

Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy

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May 4, 2006

Majority Leader Bill Frist
United States Capitol
S 230
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Frist,

For years the Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters (LCV) have promoted a misguided “high-gas-prices-are-good” agenda. Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope has said he wants “...higher gas taxes to discourage increases in vehicle miles traveled per vehicle” while the Washington Chapter of the LCV – only last year – lobbied for a 9.5 cent increase in gasoline taxes. The Natural Resources Defense Council has labeled higher gas prices “an important tool to shift American consumers toward more efficient cars.” Yet, they disguise their agenda by claiming that domestic exploration and production is harmful to wildlife. Meanwhile, the former national executive director of the Sierra Club and other environmentalists insist that we can have reasonable domestic exploration consistent with sound environmental principles.

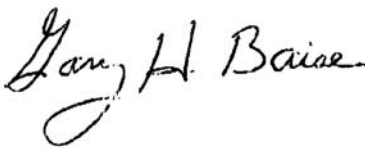
While it is important that we invest in the development of clean energy technology, and while conservation is a preferred environmental choice, it is crucial that we have energy supplies sufficient to meet demand. For a decade, the Republican-led Congress has proposed increasing domestic exploration, production and refining capacity and taking other sensible steps to ensure affordable energy is available for all Americans. The Sierra Club, LCV and others who promote higher gas prices have blocked these attempts and

appear completely out of touch with how their misguided agenda actually affects people. Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope callously said just last month “[g]iven that I drive a very small car about 7000 miles a year, I really don’t care what gas costs even now.” The overwhelming majority of Americans today do care and are suffering because of the toll high gas prices take on small business, family budgets, farming operations and more.

One idea worth considering is for Congress to provide relief to the American taxpayer by granting a tax deduction for gasoline consumption. We also encourage the opening of ANWR and the acceleration of carefully managed exploration on public lands, a re-examination of outer-continental shelf exploration, along with continuing research investment into the development of clean energy including hydrogen technologies. It is also crucial that Congress review the cause or causes that have kept the energy sector from constructing new refineries and new nuclear plants for over thirty years.

We applaud your past efforts to address our nation’s energy needs and to boost supplies so that Americans would never face the high gas prices that are adversely affecting so many. We now hope that your colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary H. Baise". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "G".

Gary Baise
Former Chief of Staff
United States Environmental Protection Agency

cc: Chairman Saxby Chambliss
Chairman Pete Dominici
Chairman James Inhofe
Chairman Ted Stevens