

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 8, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

Coal is our Nation's most utilized energy source, supplying the United States with nearly 50 percent of its energy needs. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts that coal, together with natural gas and oil, will continue to provide over 75 percent of our nation's energy needs for decades to come. With your support of necessary funding for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy (FE) in your *soon-to-be-released* Fiscal Year 2013 Budget we will be able to ensure our nation of stability, job retention and growth, as well as the ability to meet our increasing energy needs.

Despite the many challenges and concerns involved in the use of fossil fuel energy, it is without a doubt that the innovations provided by our National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) have played a leading role in our country's vast improvements in solving complex energy problems. This cutting edge research and development continues to provide substantial returns on investments, and has made possible countless innovations in both the Coal and Oil and Gas Programs.

To note some successes, FE Research and Development (R&D) has led the research to significantly reduce acid rain, as well as in other advanced pollution controls and mercury emissions reductions; and has led and/or conducted research that created technologies used in 75% of our nation's largest coal power plants. Today, FE R&D continues to lead the Nation's carbon capture, sequestration and utilization efforts; and has led efforts in combustion and turbine R&D that led to substantial increases in power plant efficiencies and reductions in harmful power plant emissions.

As President of the United States, you have advocated on many occasions that the United States must be a world leader in developing and exporting advanced energy technologies. In your most recent State of the Union Address, you recognized that: "The development of natural gas will create jobs and power trucks and factories that are cleaner and cheaper, proving that we don't have to choose between our environment and our economy. *And by the way, it was public research dollars, over the course of thirty years, that helped develop the technologies to extract all this natural gas out of shale rock – reminding us that Government support is critical in helping businesses get new energy ideas off the ground*". Mr. President, the very research that you spoke of was led by the Office of Fossil Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory and its predecessor organizations.

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In 2011, you remarked that: "When I was elected to this office, America imported 11 million barrels of oil a day. By a little more than a decade from now, we will have cut that by one third."

And again, in 2010, you stated: "We've got, I think, broad agreement that we've got terrific natural gas resources in this country. Are we doing everything we can to develop those?"

Mr. President, how can you reconcile the difference between these statements and the actuality that your Administration has repeatedly proposed reduced funding for Fossil Energy Research & Development? This included **zero** funding for the Oil and Gas R & D Program in your FY2012 budget request, as well as a limited fossil energy R&D portfolio that is narrowly focused on carbon capture and sequestration at the expense of other promising coal research programs. We urge you to reverse this trend and to propose funding a suite of fossil energy programs for FY2013.

Significant reductions in fossil energy funding could cause the immediate loss of thousands of jobs that would be felt throughout many regions and would harm our nation's economy immediately. Additionally, the possible termination of these important programs would negatively impact fossil energy research and technology development for years to come. America's economic climate and our Nation's success in these technologies and industries compel us to implore you to fully support these programs.

We urge you to provide necessary funding levels for DOE's Office of Fossil Energy and NETL in your FY2013 budget submission, which will allow for critical fossil energy research and development. These efforts will help ensure that our Nation becomes more self-sufficient in domestic energy and help the economy sustain existing jobs and create new ones.

Thank you for your consideration and time of our request. We look forward to working with you on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

  
David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

  
Tim Murphy  
Member of Congress

  
Nick Rahall  
Member of Congress

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Mark Critz  
Member of Congress



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Jason Altmire  
Member of Congress



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Shelley Moore Capito  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary, Department of Energy