



Washington, DC 20515

April 24, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

On March 31, 2009, I provided you with an outline of the actions the Office of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) has taken to increase energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the Capitol complex. In that regard, the AOC has taken immediate actions to shift to natural gas as the fuel source for the Capitol Power Plant (CPP).

Upon receiving your letter of February 26, 2009, I took immediate actions to maximize the use of natural gas as a fuel source for the CPP. First, I directed the CPP staff to initiate the seasonal conversion to natural gas operations two months earlier than normal. Second, I directed the CPP staff to proceed with planned work to upgrade the equipment and controls on one of our natural gas boilers to increase its efficiency and expand the scheduled maintenance projects this summer to test and fine tune the remaining natural gas boilers. These efforts will improve both the efficiency and capacity of existing natural gas equipment. This will enable the CPP to meet the steam requirements for the Capitol complex using only natural gas, barring three issues. First, based on discussions with our utility provider, the natural gas supply line needs to be upgraded from a four inch line to a six inch line to ensure sufficient gas can be delivered to the CPP during the winter months. We are currently working with the utility provider to plan the upgrade of the gas line. Second, colder than normal weather during the winter months could cause the steam demand to exceed the capacity of the existing natural gas equipment. Third, all existing natural gas equipment must be operating at capacity to meet steam requirements in the winter, so any equipment outages involving the gas boilers would necessitate the use of a coal boiler.

Obviously, the CPP, like all other central plants, needs backup capacity to ensure it is capable of delivering steam without interruption for Congressional facilities. Therefore, it is necessary to modify an existing coal boiler to burn natural gas efficiently. In order to expedite the project, the AOC has requested approval from the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on the Legislative Branch to use existing Fiscal Year 2009 funds (\$1 Million) to carry out the design portion of the project. Also, the AOC requested the funds (\$9 Million) needed for the actual boiler modification work as part of our Fiscal Year 2010 budget request. As noted in my March

letter, the environmental permitting process required for this project is lengthy and complex. There are several uncertainties regarding the schedule for the project at this time, so we estimate the boiler conversion can be completed by as early as November 2010 and as late as October 2011. We will work diligently to complete the work at the soonest date possible. We completed a similar conversion to an existing boiler in the CPP a few years ago and are familiar with the design, cost, and duration of this project. The completion of the project will provide the additional capacity needed to operate the Plant using only natural gas even in the event of equipment outages.

I also wanted to update you on our ongoing efforts to refine the long-term master plan for the CPP. Earlier this year we completed a comprehensive draft Strategic Energy Plan for the CPP, leveraging our in-house experts and highly qualified consultants. The master planning process examined numerous options for the Plant, with goals of improving efficiency and reliability, reducing environmental impacts, and controlling the cost of operations. We submitted the draft plan to the National Academies, which assembled a panel of industry experts who are currently conducting a thorough review of the options and strategies for the CPP. In addition, we have asked the U.S. Department of Energy, National Energy Technology Laboratory to conduct a review of the plan later this year. These reviews will provide the AOC two very useful third-party perspectives on the plan, confirming that the master plan we created has evaluated a wide range of options and charted a course that best meets the needs of Congress.

We fully support your efforts to make the Capitol complex more sustainable, and are committed to reducing the environmental impact of the Capitol Power Plant. A similar letter has been sent to The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Ayers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stephen T. Ayers, AIA, LEED AP
Acting Architect of the Capitol