

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2002

The Honorable David Walker
Comptroller General
General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

At the request of Representatives Dingell and Waxman, the General Accounting Office has been investigating the makeup and deliberations of the Administration's energy task force. Those efforts were set aside after the tragedies of September 11. We write you today to urge you to continue this investigation.

The tragedies of September 11 forced Congress and the Administration to focus their attention on combating terrorism. However, now as the war continues to go well and we turn to domestic issues, Americans have the right to know how the Administration's energy policy was developed. Soon, Congress will begin to consider legislation that will establish a national energy policy, but we still have very little information about the makeup and conduct of the Vice President's task force, even though it was established and run by the executive branch of government and was, by all accounts, the basis for the President's energy plan.

Who helped shape the Administration's energy policy? How did participants get invited and what interests did they represent? What did they recommend? What changes did they request? The American public deserves answers to these questions.

Our concern is that we would be setting a dangerous precedent, and would be shirking Congress's oversight responsibilities if these questions are not asked, or if the Administration is allowed to avoid answering them. As the investigative arm of Congress, we believe it is the responsibility of the GAO to look into this situation.

Sincerely,