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January 8, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters nationwide, we strongly urge you to oppose Senator Lisa Murkowski's amendment to the debt limit bill (H.J.Res. 45). This attack on the Clean Air Act would put public health at risk and jeopardize long-overdue action to hold the biggest polluters accountable, reduce America's oil dependence, and jump-start a vibrant clean energy economy.

The Clean Air Act is a law with a nearly 40-year track record of cutting dangerous pollution to protect human health and the environment and spur innovation. In 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that global warming pollutants are covered by the Clean Air Act. In his first year in office, President Barack Obama began carrying out the law by issuing landmark clean vehicle standards – with the support of auto companies, auto workers, states, and environmentalists – that will save consumers money at the pump, cut global warming pollution, reduce America's oil dependence, and create new jobs making more efficient and competitive vehicles.

The Clean Air Act will also ensure that the largest power plants and factories use modern technology to reduce their global warming pollution and use cleaner energy. EPA has already proposed to tailor those rules to exempt small carbon emitters and apply them only to large sources that have long been subject to similar standards for other pollutants.

Instead of embracing this progress, Senator Murkowski's amendment would strike at the heart of the Clean Air Act, blocking these actions and letting America's biggest polluters off the hook. It would also undermine our country's credibility just after President Obama helped to secure commitments to reduce emissions from all major economies,

including China and India. Here at home, thousands of American businesses are waiting for Congress to set a clear energy and climate policy that will unlock billions of dollars in job-creating clean energy investments, but the Murkowski proposal would derail that long-overdue progress.

A vote for Senator Murkowski's amendment is a step backwards for public health. It puts our communities at risk, undermines the new clean energy economy, and inappropriately injects Congress into scientific decisions. Instead of standing in the way of progress, Congress should move quickly to enact the comprehensive energy and climate legislation the country needs to build a clean energy economy, create jobs, and protect the environment.

Sincerely,

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