past decade.

As the cost for American people to fill their gas tanks continues to skyrocket, the CFTC continues to drag its feet on imposing strict speculation limits to eliminate, prevent, or diminish excessive oil speculation as required by the Dodd-Frank Act. Although the CFTC has adopted initial position limits, they are not strong enough and not yet in force owing to industry opposition, delays in swaps oversight and data collection. This is simply unacceptable and must change.

We urge you to take immediate action to impose strong and meaningful position limits, and to utilize all authorities available to you to make sure that the price of oil and gasoline reflects the fundamentals of supply and demand. This could entail promulgation of rules only with regard to the currently regulated exchange markets. Swaps rules should also be implemented immediately, but even so, waiting for swaps rules to trigger all position limits is simply not adequate to protect consumers. We urge you to develop alternative methods of moving forward and to do so as swiftly and expeditiously as possible.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the price of oil is no longer allowed to be driven up by the same Wall Street speculators who caused the devastating recession that working families are now experiencing. That means that the CFTC must do what the law mandates and end excessive oil speculation once and for all.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to receiving your response.



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

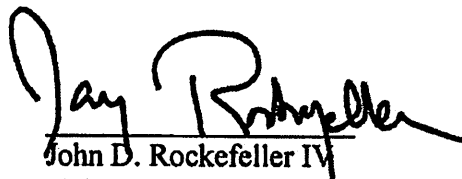
Sincerely,



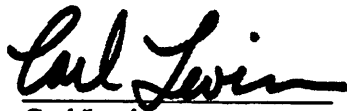
Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



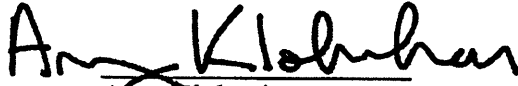
John D. Rockefeller IV  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



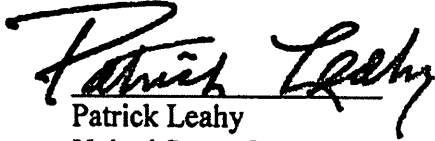
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



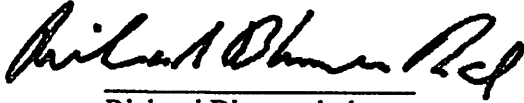
Al Franken  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



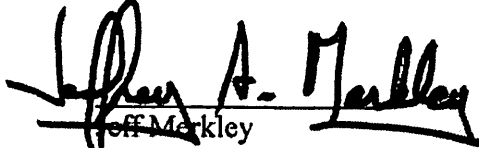
Barbara Mikulski  
United States Senator



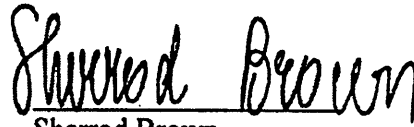
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



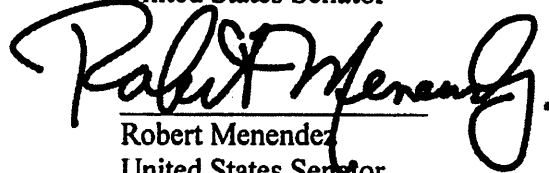
Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



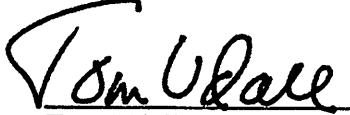
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Benjamin Cardin  
United States Senator



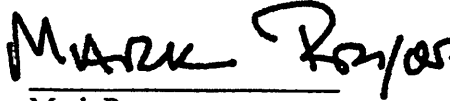
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



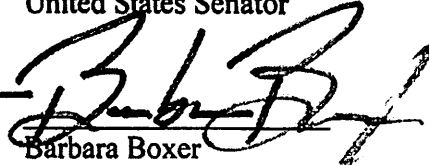
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Mark Begich  
United States Senator



Mark Pryor  
United States Senator



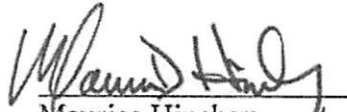
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

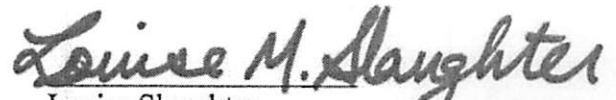


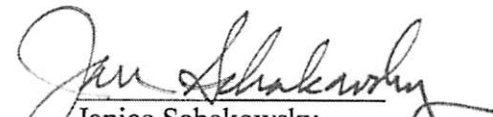
Daniel Akaka  
United States Senator




Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

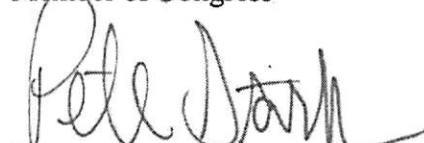
  
Maurice Hinchey  
Member of Congress

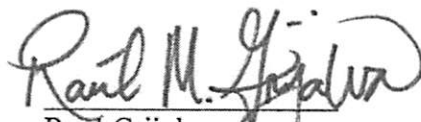
  
Louise Slaughter  
Member of Congress

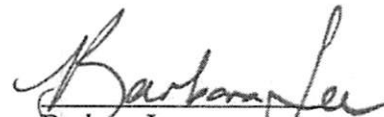
  
Janice Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

  
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

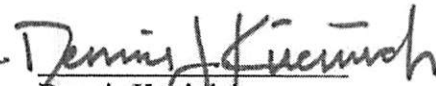
  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

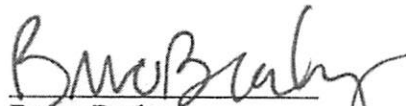
  
Fortney Pete Stark  
Member of Congress


  
Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress

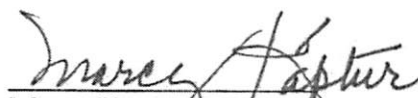
  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress


  
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress


  
Dennis Kucinich  
Member of Congress

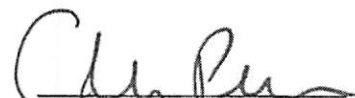
  
Bruce Braley  
Member of Congress

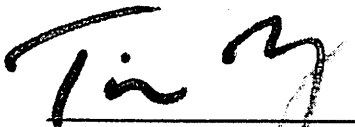
  
Mazie Hirono  
Member of Congress


  
Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress


  
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

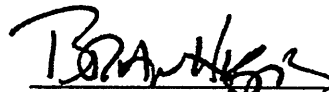
  
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

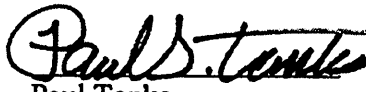
  
Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress


  
Timothy Bishop  
Member of Congress


  
Dale Kildee  
Member of Congress

  
Michael Honda  
Member of Congress


  
Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

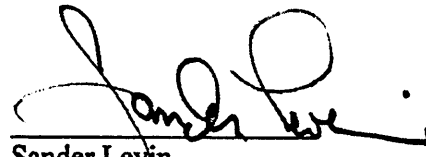
  
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress


  
Leonard Boswell  
Member of Congress

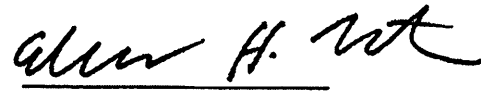
  
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

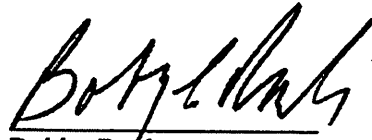
  
Joe Donnelly  
Member of Congress


  
Bob Filner  
Member of Congress


  
Sander Levin  
Member of Congress


  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

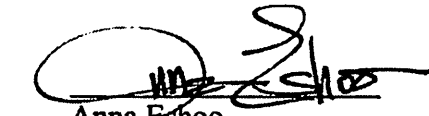
  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

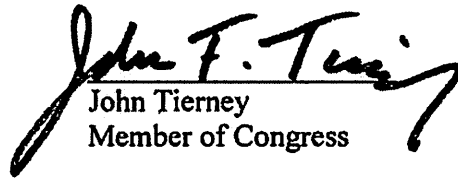
  
Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress

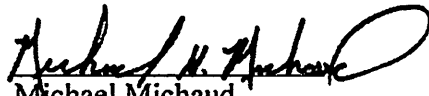
  
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

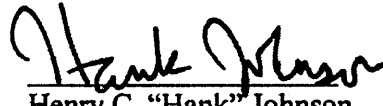
  
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress


  
Nick Rahall  
Member of Congress

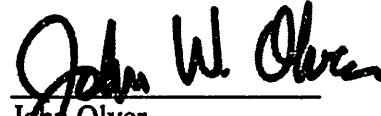
  
Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress


  
John Tierney  
Member of Congress


  
Michael Michaud  
Member of Congress

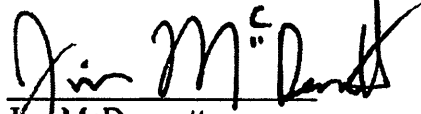
  
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson  
Member of Congress


  
John Lewis  
Member of Congress

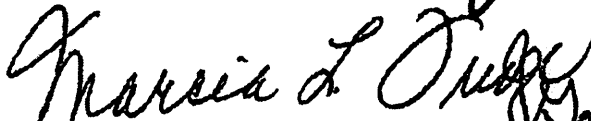
  
John Olver  
Member of Congress


  
Gerald E. "Gerry" Connelly  
Member of Congress


  
Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

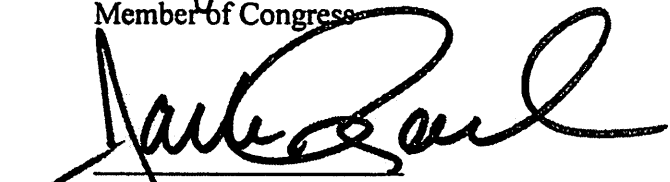
  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress


  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

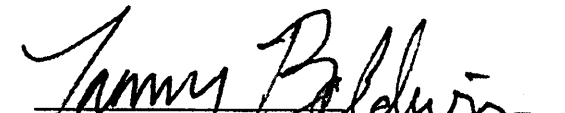
  
Marcia Fudge  
Member of Congress

  
Gary Ackerman  
Member of Congress

  
David Cicilline  
Member of Congress

  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator

  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

  
Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

