

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

BUDGET

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

January 29, 2014

The Honorable Edith Ramirez
Chairwoman
The Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20580

Dear Chairwoman Ramirez:

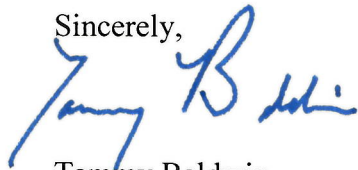
As you know, rural residents and business owners in Wisconsin and across the Midwest are experiencing crisis conditions due to the propane supply shortage in the Midwest. Unfortunately, the price of propane across my state has increased so excessively that these high prices are exacerbating an already disastrous situation. I write today to urge your leadership in ensuring the Federal Trade Commission investigates any potential illegal manipulation of the propane market that could be contributing to the unprecedented spike in propane prices across the Midwest.

Over the past week, regional shortages of propane have reached critical levels while prices have jumped dramatically. The average price of propane in Wisconsin during the first week of January was \$2.20 per gallon, which was almost 50 percent higher than the same time last year. Over the past several days, prices have continued to climb and have been reported at over \$6 per gallon in some parts of the state. These costs put terrible pressure on rural families and businesses alike, and many Wisconsinites are questioning whether illegal anti-competitive behavior or intentional manipulation of the propane market is to blame.

Therefore, I request that the Federal Trade Commission investigate the propane crisis in the Midwest and whether any illegal activity has contributed to the dangerous supply shortages and excessive prices. Wisconsinites are facing the devastating prospect of being unable to heat their homes in the coldest part of an already harsh winter. Residents of my state—and the entire Midwest—need help and we must ensure that illegal market manipulation isn't exacerbating this crisis.

Thank you for your leadership on this matter and I look forward to your quick response.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Eric Holder, Attorney General of the United States