

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 28, 2011

The Honorable Steven Chu  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Chu:

We write to express our concerns about the accuracy of natural gas estimates and how this could impact our nation's energy policy. We fully support the President's push to invest in and utilize alternative sources of energy. At a time of record high gas prices and volatility in fuel sources, finding alternatives and achieving greater energy independence is of the utmost importance. One energy alternative that has seen tremendous growth in the last few years is natural gas. While the industry proposes to offer a cleaner energy alternative, in addition to environmental and public health concerns over the extraction process, there are growing concerns with how the industry estimates its reserves.

The New York Times piece on June 27, 2011, "Behind Veneer, Doubt on Future of Natural Gas", describes concern among federal employees about the ease and low cost of extraction as well as the accuracy in the natural gas estimates. As the article points out, over the last few years, publicly the U.S. Energy Information Administration (E.I.A.) has steadily increased its estimates of domestic supplies of natural gas but internally has shown some skepticism over the shale gas forecasting. This raises concerns over the E.I.A.'s confidence in the shale gas market.

We have several questions in particular that we ask you to consider.

- What steps is the Department taking to verify the data it receives on shale gas reserve estimates?
- What type of oversight does the Department conduct to ensure accuracy of the shale gas estimates and data it receives?
- How would potential inaccuracies in the natural gas estimates alter the energy policy going forward?

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

  
JERROLD NADLER  
Member of Congress