

Letter to the Secretary of the Interior from President Harry S. Truman

May 3, 1946

My dear Mr. Secretary:

In keeping with the Administration's policy of winding up the affairs of war agencies as quickly as possible after their emergency responsibilities have been discharged, I have acted upon your recommendation to terminate, effective May 8, the Petroleum Administration for War, which has so successfully completed its war-time assignment.

I am in agreement with your views that steps should now be taken to assure coordination in peace-time of the Federal Government's many interests in petroleum, petroleum products and associated hydrocarbons.

To the extent possible one agency must bear the primary responsibility for providing a focal point for leadership and information for the numerous agencies of the Federal Government dealing with petroleum. I, therefore, request that you undertake the initiative in obtaining coordination and unification of Federal policy and administration with respect to the functions and activities relating to petroleum carried on by the various departments and agencies. Where practicable and appropriate governmental activities relating to petroleum should be centralized and I ask that from time to time you submit to me for consideration proposals looking to the accomplishment of this objective.

You should, through such office as you designate, serve as the channel of communication between the Federal Government and the petroleum industry, and as the liaison agency of the Federal Government in its relations with appropriate State bodies concerned with oil and gas. I have been impressed with the great contribution of government-industry cooperation to the success of the war petroleum program, and feel that the values of such close and harmonious relations between Government and industry should be continued. I, therefore, suggest that you establish an industry organization to consult and advise with you.

In this connection, I think it would be most helpful, if Mr. Ralph K. Davies, Deputy Petroleum Administrator throughout the war, were to remain on for a brief period to assist in organizing and launching these activities and to supervise winding up the affairs of the Petroleum Administration. Mr. Davies possesses a broad experience in oil, and enjoys a high standing both within Government and within the petroleum industry. I believe that his participation would assure the full cooperation and support that is so essential in the initial phase.

I need not emphasize to you the importance of petroleum in the life of the Nation and the consequent necessity for assuring the adequate and continuous availability of this vital resource. You are requested to keep me informed concerning significant developments in the petroleum field, and to consider and recommend such steps as may be necessary appropriately to safeguard our petroleum future.

Copies of this letter are being sent to the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and Commerce, for their information and guidance. I am sure you will find them ready to cooperate fully.

Very sincerely yours,

Harry S. Truman