

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2802

November 30, 2010

Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
H-218, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable James Moran  
Chairman, Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies Subcommittee  
B-308, Rayburn  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Mike Simpson  
Ranking Member, Interior,  
Environment and Related  
Agencies Subcommittee  
2312 Rayburn  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Simpson,

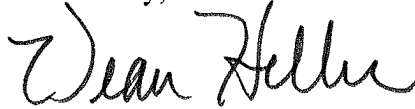
I want to bring an urgent and very important matter to your attention regarding geothermal energy and the upcoming Continuing Resolution. Recently the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has determined that, because of language in the Continuing Resolution expiring December 3, 2010, counties are ineligible for geothermal energy revenue sharing payments for this fiscal year. I strongly urge you to correct this vital matter in the upcoming Continuing Resolution to be considered by the House.

As you may know, hidden in Section 423 of the fiscal year 2010 Interior Appropriations legislation (P.L. 111-88) was a provision that stripped counties of the geothermal energy revenue sharing that was enacted as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This section robbed counties of their 25 percent share, which they depend upon to provide services. To correct this, the Nevada delegation and others successfully worked to retroactively repeal the provision that stripped counties of this vital revenue, as part of the Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 111-212). However, since the current Continuing Resolution for FY 2011 refers to the FY 2010 Appropriations Act for Interior, Environment and Related Agencies – not the Supplemental Appropriations Act – counties are again going without revenue sharing. This must be fixed in the upcoming Continuing Resolution and/or any other longer term funding bills.

For decades, the American West has borne the burden of the federal government's vast land holdings, losing out on substantial taxes and revenue that counties cannot collect or generate on federal lands located within their boundaries. Some of our western counties have as little as 2% taxable land base, and geothermal revenue sharing provides a funding stream that allowed communities to fund vital services such as law enforcement, emergency health care and search and rescue. The repeal of geothermal revenue sharing is yet another problem for our public lands communities who bear the unique burdens of high federal land ownership. During these difficult economic times, the addition of this language, which has already been approved once by the House, is vital.

The inability of Congress to pass an appropriations bill on time should not become a problem for county governments. The addition of language in the upcoming continuing resolution this week will help ensure this problem is fixed. Again, I strongly urge you to include language related to geothermal revenue sharing in the final version of the continuing resolution that the House will consider this week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Heller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "H".

DEAN HELLER  
Member of Congress