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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 27, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

Our efforts to get America's economy moving again are at risk of being undermined by artificially high oil prices. Those who benefit the most from inflated prices, especially members of the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), must be convinced to raise production levels as part of a comprehensive strategy to take on this issue of global concern. The State Department must continue to push OPEC to increase production to levels that will ensure our continued economic recovery.

With gasoline averaging over three dollars a gallon and oil trading at more than \$100 a barrel, multinational oil companies and unfriendly foreign regimes are taking money out of the pockets of already struggling consumers, farmers, and small businesses. This threatens ongoing economic growth, increases the price of food and necessities for working families, and creates a drain on capital that affects those at the lowest income levels the hardest.

The current political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa has undoubtedly played a role in the recent surge in oil prices. Despite recent reports that Saudi Arabia will increase production to replace some of the shortfall, it is my understanding that this alone is not enough to make up for lower outputs in other nations. Increased production will not only allow for our recovery to continue, it will also send a positive signal to the global marketplace.

I appreciate the work you and your staff have done in what has been a fast moving and complex change in the political institutions of the region. It is critical, however, that oil prices continue to reflect the true global demand and are not manipulated by energy cartels or financial speculators. We cannot allow OPEC to hinder our economic recovery, nor our efforts to develop our own alternative energy sources.

I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator