



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

September 19, 2013
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

Senate Substitute Amendment to H.R. 527 – The Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act

(Sen. Wyden, D-OR, and Sen. Murkowski, R-AK)

The Administration strongly supports the Senate substitute amendment, the High Technology Jobs Preservation Act, to H.R. 527, the Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act. The substitute amendment would prevent the October 7, 2013, termination of the Federal program for crude helium sale, storage, and delivery. The impending abrupt shutdown of this program would cause a spike in helium prices that would harm many U.S. industries and disrupt national security programs. Instead, the substitute amendment would provide for an orderly transition of the Federal Government out of the helium market.

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) operates the Federal Helium Program as a strategic natural resource. This program supplies about 42 percent of U.S. crude helium and about 35 percent of the world's demand. Helium is an essential resource for the aerospace industry, computer chip and optical fiber manufacturing, for medical uses including MRI magnet cooling, lung tissue visualization, heart catheterization methods, and medical lasers, and aluminum helium arc welding. Helium is also used in national defense applications such as rocket engine testing and purging, surveillance devices, air-to-air missiles and scientific balloons. Under current law, the Federal Helium Program is scheduled to end on October 7, 2013, absent a new Congressional authorization. This legislation would provide the BLM with the authority necessary to continue this critical program.

* * * * *