LISA MURKOWSKI
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN

APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
CHAIRMAN

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–0203
(202) 224–6665
(202) 224–5301 FAX

510 L STREET, SUITE 600
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501–1956
(907) 271–3735

101 12TH AVENUE, ROOM 329
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701–6278
(907) 456–0233

800 GLACIER AVENUE, SUITE 101
JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 586–7277

805 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 105
KENAI, AK 99611–9104
(907) 283–5808

1900 FIRST AVENUE, SUITE 225
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901–6059
(907) 225–6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307
WASILLA, AK 99654–7142
(907) 376–7665

August 21, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare for your upcoming visit to Alaska, I write to express my sincere hope that you will not only be awed by our mountains and the land, but inspired by our people. While you have asserted that your trip is driven by Alaska's position on the "frontlines of our fight against climate change," I hope you will recognize that is only one part of our story – as Alaskans are also leading the nation in the deployment of many renewable and other innovative energy technologies.

Should you want to see some of the nation's most promising efforts to advance new energy systems, I encourage you to consider the following communities during your visit to our State:

- In Chena Hot Springs, Bernie Karl has developed a method to generate electricity from the lowest-temperature geothermal resource in the world. He has also proven that the wastewater generated during production of oil and natural gas wells can be used to make electricity, and is converting waste cardboard and paper waste into pellets for highly energy-efficient building materials.

- In Kongiganak, Harvey Paul has installed five wind turbines to provide power for its 400 residents. The village utilizes excess electricity generated from its turbines to heat homes with "thermal bricks" – stoves that store electric heat for home space heating, cutting heating oil costs by up to 60 percent and collectively saving residents hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

- Kwigillingok has installed a "smart grid" for its 317 residents that has allowed the village to pair its diesel generators more efficiently with wind turbines. Village residents now use "smart" meters to turn on and off their home appliances. This has saved local residents thousands of dollars in a remote area where electricity costs 61 cents per kilowatt hour, six times the national average.

- In Igiugig, the Ocean Renewable Power Company continues to test a marine hydrokinetic generator that sits on the river's bottom. In combination with the wind turbines currently

in place, within two years, it could turn the current of the Kvichak River into low-cost electricity for the village of 52.

- King Cove – whose nearly 1,000 residents remain cut off from reliable access to emergency medical transportation as a result of a decision made by your Interior Secretary, Sally Jewell – will soon be diesel-free and powered entirely by two small hydropower projects.

- The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council initially tested an in-river, hydrokinetic turbine in Ruby. The University of Alaska's Center for Energy and Power has purchased the pontoon and equipment and is preparing to install it for additional testing in Nenana at the end of August.

- In Hoonah, the Inside Passage Electric Cooperative just finished installing a small hydroelectric generator, which will divert a small amount of water in Gartina Creek to generate nearly half of the town's electricity.

- In Anaktuvuk Pass, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center of Fairbanks recently demonstrated that it is possible to build affordable homes that operate with a fraction of energy that most current homes use, even in a climate where winter temperatures often plummet to 60 degrees below zero.

- At Pilgrim Hot Springs, the University of Alaska last year discovered that the springs may be able to produce enough geothermal energy to power not only that village, but also the larger town of Nome.

- Juneau recently installed a ground-source geothermal heating system to rid part of the airport's aprons of snow and ice in winter.

- In Anchorage, the Municipality now uses methane gas generated from the town's landfill to produce energy.

Across the globe, other countries are looking to Alaska as the leader on the integration of renewables into diesel microgrids. The examples listed here are just a small sample of the expansive deployment of new energy technologies and systems in Alaska. They help illustrate how the residents of our State are dedicated to innovation, strong economies, and a healthy environment – and also offer two key lessons that I hope you will take to heart when you visit us later this month.

First, climate change must not be used as an excuse to deprive Alaskans of our best economic prospects. Many renewable energy projects in our State were made possible with State revenues derived from oil production. As you will see, Alaska has developed institutions and programs that maximize the benefits of resource production to improve the lives of our people.

Second, climate change is an opportunity for the federal government to partner with Alaskans and leverage the expertise that we have developed. I am hopeful that after your visit you will

recognize the unique needs of our State, and direct federal agencies to work in greater partnership with the State of Alaska, the Alaska Center for Energy and Power, the Cold Climate House Research Center, the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, and others.

I sincerely hope you agree that any federal effort you may initiate in Alaska needs to leave a lasting legacy of improving the lives of our people. That is only possible if federal agencies actively collaborate with Alaskans to build capacity in Alaska. As always, I stand ready to work with you or your agencies to develop partnerships and programs of benefit to our communities.

I appreciate your consideration of this letter. Alaskans are innovators and energy pioneers out of necessity. We face some of the highest energy costs in the country – with many in Alaska spending almost half their household income to stay warm and keep the lights on. Alaskans look forward to hosting you this month, to showing you the best of our beautiful state, and to helping you gain a better understanding of our pioneering spirit – especially with regard to energy innovation.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator