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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 23 --- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) urged continued conservation of helium in a statement he filed today with the Subcommittee on Minerals, Materials and Fuels of the Senate Committee on the Interior.

Dole said he was calling for a review of the government's recent action to terminate the Federal Helium Conservation Program. for two reasons: the ecology and the economy. Dole explained, "there is a cost to conservation," but termed the government's decision "extremely shortsighted" due to the "strong possibility that within the next decade or two, we will need helium."

Another concern to the Kansas Senator is that 90 per cent of the free world's known reserves of low cost helium lie in the natural gas fields of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Dole said:

The elimination of the Helium Conservation Program would undoubtedly have a severe economic impact in western Kansas where four helium plants, employing approximately 500 people, are located.

Dole continued:

The basic question, is the conservation of the element of helium, apart from consideration of whether the program recently ~~ordered~~ terminated was good or bad from a fiscal point of view. If the program was bad, the Department of the Interior should propose an alternative which would preserve this rare element for the future, particularly in view of its potential beneficial impact on our energy supply and the environment.