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November 7, 1991


Mr. Michael J. Miller, President  
Safety Boss, Ltd.  
1010-1 Street, SW  
Suite 333  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2R 1K4

Dear Mr. Miller:

Enclosed is a copy of the statement that I made on the floor of the U.S. Senate, marking the capping of the last oil well fire in Kuwait. As chairman of the Gulf Pollution Task Force, I would like to thank you for your contributions in bringing about an early end to this monumental environmental task.

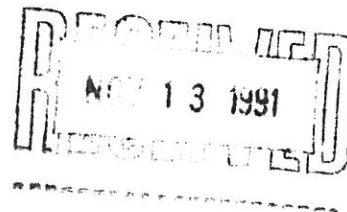
Please feel free to contact Michael Henderson of my staff at (202)-224-4041, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman  
United States Senator

Enclosure





## U.S. SENATOR JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN CONNECTICUT

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**FOR RELEASE:**

*November 6, 1991*

### ***Statement Of Senator Joseph I. Lieberman On The Kuwaiti Oil Fires***

Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of my colleagues to a significant event that has happened today, half a world away; an event that has been long awaited by people around the world: the extinguishing of the last oil well fire in Kuwait.

On August 2, 1990, the world was shocked to learn of Saddam Hussein's ruthless invasion of Kuwait. The brutal occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces continued until the American-led coalition liberated that nation in February of this year. It was then that the extent of severe damage to Kuwait's infrastructure and its environment became fully known.

One of the most disturbing consequences of Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait was his environmental terrorism -- the intentional spilling of millions of gallons of oil into the Persian Gulf, and the premeditated bombing of hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells.

I have visited Kuwait, and I must tell my colleagues that there is nothing quite like the experience of seeing the oil well fires set by Iraqi troops up close. No Medieval artist's depiction of Hell -- or Hollywood director's vision of war -- ever captured the horrific desolation of the blazing oil fields of Kuwait. I was there in August, and I witnessed a dreadful scene of black, white, and gray, forming a backdrop for the roiling reds and yellows of the fires themselves. The heat from the flames makes the normal air temperature -- which was 118 degrees the day I was there -- seem like a cooling breeze as it assaults the skin. Any metal on one's body -- a camera, a belt buckle -- becomes as hot as a pan in a fire. And the sound is other-worldly, a harsh, unending roar that fills the air and amplifies the impression of the ghostly scene. The tableau of devastation is reflected off the sheen of the lakes of oil that have accumulated from well-heads that blew, but do not flame.

And near one of those well-heads gathers a company of courageous firefighters, covered head to toe in oil, struggling to cut the flow of oil from a well-head at which they have just extinguished a flame. The day I was there, the firefighters put out their 300th fire, and it was beginning to look like all the fires might be under control in time for the first anniversary of the war's end, next February. It would be, I wrote at the time, an amazing feat of heroism, skill and determination.

--more--

## 2-2-2 oil fires

Mr. President, even the most optimistic prophets were not optimistic enough. The fires are all out, less than nine months since the end of the war. A formal ceremony in the Burgan oil field outside of Kuwait City -- the oil field that I visited in August -- was held earlier today to mark this historic occasion. I expect that this multi-national effort - led by great Americans like Red Adair - will go down as one of the most remarkable feats of human courage and skill we've seen in a long time.

I would like to take this time to commend the work of the American teams involved: the Red Adair Company, Boots and Coots, and Wild Well Control, all of Texas. These companies, plus a team from Canada, Safety Boss, Ltd., accomplished in about nine months what some believed would take four or five years. The sheer number of blazing wells and the enormous amount of equipment needed to fight them were unparalleled in history.

The Gulf Pollution Task Force of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which I chair, has had four meetings where we heard testimony from a variety of witnesses -- government, private industry, academia -- concerning the environmental effects of the oil well fires and the oil spills on the air, water and land of the Gulf region. At one of our first meetings, the Task Force was informed that due to bureaucratic and administrative problems, equipment and supplies needed for firefighting were being delayed days and even weeks at a time. Red Adair testified that lack of heavy equipment and supplies was slowing the progress of all the firefighting teams. He concluded by saying that unless additional support was made available, the firefighting effort might drag on for years.

I am proud to say that our Task Force was able to respond to Red Adair's plea, and cut through some of the "red tape" to get vital equipment to the firefighters much quicker than originally planned. Through the cooperation of the Military Airlift Command, large bulldozers and other heavy machinery were delivered directly to the firefighters, helping them get the job done.

With the capping of the last oil well fire, the source for much of the atmospheric and respiratory-related problems will have been controlled. However, much remains to be done in the region in terms of monitoring long-term health effects, reclaiming damaged coastal ecosystems, and disposing of millions of barrels of contaminated oil contained in open pits near the shore. Kuwait's medical and scientific infrastructure remains fractured, hampering greatly-needed environmental and health research. Valuable data that could have assisted doctors and scientists in tracking health effects and monitoring meteorological and oceanographic processes was lost because Iraqi forces had destroyed them during their occupation of and withdrawal from Kuwait. Numerous agencies of the American government attempted to fill the void, including the EPA, the Public Health Service, NOAA and NASA, which provided technical assistance to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the countries most affected by the oil fires and oil spill. We can be proud of the American government.

Mr. President, the final consequences of Saddam Hussein's environmental aggression are yet to be known. But the most visible, and perhaps the most damaging, reminder -- the oil fires of Kuwait -- are no more. For that, we are all thankful.