

Congresswoman Doris Matsui Points to New Direction for Energy Independence

Condemns Call for Expanded Drilling

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05) hailed upcoming legislation to help address the escalating cost of gasoline. The U.S. House of Representatives will take up four separate pieces of legislation this week to counter gas prices.

"I understand that the economic reality of the cost of gasoline and rising grocery costs is creating a dire situation for hard-working Americans. However, the answer is not to expand drilling. The answer is to provide responsible relief at the pump and turn our eyes to a real change in our energy policy for the 21st Century," said Rep. Matsui. "I have heard people calling for more drilling, but the stark reality is that there are already 68 million acres that are leased by oil companies that are not being used."

"We must take steps now to invest in a cleaner, more sustainable energy future. We know that we cannot continue the failed policies of the past. We must take a principled stand and create a real, workable solution to the price of gas," said Rep. Matsui. "I call on my colleagues to pass the bills before us today that will bring relief for American families."

Today, the House will is scheduled to consider three pieces of legislation to address skyrocketing gas prices, make America more secure, and launch a cleaner, smarter, more efficient energy future:

- Reducing Transit Fares (H.R. 6052) - Gives grants to mass transit authorities to lower fares for commuters pinched at the pump and expand transit services.

- Curb Oil Trader Speculation (H.R. 6377) - Directs the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to curb the role of excessive oil speculation on the price of oil.

- "Use It Or Lose It" for Oil Companies Holding Permits and Not Drilling (H.R. 6251) - Prevents the oil industry from obtaining drilling permits on new lands until they develop the 68 million acres of currently undeveloped federal oil reserves which they are currently holding, keeping domestic supply lower and prices higher. This allows them to keep viable lands from competitors while not investing money in the development of those lands.

These bills come on the heels of action already taken by Congress. Earlier this year, the House passed:

- Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act - Legislation to extend and expand tax incentives for renewable energy, including incentives for plug-in vehicles, retain and create hundreds of thousands of green jobs, spur American innovation and business investment, and cut taxes for millions of Americans.

- The Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act - Legislation to combat record gas prices by authorizing lawsuits against oil cartel members for oil price fixing, and creating an Antitrust Task Force to crack down on oil companies engaged in anticompetitive behavior or market manipulation.

- Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act - Temporarily suspends the filling of the SPR, starting June 30th, to put more oil on the market, which experts agree will help drive down gasoline prices.
Signed into law on May 19, 2008

- Energy Independence and Security Act in 2007- Historic energy legislation with provisions to combat oil market manipulation, increase vehicle fuel efficiency to 35 miles per gallon in 2020 - the first Congressional increase in more than three decades-- and promote the use of more affordable American biofuels.
Signed into law on December 19, 2007

Facts About Drilling versus Alternative Solutions

- There are 68 million acres onshore and offshore in the U.S. that are leased by oil companies-open to drilling and actually under lease-but not developed.
- 80 percent of the oil available on the Outer Continental Shelf is already open for leasing-but the oil companies haven't decided it's worth their effort to drill there.
- Drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge wouldn't yield any oil for 10 years-and then would only save the consumer 1.8 cents per gallon in 2030.
- The U.S. has only 1.6 percent of the world's known oil supply. But every day, Americans use a quarter of the world's daily oil consumption.

- Since 2000, drilling on federal land has increased dramatically - climbing about 66 percent- while gas prices have more than doubled.

- While consumers pay at the pump, oil companies continue to report record profits. The biggest five oil companies announced 1st quarter profits totaling nearly \$37 billion, with Exxon Mobil's profits climbing to \$11 billion. This continues a five-year trend of record oil profits under the Bush Administration, with the big five raking in \$127 billion in profits in 2007.

- The problem isn't access. The oil companies have nearly unfettered access to the lands that they want. The problem is the lack of development of lands they already control. The oil companies stock pile lands because of competition, without investing the resources needed to actually develop them.

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