

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2009

Hon. Steven Chu
Secretary
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20585

RE: January SPR Contract Awarded to Vitol

Dear Secretary Chu:

We are writing to respectfully request that the Department of Energy conduct a review of a contract awarded by the Department to buy oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) from Vitol, the Swiss/Dutch energy trading firm, announced on January 16.

In November 2007, Vitol pleaded guilty to grand larceny in New York state court in connection with kickbacks paid to the Iraqi government during the Oil-for-Food program, and was ordered to pay a fine of \$17.5 million. Prosecutors alleged that Vitol, through an associated entity or third parties, paid \$13 million in kickbacks to Iraqi officials in connection with oil purchases under the program from June 2001 through September 2002, but allowed false representations to be made to the U.N. that no kickbacks were paid. These activities took place while Iraq was under United Nations Security Council sanctions.

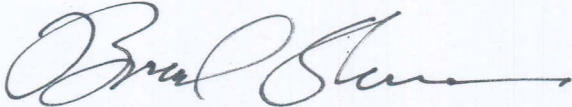
The crime of larceny certainly *could provide* sufficient grounds for debarment from federal contracting, even if it does not necessarily require such action.

Accordingly, the review requested in this letter should ensure that Vitol did not make any inaccurate representations or fail to disclose information about its criminal activity in the Oil-for-Food scandal, and assess whether Vitol's conduct justifies debarment as a federal contractor.

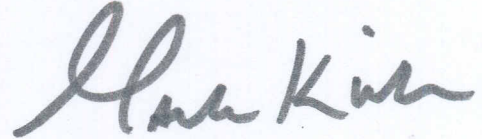
We also note with concern the fact that Vitol is a major trading partner of Iran and is a key supplier of refined petroleum to Iran. While this is not grounds for denying a contracting opportunity under current law, it further demonstrates that this firm may not be the best business partner for the United States government.

We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to receiving your response to this request for a review of this contract and potential debarment of Vitol.

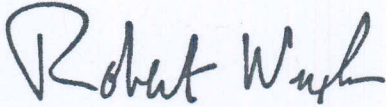
Sincerely,



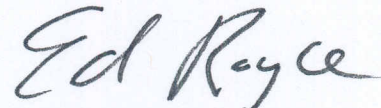
BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress



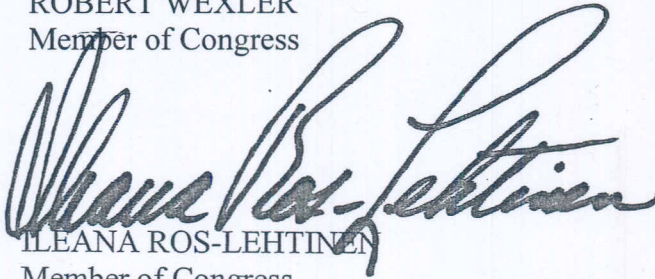
MARK STEVEN KIRK
Member of Congress



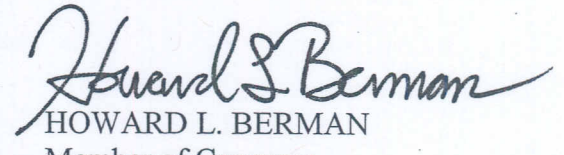
ROBERT WEXLER
Member of Congress



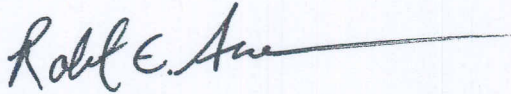
EDWARD R. ROYCE
Member of Congress



ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress



ROBERT E. ANDREWS
Member of Congress