United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 2, 2010

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

It is our understanding that the Majority may attempt to bring to the Senate floor the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) during the upcoming lame duck session. We write to ask that we be consulted before any time agreement or amendment agreements are entered into. New START is a complex agreement and will have lasting implications for the national security of this nation. With the limited floor time available before Sine Die, we want to ensure that a treaty of this magnitude receives sufficient debate and consideration so that all consequences, both intended and unintended, can be vetted. We have numerous amendments requiring significant debate to the treaty as well as the resolution of ratification that we would like to offer and have votes on. It would be unwise and improper to do this in a hurried fashion over the course of only a few days.

It is also appropriate to consider that there are several new members in this body who have not been afforded the opportunity to examine this treaty and its implications. They should be afforded ample time to study the treaty, the resolution of ratification, hearing transcripts, and all supporting documents on this matter. This must include the full negotiating record which has not yet been made available to the Senate. Only by doing this will all Senators be able to make fully informed decisions on amendments and adoption.

We take the advice and consent powers granted to the Senate by the founding fathers very seriously. Rushing a matter of this magnitude through the Senate is not what they had in mind when they established this very important check on the executive branch.

Sincerely,

cc: U.S. Senator Harry Reid

Tom Cole

Mike Johnson

Chuck Grassley

Jeff Merkley