

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 25, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

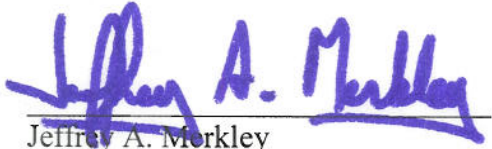
Recently, your Administration conditionally approved Shell's plan to begin exploratory oil drilling off the coast of Alaska. As several of my colleagues and I noted in a previous letter to you on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and a letter before that to Secretary Jewell on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the development of fossil fuel resources in the Arctic is inconsistent with your Climate Action Plan.

Research shows that drilling in the Arctic is inconsistent with efforts to achieve the world's target, endorsed by the United States, of limiting global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. You have stated many times that America must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and build our capacity for clean, renewable energy. Allowing Shell to expand fossil fuel drilling in the Arctic is incompatible with this imperative and with your commitment that the United States will lead the global effort to address climate change.

As the previous letters also discussed, opening up the Arctic Ocean to drilling poses serious risks to wildlife and natural resources, and the communities that depend on them. Oil companies like Shell have yet to demonstrate they possess the capacity to prevent and respond to oil spills in the unforgiving environment of the Arctic Ocean. Instead of opening a new carbon reserve within an invaluable ecosystem, the United States should use its position as Chair of the Arctic Council to discourage Arctic drilling and to promote Arctic Ocean safety, security and stewardship, all while guarding against the increasingly devastating impacts of climate change in this region. We urge you to change course, and ask for your critical leadership on international Arctic Ocean protection.

We continue to hope the Administration will reverse its policy to promote drilling in the Arctic. In the meantime, we are concerned that no one has responded to the concerns we raised in our previous letters. We again request that your Administration explain how expanded drilling in the Arctic aligns with your Climate Action Plan and the need to keep global warming below 2 degrees. We also again ask that the Administration respond to concerns about the numerous risks Arctic drilling poses to wildlife and natural resources, and explain how these risks are appropriate in light of the already clear inconsistency between Arctic drilling and meeting our country's responsibility to address climate change.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Morkley  
United States Senator



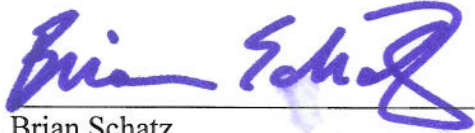
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



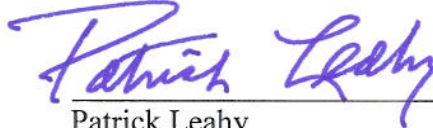
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator