



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

May 31, 2012

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Mica
Chairman, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boxer and Chairman Mica,

As you work toward reaching an agreement on surface transportation reauthorization, the members of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition (SEEC) urge you to reject any anti-environmental policy riders. These policy riders detract from the true purpose of this conference--creating sound transportation policy for our nation's crumbling infrastructure--while jeopardizing environmental safeguards put in place to protect the American public and our vital natural resources.

Specifically, we strongly urge you to reject the House-passed Ribble Amendment that would destroy our nation's bipartisan landmark environmental law, the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The Ribble amendment guts the NEPA public input process for transportation projects, potentially allowing for bureaucratic seizures of privately-owned land. This would radically expand federal takings authority at the expense of individual due process and community planning. It would also eliminate the public planning process, making it difficult for local governments to have a say in transportation projects happening in their own backyard. The Ribble provision also undermines critical protections for wildlife, wetlands and other sensitive habitats, and weakens regulations to protect clean air and clean water; protections which Americans have consistently shown they overwhelmingly support. Undoing these critical components instituted by NEPA will jeopardize the fundamental protections on which Americans and their communities rely.

We also urge you to reject the House-passed Terry Amendment directing the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to approve the Keystone XL pipeline within a 30-day time table. FERC has never had such authority. Additionally, this pipeline, by TransCanada's own admission, will actually raise oil prices in the Midwest. The oil provided by the pipeline is not to America's benefit. Valero, the company that has committed to refining the plurality of Keystone XL oil, has advertised to investors that it will export the oil to Latin America and Europe. Finally, a complete review of the potential pipeline's safety hasn't been completed. We urge you to reject an arbitrary timeline for the Keystone XL pipeline.

Finally, we urge you move forward with a transportation bill that does not include the McKinley Amendment to prohibit EPA guidelines for coal ash. The United States annually generates an estimated 130 million tons of waste from burning coal, most of which is coal ash. This waste has poisoned drinking water and, when impoundments failed, buried towns such as Kingston, Tennessee. Blocking EPA authority to oversee these toxic chemicals is unrelated to transportation and endangers the health and safety of the thousands of American citizens living near the coal plants.

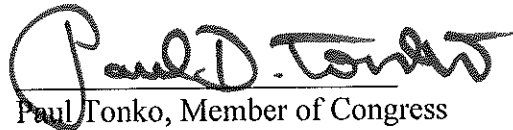
These anti-environmental provisions have no place in the debate to invest in our nation's deteriorating transportation infrastructure. We compel you to focus on investments to modernize our infrastructure and transportation network instead of policy riders that will hurt Americans' health, their energy security and their communities. SEEC urges you to reject these amendments and to focus instead on getting commuters and commerce moving so Americans can get to work building the backbone of our economy.

Sincerely,

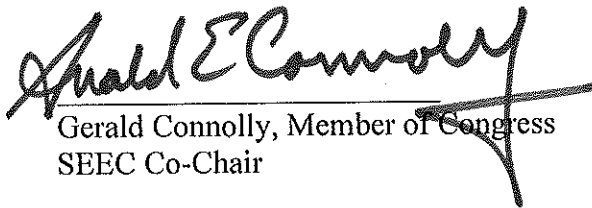
The Members of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition



Steve Israel, Member of Congress
SEEC Co-Chair



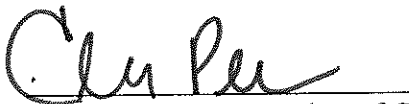
Paul Tonko, Member of Congress
SEEC Co-Chair



Gerald Connolly, Member of Congress
SEEC Co-Chair



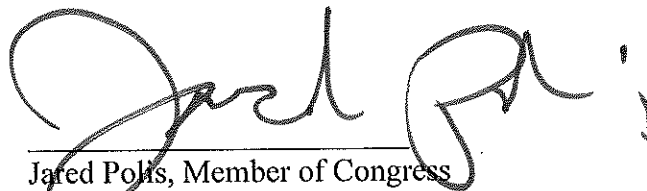
Rush Holt, Member of Congress
SEEC Vice Chair



Chellie Pingree, Member of Congress
SEEC Vice Chair



Doris Matsui, Member of Congress
SEEC Vice Chair



Jared Polis, Member of Congress
SEEC Vice Chair



Joe Courtney, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



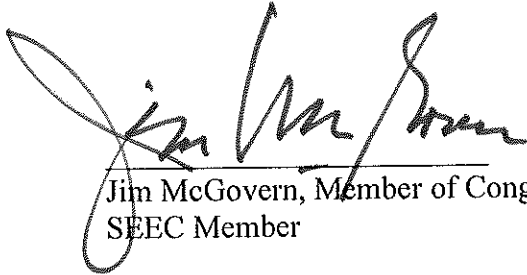
John Garamendi, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



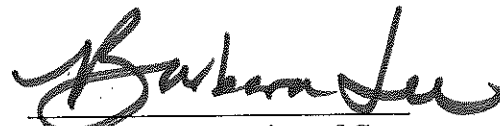
Donna Edwards, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



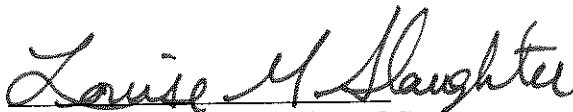
Ben Ray Lujan, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Jim McGovern, Member of Congress
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Barbara Lee, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



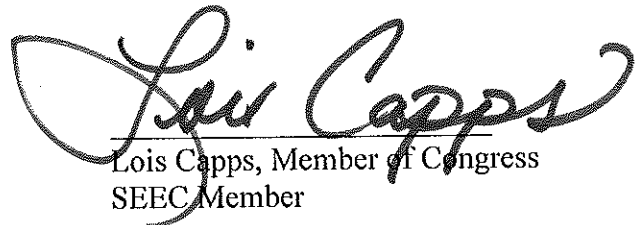
Louise Slaughter, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



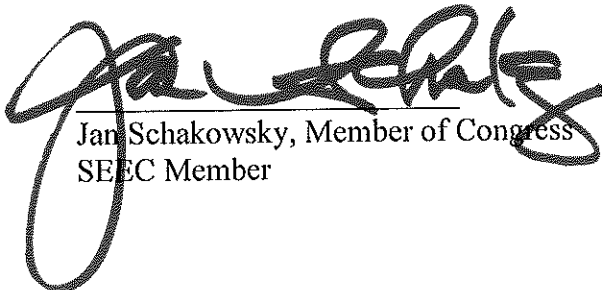
Maurice Hinchey, Member of Congress
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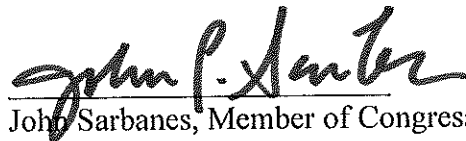
David Price, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



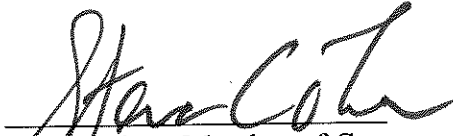
Lois Capps, Member of Congress
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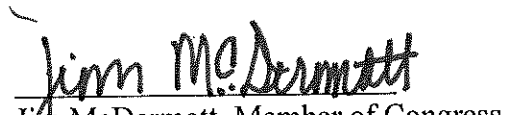



Jan Schakowsky, Member of Congress
SEEC Member

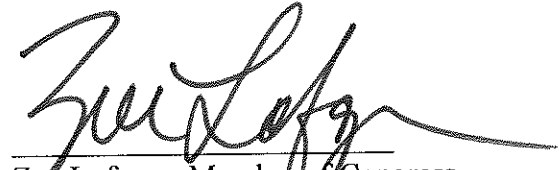


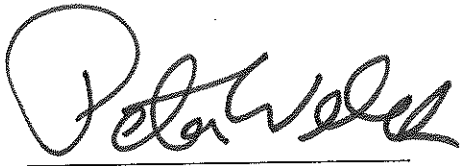
John Sarbanes, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Steve Cohen, Member of Congress
SEEC Member

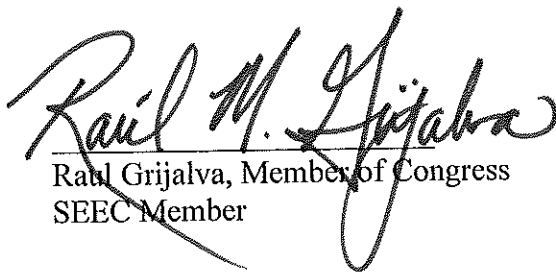

Jim McDermott, Member of Congress
SEEC Member

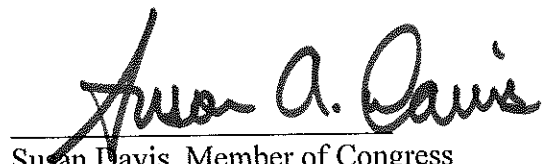

Mike Quigley, Member of Congress
SEEC Member

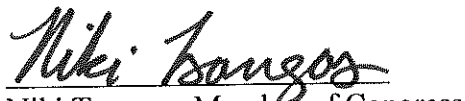

Zoe Lofgren, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Peter Welch, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Mazie Hirono, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Raul Grijalva, Member of Congress
SEEC Member



Susan Davis, Member of Congress
SEEC Member

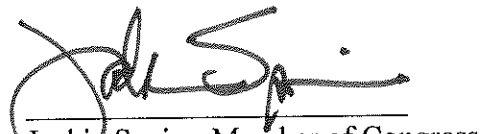

Niki Tsongas, Member of Congress
SEEC Member


Russ Carnahan, Member of Congress
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Mike Honda, Member of Congress
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Jim Langevin, Member of Congress
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Anna Eshoo, Member of Congress
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Jackie Speier, Member of Congress
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