



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

October 25, 2013

Mr. James T. Hackett
Chairman
National Petroleum Council
1625 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Hackett:

Building the foundation for a clean energy economy will require unprecedented actions by industry and government to strengthen the nation's oil and natural gas infrastructure, tackle the issues of climate change, and protect our environment. To provide useful input into upcoming policy decisions, I request that the National Petroleum Council undertake strategic, short term studies on three topics: *Natural Gas and Oil Infrastructure Resilience*, *Maximizing the Climate Benefits of Natural Gas*, and *Arctic Research*.

Natural Gas and Oil Infrastructure Resilience. Superstorm Sandy, wildfires and floods have underscored the importance of having resilient oil and natural gas infrastructure and effective ways for industry and government to communicate to address energy supply disruptions. Key questions to be addressed on this topic include:

- What vulnerabilities have recent storm activity exposed in US energy infrastructure?
- What legal, procedural, and physical gaps need to be addressed by industry and government to improve response to disruptions?
- What strategies should be pursued to increase energy system resilience to storms and other potential disruptions?
- What actions can be taken to address the interdependencies between oil and natural gas systems and other critical infrastructure?

Maximizing the Climate Benefits of Natural Gas. The vital role that domestic natural gas resources are poised to serve in a clean energy economy will hinge on maximizing the climate benefits of increased natural gas use. Key prerequisites will include gaining a better understanding of the extent of methane leakages in the natural gas value chain from the well head to the consumer, as well as focusing attention on reducing these leakages. Key questions to be addressed on this topic include:

- What technologies and practices can be adopted or further developed to improve the detection and measurement of methane emissions from natural gas systems?
- What technologies and practices can accelerate reductions in methane leakage in natural gas systems?



Arctic Research. A core component of the Administration's National Strategy for the Arctic Region released in May 2013 includes responsibly developing Arctic oil and gas resources to ensure energy security. In 2015 the United States will assume chairmanship of the multi-nation Arctic Council. The National Petroleum Council's input would be invaluable to assist us as we explore:

- What research should the Department of Energy pursue and what technology constraints must be addressed to ensure prudent development of Arctic oil and gas resources while advancing U.S. energy and economic security and ensuring environmental stewardship?

For the purposes of these studies, I am designating Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman to represent me. He will provide the necessary coordination between the Department of Energy and the National Petroleum Council and oversee the Department's engagement. Acting Assistant Secretary Christopher Smith is the Designated Federal Official for this advisory committee and he will work with Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman and the Council staff to identify leads for each of the studies. I understand that dialogue between the Department and the Council may be necessary to further define the scope of the studies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest Moniz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ernest Moniz