FRED UPTON, MICHIGAN
CHAIRMAN

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–6115

Majority (202) 225–2927
Minority (202) 225–3641

October 13, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

Recently, the *New York Times* reported on the practice of natural gas flaring across wide areas of North Dakota.[1] This practice involves the burning of 100 million cubic feet of natural gas every day or, as the *Times* reported, "enough energy to heat half a million homes for a day." These practices, which burn up to 30% of the natural gas produced in North Dakota each year, are responsible for the release of two million tons of CO2 in the atmosphere every year.

These are shocking statistics. Our goal should be to utilize domestic energy resources responsibly to reduce our dependence on imported energy, not to squander vast quantities of natural gas. The associated release of large volumes of greenhouse gas emissions will exacerbate our contribution to global warming.

These wasteful practices appear to be a result of high oil prices and low prices for natural gas. Investments in infrastructure to capture the natural gas associated with oil drilling are not keeping up with the rapid pace of oil exploration and development.

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[1] [1] Krauss, Clifford. "In North Dakota, Flames of Wasted Natural Gas Light the Prairie", New York Times (Sept. 26, 2011).

We are writing to request a hearing in the Energy and Power Subcommittee on this natural gas flaring. We should ascertain the extent of these practices, their energy and environmental consequences, and whether these practices warrant any additional attention from the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member

Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Power