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Congress of the United States  
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FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS

July 1, 2008

Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

<http://markudall.house.gov/HR/Co02/home>

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

I am concerned to hear that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will place a moratorium on its consideration of future solar energy projects on public lands in six Western states, including my state of Colorado, until completing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on their potential effects.

I strongly agree that we need more information about the environmental impact of solar energy facilities on our public lands. Renewable energy sources will be critical in relieving our dependence on fossil fuel from unstable regions of the world – energy sources that also contribute to climate change and other environmental problems – but we must be careful not to cause greater harm to our natural landscape as we move forward. An EIS will be an important step forward in this process. However, I am concerned that placing a complete moratorium on the review of new solar energy projects while BLM works to complete the EIS – which could take years – could greatly limit our country's ability to become more energy independent, as well as seriously threaten a growing new industry in our country. Furthermore, I do not believe that a moratorium on new solar projects makes sense in a time of rising energy prices.

I urge you to direct the BLM to continue to evaluate new applications for the siting of individual solar energy projects even as a broader EIS is underway.

Sincerely,

Mark Udall  
Member of Congress