



For Immediate Release
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Former Blue Dog Leader Sends Letter to Coalition Calling For Compromise on Energy

WASHINGTON-- Former U.S. Senator and Blue Dog Coalition co-chair John Breau and former Long Beach, Calif., Mayor Beverly O'Neill, sent a letter today as co-chairs of **The Energy Initiative**, a broad coalition of energy consumers and producers, to the Blue Dog Coalition encouraging Congress to find compromise on a House energy bill.

The letter, addressed to Blue Dog Energy and Natural Resources Task Force co-chairs Reps. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, and Charlie Melancon, D-La., says that the forthcoming House energy bill, once enacted, "could dramatically impact the nation's economy, environment and national security." The letter continues by stating:

"We are writing today as co-chairs of The Energy Initiative, a diverse coalition of more than 25 organizations representing a cross-section of energy producers and consumers, to share the lessons we have learned over the past year working with our membership to facilitate a candid and productive dialogue on the federal policies that will ensure America's energy future.

We are encouraged to see that the Blue Dog Coalition and other centrist Democrats have expressed concern with a number of the proposed energy provisions and are committed to advocating a balanced and forward-looking energy strategy that will enhance our national security and promote increased domestic production of energy from all sources, environmentally sound use of energy and research and development of new energy technologies.

The Energy Initiative, which includes representation from state and local governments, oil and gas companies, motorists, electric utilities and others, convened last year to address the major challenges, policy impediments, and other barriers relating to U.S. energy policy and develop a package of federal policy recommendations for the consideration of the 110th Congress. While The Energy Initiative is still working to formulate its final policy recommendations, as co-chairs we have observed several recurring principles during our group's deliberations that we think members of the Blue Dog Coalition should bear in mind as they strive to address our country's energy needs.

Foremost amongst these principles is the need to elevate public awareness on the issues surrounding energy policy, recognizing that each American has a responsibility to understand their role in alleviating the nation's energy crisis. Second, we believe Congress must agree to fully utilize, investigate and develop all existing and potential sources of energy and aggressively exercise conservation and efficiency in the use of all energy.

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Third, we believe Congress must ensure that no single energy source—whether it is oil, gas, coal, wind or other alternatives—is unfairly burdened with the cost of meeting America’s future energy needs. Instead, costs should be fairly shared among the various private energy sectors, as well as the public sector.

Finally, we believe that, while there is no consensus on the best approach to addressing climate change, either in Congress or among the members of The Energy Initiative, it is a serious issue and the time has come for a public, transparent, and informed debate regarding our impact on the environment.

With legislative deliberations already well underway, the 110th Congress has the opportunity to enact significant energy policy that will begin to address this important issue. Congress must consider the interests of all parties—producers and consumers—to develop far-reaching solutions that deliver abundant and affordable energy in a sensible way.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss our efforts and share our observations on the process of developing balanced and comprehensive federal energy policies. Based on our efforts, we think these principles should be borne in mind both this week and in the future as Congress focuses on the growing energy crisis in America. Thank you for your time and consideration.”

To speak with the co-chairs or for questions about The Energy Initiative, call Joah Spearman at (202) 354-8242.

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About The Energy Initiative

The Energy Initiative comprises trade groups that represent mayors, governors, natural gas utilities, motorists, electricity companies, and manufacturers. Members include the Agriculture Energy Alliance, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, American Automobile Association, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Gas Association, American Petroleum Institute, American Public Transportation Association, American Trucking Association, Association of Oil Pipelines, Domestic Petroleum Council, Edison Electric Institute, Electric Power Supply Association, Independent Petroleum Association of America, Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, Minority Business Roundtable, National Association of Counties, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association, National League of Cities, National Mining Association, National Automobile Dealers Association, National Ocean Industries Association, Real Estate Roundtable, U.S. Conference of Mayors, U. S. Oil and Gas Association, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. You can learn more by visiting www.theenergyinitiative.org.