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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548Comptroller General
of the United States**GAO STATEMENT
AUGUST 6, 2001**

GAO is seeking certain information relating to the National Energy Policy Development Group. We are reviewing the Vice President's August 2 letter to Congress in which he declined to provide GAO with the information we have requested. However, at this time, a few basic points warrant clarification.

GAO firmly believes that it has clear statutory authority to perform this review, and to obtain the information we are seeking. We are requesting information from the Vice President in his capacity as Chair of the National Energy Policy Development Group. The information we are requesting is purely factual in nature and relates solely to the process used by the group. We are also asking the National Energy Policy Development Group to supply additional information concerning the costs of its activities. Both types of information are commonly provided to GAO.

Contrary to the Vice President's statements, we are not interested in obtaining his daily schedule or reviewing communications involving the President, the Vice President, the President's senior advisors and others. We have made this clear in several communications to the Vice President's representatives. We are simply asking for facts that the Vice President, as Chair of the National Energy Policy Development Group, or others representing the group, would be in a position to provide to GAO.

In an attempt to resolve our differences, GAO officials have engaged in numerous conversations with the Vice President's representatives and others. In addition, Comptroller General David M. Walker attempted to speak with the Vice President last week without success. According to Walker, "We will continue to attempt to resolve this matter in a reasonable and timely manner. However, if necessary, we are prepared to issue a formal report on this matter to Congress, the President, and other executive branch officials to obtain the information we are seeking." This report serves as a preface to any potential certification by the executive branch or possible suit by the GAO.