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ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

May 1, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Ernest Moniz
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

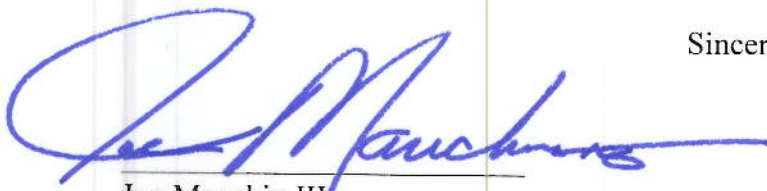
Dear Secretary Foxx and Secretary Moniz:

We recognize and appreciate the independent efforts of the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Energy (DOE) to enhance the safety of crude oil transported by rail and further encourage you to increase collaboration and coordination between your two departments. The revised tank car and operating standards for trains carrying crude oil provide important details for car owners/operators, repair shops, and car manufacturers, but they only address part of the problem. In addition to making stronger and smarter tank cars, we must also improve our understanding of the unique chemical elements of crude oil and other flammable materials.

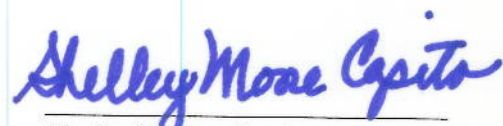
On April 1, 2015, the State of North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources began requiring operators to condition Bakken crude oil to a vapor pressure of no more than 13.7 pounds per square inch (psi). While we appreciate Secretary Moniz's recent commitment to complete a two-year joint study with DOT on the unique properties of crude oil that contribute to its combustibility in rail accidents, we simply cannot afford to wait that period of time. We urge you to complete a comprehensive study on oil volatility as soon as possible and provide our offices with specific recommendations about how we can make this material safer to transport.

Since 2009, U.S. railroads have increased crude oil shipments more than 3,300%, and most industry experts project domestic crude production to continue to increase through at least 2020. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) initiative known as "Operation Classification" has been collecting data and evaluating the specific characteristics of Bakken crude for well over a year now, but it has produced nothing to inform our debate in Congress about how to improve the safety of crude transported by rail. We appreciate your immediate attention to this matter and look forward to working together to find a solution.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Shelly Moore Capito
United States Senator