

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 28, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As members of the Congressional Rural Caucus (CRC), we write to express our grave concerns about the methamphetamine (meth) epidemic that is plaguing rural America. The explosion of this destructive synthetic drug, which began in the western United States and is steadily moving eastward, has a devastating effect on individuals, families, communities and the environment.

As you and your Administration know, meth is a homemade amphetamine made from easily accessible materials such as antifreeze, ether, paint thinner, acetone, ephedrine and other products found in every local hardware or drug store in America. The highly addictive, treatment resistant drug, which may be smoked, injected, inhaled or swallowed, increases the release of dopamine in the brain, which leads to a euphoric sensation followed by a severe "crash." Long-term meth abuse results in severe physical and psychiatric harm, including permanent brain damage.

Unlike most drugs, the effects of meth go beyond its horrible impact on those who use it and the violence associated with drug-related crime. Every pound of meth produced creates five pounds of toxic waste. The cleanup of a single meth lab, the cost of which falls on the shoulders of local governments, carries an average cost of \$5,000 and can cost as much as \$250,000. The identifiable cost of expenses related to meth for rural counties has greatly escalated in the last five years; rural counties routinely spend over \$1 million per year on meth-related expenditures.

Worst of all, it has been reported that in at least 70% of all meth lab seizures, a child is living in the home. Besides the health risks related to the toxic byproducts of meth production, children living in homes containing meth labs face an increased risk of neglect and are more likely to be physically and sexually abused.

Many communities across the nation are struggling with the enormous economic and social impact of meth. Dealing with the effects of meth, whether it is diverting tax dollars from already-strapped county budgets, devoting manpower hours to locate and clean up remote meth labs, or treating meth addicts at the local hospitals, clinics and prisons, consumes our society's resources at an astounding rate.

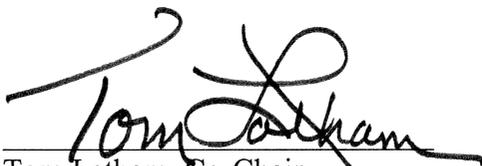
Recently, the National Association of Counties released the results of a survey in which law enforcement officials and county child welfare workers from 500 counties in 45 states responded to questions regarding the impact of meth on their communities. The results were staggering; 87% of law enforcement agencies reported an increase in meth-related arrests in the last three years and 58% of counties said methamphetamine was their biggest drug-related program, as compared to only 17% that cited marijuana.

We appreciate the release of the Interim Report from the Interagency Working Group on Synthetic Drugs and as you continue to construct a strategy to deal with this destructive drug, we respectfully urge you to consider the following recommendations:

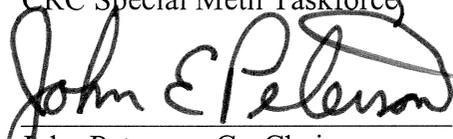
- It is estimated that as much as 80% of America's meth comes from outside the country, specifically from Mexico, which imports more pseudoephedrine, a precursor of meth, than it can use to create legitimate medications. *The Oregonian* recently reported that nine factories manufacture the bulk of the world's supply of pseudoephedrine. We urge the State Department and the Drug Enforcement Agency to work with officials in India, China, the Czech Republic and Germany to more closely track the sale of pseudoephedrine and train international customs officials to help monitor its flow to eradicate illegal smuggling of meth.
- We support a dedicated funding stream to assist states and localities, specifically rural communities, with costs related to meth including the cleanup of meth labs, disposal of the resulting toxic waste, health care and treatment, social services, local public awareness efforts, drug courts and law enforcement operations.
- We support the expedited creation of a national clearinghouse for information related to meth, as described in the Interim Report from the Interagency Working Group on Synthetic Drugs ([www.methresources.gov](http://www.methresources.gov)). Not only would education help deter potential abusers from first using meth, it would also assist local governments, schools, parents, law enforcement officers and public health workers combat the epidemic.

We look forward to working with you throughout the legislative process to reach the shared goal of eradicating methamphetamine across the nation. Thank you for your consideration.

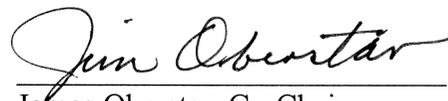
Sincerely,



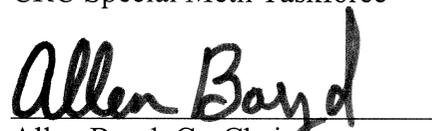
Tom Latham, Co-Chair  
CRC Special Meth Taskforce



John Peterson, Co-Chair  
Congressional Rural Caucus



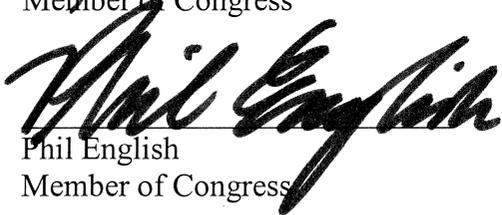
James Oberstar, Co-Chair  
CRC Special Meth Taskforce



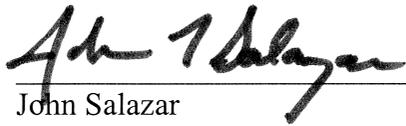
Allen Boyd, Co-Chair  
Congressional Rural Caucus



Lincoln Davis  
Member of Congress



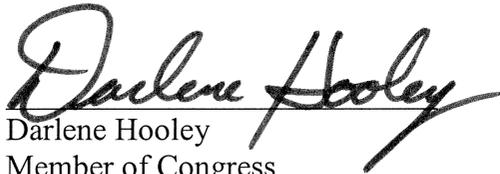
Phil English  
Member of Congress



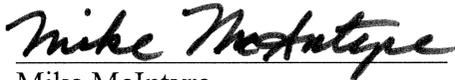
John Salazar  
Member of Congress



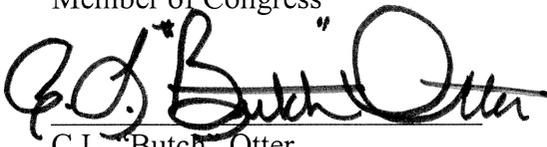
Ed Case  
Member of Congress



Darlene Hooley  
Member of Congress



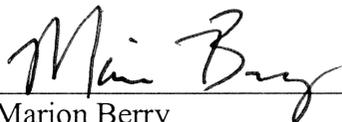
Mike McIntyre  
Member of Congress



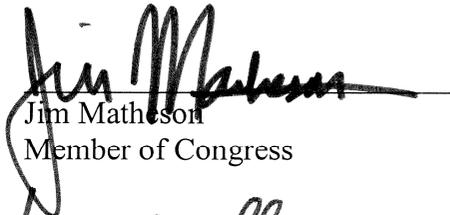
C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Marion Berry  
Member of Congress



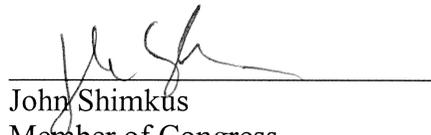
Jim Matheson  
Member of Congress



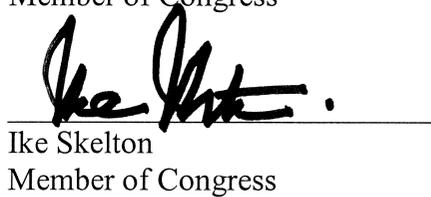
Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



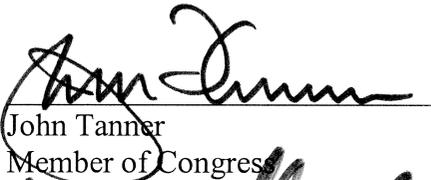
Tim Holden  
Member of Congress



John Shimkus  
Member of Congress



Ike Skelton  
Member of Congress



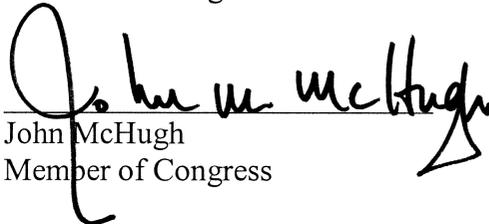
John Tanner  
Member of Congress



Bob Etheridge  
Member of Congress



Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress



John McHugh  
Member of Congress



Tom Osborne  
Member of Congress



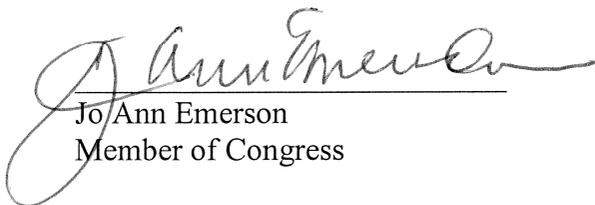
William Jenkins  
Member of Congress



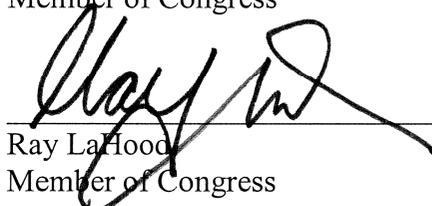
Tim Johnson  
Member of Congress



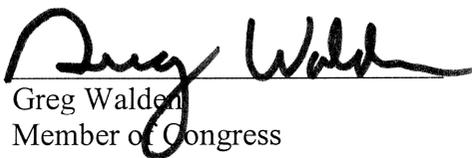
Jerry Moran  
Member of Congress



Jo Ann Emerson  
Member of Congress



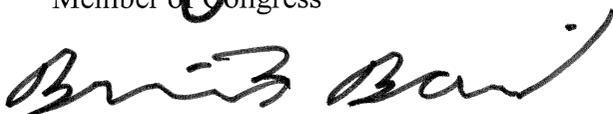
Ray LaHood  
Member of Congress



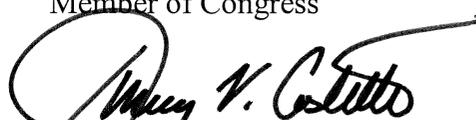
Greg Walden  
Member of Congress



Barbara Cubin  
Member of Congress



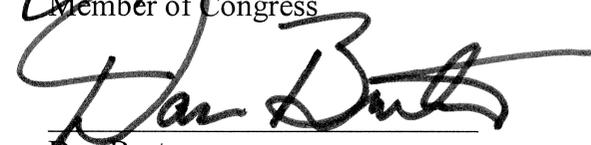
Brian Baird  
Member of Congress



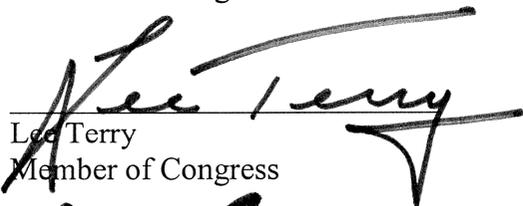
Jerry Costello  
Member of Congress



Bart Stupak  
Member of Congress



Dan Burton  
Member of Congress



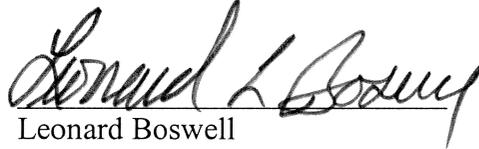
Lee Terry  
Member of Congress



Vic Snyder  
Member of Congress



Jim Gibbons  
Member of Congress



Leonard Boswell  
Member of Congress



Shelley Moore Capito  
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress