

BARBARA BOXER, CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN

THOMAS R. CARPER, DELAWARE  
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND  
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT  
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND  
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO  
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON  
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, NEW YORK  
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY  
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS

DAVID VITTER, LOUISIANA  
JAMES M. INHOFE, OKLAHOMA  
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING  
JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA  
MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO  
ROGER WICKER, MISSISSIPPI  
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS  
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

BETTINA POIRIER, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR  
ZAK BAIG, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

June 6, 2014

The Honorable Angela Merkel  
Chancellor of Germany  
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1  
10557 Berlin

Dear Chancellor Merkel:

I write to commend Germany's efforts to lift its ban on hydraulic fracturing. As you are keenly aware, hydraulic fracturing continues to provide incredible economic opportunity for the United States, including a manufacturing renaissance not envisioned just ten years ago. While Germany takes this critical step forward to reduce dependence on Russian energy resources, and bolster its competitiveness internationally, inaccurate portrayals of the risks associated with this production technology will inevitably be circulated. For over 60 years, the United States has conducted hydraulic fracturing safely and effectively. Today, newer technologies in this process are providing significant economic opportunity and remain one of the brightest spots in our economy.

Under the leadership of President Barack Obama, the United States wasted significant resources in an attempt to discredit and eliminate hydraulic fracturing. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through repeated false claims, attempted to stifle domestic energy production and deny the supply of affordable natural gas to consumers and manufacturers. In fact, the significant increases in domestic energy production that continues to occur in the United States, has been on private lands rather than those held or managed by the U.S. government.

The United States closely examines the energy policies of Germany and your European neighbors, and over the last several years observed the resulting negative impacts to your economies. Overlooking these adverse consequences, President Obama seeks to put in place similar carbon emissions-reducing programs despite the failed track record in Europe. I am unaware of any analysis quantifying the benefits of these carbon emissions-reducing programs, particularly in contrast to the harmful economic impacts.

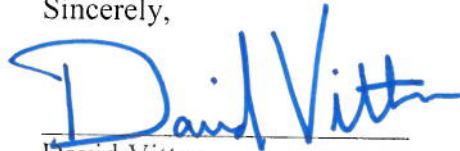
Moreover, I am mindful of the recent attempts in Germany to increase coal production and coal-fired electricity generation in order to meet the base load demand previously provided by your nuclear fleet. These measures, combined with opening new natural gas-fired plants, helped Germany to avoid electricity blackouts. In reality, base load power generated by fossil fuels and nuclear remains the most reliable and affordable choice for electricity supply and use. As the Breakthrough Institute pointed out:

Renewable electricity is proving so unreliable and chaotic that it is starting to undermine the stability of the European grid and provoke international incidents. The spiraling cost of the renewables surge has sparked a backlash, including government proposals to slash subsidies and deployment rates.

As deliberations over climate policies continue in the United States, and with unilateral action underway by President Obama, there are a number of us tracking Europe's carbon goals and Germany's actions, as well as the related impacts on consumers, businesses, and grid reliability.

I do believe the decision to lift the ban on hydraulic fracturing will be both environmentally and economically beneficial. If the resources are utilized appropriately, lifting the ban will result in beneficial electricity rates for your citizens while providing the feedstock for your manufactured goods. Once again, I commend you in taking this important step towards a thriving economic future for Germany.

Sincerely,



David Vitter  
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States