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Office of Senator Byron Dorgan
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Senator Dorgan,

It is no secret that Americans are increasingly cynical about their government. With influence peddling as a \$4.5 billion a year “growth” industry, there are now 1,300 Washington lobbyists for every Senator. The revolving door between K Street and Capitol Hill does nothing to improve people’s faith in the independence of their elected leaders.

Throughout your public service career, you have been a strong leader on a wide range of issues including several key energy initiatives that are essential to America’s future. Given how much the nation’s clean energy future is at stake this year, I was disappointed when, earlier this month, you announced your decision to retire – and that you are considering several career options, *including working “on energy policy in the private sector.”*

As a longtime member of Congress I am sure you are aware that, regardless of your actual intentions, this language is often code for legislators who have begun trolling for an influence peddling job after they leave Congress. And, the path from public servant to influence peddler is a sadly well-worn one: Rep. Bob Livingston, Senator John Breaux, Rep. Billy Tauzin, and Senator Trent Lott.

I recall seeing you as a speaker at the oil industry’s controversial, pay-to-play forum on December 1st, just five weeks before you announced your retirement. As you will recall, this highly questionable exercise was one in which Newsweek was caught renting out its name, credibility and top pundit to big oil’s influence peddler, Jack Gerard. We were able to document Mr. Gerard’s unwillingness to answer basic questions about the purchase price of Newsweek’s credibility, and you can see the results at youtube.com/polluterwatch.

We are all confident that you will have no shortage of job options open to you at the end of this year. Why let dirty energy lobbyists, who are working overtime to imperil America's clean energy interests, threaten your legacy as an independent advocate for what's best for North Dakota and the people of this country?

To prevent that from happening, I call on you to:

- List the dirty energy lobbyists and their respective clients with whom you have had contact about your next job.
- Release all details of phone calls, emails or meetings you have had with prospective employers from energy interests who have lobbied you or your office. Of particular interest are Washington-area lobbying and public relations firms.
- Pledge that you will wait until after an energy bill is passed this year to engage in any further discussions about future employment with interests that lobby you.

This year the Senate is likely to debate and act on several key pieces of legislation that will shape the future of the American energy industry, our economy and our efforts to fight pollution. Regardless of your final positions on these bills, I am sure you agree that Americans deserve to be absolutely certain that your votes reflect your genuine view of what is best for them.

I am sure that you would not allow future career prospects to influence your legislative judgment. However, by releasing your records and pledging to refrain from any employment discussions, you can avoid creating any perception to the contrary.

Sincerely,

Kert Davies

PolluterWatch Director