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effect when the current rules run out at the end of 2016.

California is indispensable. When automakers blocked progress in Washington, California broke the logjam. It approved tough standards in 2002 that set the course for the national rules Obama announced in May 2009. California's continued involvement will help break down the automakers' next barricades.

The key tool Obama can use is the Clean Air Act, passed by Congress and blessed by the Supreme Court.

Among the worst ideas: Sarah Palin invites us to ravage the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Canada is already shipping millions of barrels of oil to the U.S. from the vast earth-and sky-befouling operations at Alberta tar sands. But why trade disaster at sea for looming pollution catastrophes on land?

We're left with the need to move beyond gasoline and diesel. What automakers won't do on their own, they will in response to strong leadership.

The challenge to Obama is setting fuel economy and emissions standards tough enough to break our oil addiction.

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to deliver on that kind of edge is to make a commitment to cut our dependence on foreign oil and embrace the better future that awaits us if we do so.

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Build a more efficient transportation system

By MEGAN OWENS and MICHELLE MARTINEZ

The BP oil disaster is the largest environmental calamity the U.S. has ever experienced. So why are we responding with small solutions?



Megan Owens



Michelle Martinez

In the early 1960s, Americans didn't know how we were going to get to the moon. But a visionary president put the best minds of that generation to work and achieved the nation's daring goal. We believe that the catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico must again move the nation to

bold leadership.

The Free Press reported Monday on estimates of the magnitude of the oil spill, ranging from 66 million to more than 100 million gallons of oil. While those amounts are staggering, it is important to remember that Michigan drivers use that much gasoline — which would require even more oil from which to distill it — every five to eight days.

This level of dependence occurs in large part because we have so few transit alternatives.

By investing in more and better public transit, revitalizing cities, and truly embracing transportation alternatives, we could dramatically decrease our demand on oil from the deep waters off our shores, from countries that don't like

us very much, and from other risky and harmful places.

Together we can end our dependence on the dirty fuels that ruin our health and the community, and contribute to climate disruption.

Rather than drilling in the Arctic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, we should embrace 21st Century solutions that enable transportation alternatives, make cars more fuel efficient, promote conservation, invest in clean, renewable energy, and protect our natural heritage. We already have the technology solutions for a 21st Century transportation system that will end our addiction to oil while also revitalizing cities.

What's more, studies show that, dollar for dollar, clean energy creates three times more jobs than oil. Public transportation, embedded in a smartly designed urban setting, does not demand that we compromise our homeland security, nor does it permit for the outsourcing of jobs.

Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and other elected leaders in greater Detroit and throughout the state must actively work together to invest in public transit and other green energy solutions. We cannot continue the shortsighted practices that allowed for the environmental catastrophe in the gulf and the economic catastrophe in our region.

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accounts for the lion's share of the energy necessary, but moving the bill, which would increase in