Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2008

Secretary Dirk Kempthorne
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Director Jim Nussle
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Kempthorne and Director Nussle,

We are writing to urge you to avoid the inclusion of "net receipt sharing" as part of the President's Budget for fiscal year 2009 for the Department of the Interior. The proposal would reduce the States' share of receipts from mineral leasing activities on public lands by two percent annually. Previous budget documents have suggested that this reduction is necessary to defray administrative costs at the Department.

We strongly disagree with this assertion and oppose the Department taking money that is rightfully owed to our states in order to pay for more federal bureaucracy. It is unconscionable that the Department of the Interior and the Office of Management and Budget would propose to take money from States used to pay for important priorities, including educational improvements, to pay for more program administration. This appropriation does not serve the taxpayers who fund the government nor does it serve the states who allow for energy production to happen within their borders.

Similar policy, implemented in 1991 and initially repealed in 2000, led to the loss of nearly $250 million in States' revenues. The inclusion of this proposal in the fiscal year 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 110-161) will once again allow for this harmful provision to have a negative impact on States.

We strongly opposed the inclusion of this provision in the fiscal year 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act. We do not believe the measure received thorough consideration and believe that if it had received such consideration, it would have been removed. We hope the Department of the Interior and the Office of Management and Budget will recognize the problematic nature of this provision and will avoid including the proposal in the President's Budget for fiscal year 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Enzi
Senator Mike Enzi

John Barrasso
Senator John Barrasso

Jon Tester
Senator Jon Tester

Orrin Hatch
Senator Orrin Hatch

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Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Wayne Allard

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Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers

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Representative Chris Cannon

Representative Rob Bishop

Representative Dennis R. Rehberg

Representative Wally Herger

Representative John T. Doolittle