

You may be interested to know that yesterday, after extensive negotiations, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6899, the Comprehensive American Energy Security and Consumer Protection Act. H.R. 6899 pairs short-term relief for Americans who have been hit hard by rising fuel prices with long-term measures that will enable us to break our dangerous dependence on oil.

It is no secret that I have questioned whether increased leasing will benefit consumers today or ten years in the future. However, I am proud that the House of Representatives has passed this bi-partisan compromise. H.R. 6899 recognizes that drilling is not an end-all solution and that draining our domestic oil reserves without investing in renewable energy would leave us more beholden to foreign nations. It attacks the issue from all sides while acknowledging that families need immediate action.

Expanding Domestic Energy Supply

H.R. 6899 seeks to increase our domestic supply of oil by permitting federal leasing between 100 and 200 miles offshore and allowing states to further opt-in to drilling between 50 and 100 miles. H.R. 6899 also requires oil companies to drill on the 68 million acres of federal lands they already control – acres that are not currently producing oil or gas.

The bill would temporarily release 10% of the oil within the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a national underground stockpile, to provide immediate-term relief for consumers. Smaller past releases have brought down prices by as much as 33 percent.

In addition, H.R. 6899 would lift the federal moratorium on oil shale exploration, delegating the decision to states to make their own determinations.

Invests in Renewable Energy, Creating American Jobs

Side-by-side with expanding our domestic supply of oil, H.R. 6899 would truly begin to shift our focus to alternative energy. In fact, the bill directly invests revenue from new offshore leases into renewable energy development and deployment. It would also advance a major priority of this Congress: to extend and expand the tax credits for renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and biomass. These tax credits, totaling 19 billion dollars, would create approximately 115,000 new American jobs.

Furthermore, the bill would require that power companies generate at least 15% of their energy from renewable sources by 2020. This would build on the success of the energy bill signed into law last December, the Energy Independence and Security Act, which increased car and truck fuel efficiency standards for the first time in 30 years.

Finally, the bill contains tax credits for coal that captures carbon, incentives for plug-in hybrids and for natural gas vehicles, and legislation I helped author to promote energy-efficient homes, buildings, and appliances.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

John W. Olver
Member of Congress