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Dear "Step It Up" Alaskans:

First, thank you for inviting me to attend your rally seeking to encourage the adoption of national and state policies to reduce carbon emissions. Unfortunately, U.S. Senate business prevents my attendance.

As Alaskans, we have all noticed that our climate has been warming in recent decades and that the 3 to 5 degrees rise in temperature we have experienced has had a host of consequences that have affected our State, from warming permafrost to increasing coastal erosion. While the science of global climate change is still hotly debated, I believe that it does make sense to take common-sense steps now to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions when it can be done without significant impacts to our economy and our ability to afford environmental protections in the future.

For that reason Senator Stevens and I earlier this year joined in co-sponsoring legislation to create a carbon emissions program that would create a cap on emissions and set up a credit trading program to help companies lower emissions at the lowest possible cost to society. The bill we co-sponsored would result in emission reductions of roughly 60 percent by 2050 – well within the 50 to 80 percent target proposed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change earlier this year as needed to avoid future environmental impacts. The bill for the first time would impose a price on carbon emissions, while including a "safety valve" that would prevent serious economic disruptions from occurring. The measure would require the United States to lead the climate debate by setting a good example, but would also require international participation without which efforts at global emission reductions will be doomed.

Crafting climate legislation is an extremely difficult undertaking given the need for legislation to avoid significant impacts on the poor, while also providing "adaptation" assistance to areas, like Alaska, that have already experienced the impacts of changing climate conditions. Efforts like today's rally will help educate Alaskans on the issue and potential solutions and help to foster the conditions for Congress to debate this complex subject. Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator