October 11, 2012

The Honorable Steven Chu The Honorable Ken Salazar

Secretary Secretary

U.S. Department of Energy U.S. Department of the Interior

1000 Independence Avenue, S.W. 1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20585  Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Jon Leibowitz

Chairman

Federal Trade Commission

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20580

Dear Secretary Chu, Secretary Salazar, and Chairman Leibowitz,

As I’m sure you are aware, gas prices recently skyrocketed on the West Coast, which caused gas prices to rise in Nevada as well. These increases appear to be due to myriad factors, including refinery disruptions and concerns about supply.

Such price volatility is troubling for the state of Nevada. Middle class families across the state have already been forced to tighten their belts, and the last thing they need is to feel the squeeze of higher gas prices. We need to make sure that businesses, from producers to retailers, are not manipulating prices. I respectfully request that your agencies take appropriate steps to prevent illegal market manipulation. We must ensure an affordable, stable supply of the energy needed to power our economy.

Recent price volatility also provides an opportunity to reflect on the impact of high energy prices on consumers. Gas prices have more than doubled since 2009. These high costs permeate into every aspect of life and disproportionately hurt Nevada’s tourism industry and the jobs that depend on it. Higher gas prices mean empty restaurants, vacant hotel rooms, and crippled small businesses at a time when we can least afford it.

I support commonsense measures that will help our nation move toward alternative energy technologies to power our future. We also need to secure our economy now by encouraging responsible production of all of our natural resources. Democrats and Republicans must work together to develop concrete policies that will result in lower prices, expanded domestic production, and a reduction in our dependence on foreign oil. Expanding production, improving our energy infrastructure, and continuing to develop alternative fuel technologies are the right objectives to meet our nation’s energy needs.

We also must do what is right for Nevadans and all Americans by securing stable, affordable gas prices. This includes protecting consumers from illegal practices and securing the energy resources needed to power our economy. I look forward to working with each of you to achieve these vital goals.

 Sincerely,

 DEAN HELLER

 U.S. Senator