

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Chairman Hensarling:

We are writing to request that the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction maintain the current revenue sharing for counties as it pertains to geothermal receipts.

In the bipartisan Energy Policy Act of 2005, Congress decided that because of the high burdens geothermal production places on the counties where geothermal development is located, these counties should share in the revenue of the federal receipts. In turn, counties have used these revenues to pay for critical governmental services, such as road maintenance, public safety and law enforcement, and conservation easements. This revenue sharing has also made counties vested partners, and ultimately champions, in the continued development of geothermal energy—a clean, renewable, and domestic energy source.

There have been numerous proposals to discontinue geothermal revenue sharing for counties, including a provision in the President's Plan for Economic Growth and Deficit Reduction. We are strongly opposed to this provision. Ending the geothermal revenue sharing plan would have a significant negative impact on our districts, while the overall effect on our nation's fiscal well-being would be miniscule. Many of the counties that receive revenue from geothermal receipts are small, rural counties facing precarious budget situations. The loss of such revenue for these counties could result in the elimination or reduction of essential services. As such, we urge you not to include the repeal of geothermal revenue sharing with counties in any final agreement you may reach.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you as you prepare your deficit reduction plan.

Sincerely,


MIKE THOMPSON


JOHN GARAMENDI

Lynn Woolsey
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Bob Filner
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