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The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
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Dear Mr. President:

It is my understanding that you will meet with Japanese Prime Minister Noda this coming Monday, April 30. Because I recently joined our mutual friend and colleague, Senator Daniel Inouye, in co-chairing the Japan Interparliamentary Group, I wish to highlight an issue of specific importance to all of us.

Following the Fukushima incident just over a year ago, I am sure you are aware that Japan is moving to phase out its fleet of nuclear power generators. This difficult decision has resulted in Japan's heavily increased reliance on imported energy sources including both coal and fuel oil. As a matter of both energy security and environmental policy, Japan has expressed a strong interest in switching its power generation to cleaner sources, specifically natural gas.

These circumstances, while challenging, present a unique opportunity for Alaska and the United States. You have noted the great potential of Alaska's natural gas in the context of a comprehensive energy policy and your Administration is to be applauded for its support of this popular project. Alaska's natural gas would provide a comparatively clean, sustainable, and entirely reliable energy source to our friends in Japan. It would also be highly cost competitive compared to any other option.

Alaska's natural gas resources do not present the concerns and controversies surrounding natural gas exports from the Lower 48. Because of our geographic position, our natural gas does not currently enter any of the lower 48 markets, but we have developed a strong and productive trading relationship with Japan. In fact, Alaska has exported our natural gas from Cook Inlet to Japan for over four decades. We are now focusing on expanding this to include natural gas from the North Slope.

I hope that you will raise this with the Prime Minister and offer support for expeditious permitting for the infrastructure necessary for supplying Alaska's natural gas to this important friend and ally. I thank you for your consideration and offer my help and support in advancing the friendship between the U.S. and Japan.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator