

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 6, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne,

It is our understanding you will soon decide if the polar bear should be added to the list of “threatened species” as defined by the Endangered Species Act. There are a number of reasons why we believe it is unnecessary and potentially harmful to add these animals to the threatened species list.

Recent figures suggest the current polar bear population is currently 20,000-25,000, which is up significantly from statistics in the 1960s that suggested only 8,000-10,000 of these bears remained in existence. The doubling of the polar bear population over the last four decades would suggest that this mammal does not need to be placed on a list designed to protect animals with declining populations.

Activists advocating the addition of the polar bear to the threatened species list appear to be using this as part of an overall effort to prohibit the United States from opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to help decrease our reliance of foreign oil. In addition, activists will likely claim the polar bear was declared threatened because of global warming’s effect on the bear’s habitat. It would be unfortunate to aid environmental activists with these initiatives by declaring an animal threatened, despite its increasing population.

This decision would also pave the way for activists to demand ESA designations against any carbon dioxide-producing activity, such as building a new power plant. America is struggling to meet its current energy demands, which are projected to grow nearly 20% by 2030. This would significantly hinder the free market and business across the country.

In light of these reasons, we respectfully urge that the polar bear not be added to the list of threatened species.

Sincerely,

Jim A. Hunt

Sayby Claiborne

John

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Sam McKey

Ken Hatch

Michael B. Eji

Wayne Allen

John Baum

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