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July 19, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585-0800

Dear Secretary Granholm:

I write to request information related to the Department of Energy's (DOE) management of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). I am concerned that this administration is rapidly depleting the nation's petroleum reserves, while failing to create a sustainable plan for the optimal size, configuration, maintenance, and operational capabilities of the SPR. Furthermore, the transfer of the United States' SPR to China--or other foreign adversaries--poses a significant national security risk that requires immediate action.

As you are aware, the Department recently announced the largest SPR drawdown in history, with plans to release up to 260 million barrels of crude oil from the SPR from October 2021 through October 2022. The administration is depleting the nation's petroleum reserves, while allowing adversarial foreign nations, such as the Chinese government, to gain geopolitical leverage over the United States. Since November 2021, China has ramped up its purchases of crude oil from Russia and the United States to boost its own reserves. As a result, China may now control the world's largest stockpile of oil, with total crude oil inventories estimated at 950 million barrels.

Last month, more than 5 million barrels of oil of the SPR were released and exported to Europe and Asia. Of those 5 million barrels, 950,000 barrels were sent to China, after winning a bid from the DOE's management of the SPR. On April 1, 2022, the DOE issued the second Notice of Sale for a price-competitive sale of 30 million barrels of SPR crude oil. UNIPEC America, inc., the trading arm of Sinopec, a Chinese petrochemical corporation owned by its government, placed a bid. UNIPEC won a contract of United States SPR crude oil of 950,000 barrels.

Americans are paying record gasoline and diesel prices, and allowing our strategic stockpiles to flow to China only adds insult to injury for the American consumer.

The SPR exists to protect and serve Americans, not foreign adversaries. The DOE's recent transfer to UNIPPEC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of a Chinese State-Owned Enterprise, is just one concerning example of threatening our national security and harming America's economic security. This comes at a time when the SPR has fallen to about 492 million barrels of oil, the lowest level since 1985, due to the DOE's scheduled releases of nearly one million barrels per day.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 202-225-4261. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman