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October 23, 2015

Mr. Gene Dodaro
The Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Last year, I commissioned the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the likely impacts of “lifting the ban” on crude oil exports from the United States. The report published in response to that request (GAO-14-807) concluded that such action would boost production, grow the economy, lower the trade deficit, and could even reduce consumer fuel prices.

As you know, “the ban” on oil exports is actually a general prohibition. Presidents of both political parties have exercised their lawful statutory authority to create exemptions. For example, under certain conditions oil produced in the United States may be exported from Alaska and California, and to Israel, Mexico, and Canada.

The Administration has stated its opposition to legislative efforts that are underway to eliminate the general prohibition on exporting oil. At the same time, the Department of Commerce regulates the export of American oil to Canada, amounting to approximately 492,000 barrels per day in July 2015. I am interested in your assessment of whether this licensing process is optimized for the 21st century, is consistent with our nation’s commitment to free trade, and is an efficient use of federal resources.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator