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Energy and Commerce Committee
Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee
Telecommunications and the Internet Subcommittee

International Relations Committee
Western Hemisphere Subcommittee (Ranking Member)
Europe and Emerging Threats Subcommittee

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The Journal News editorial, February 27, 2006

“Congress doesn't have to look far for an answer to the oil security challenge. The bipartisan oil security legislation introduced in both the House and Senate offers a genuine chance to break the shackles of oil addiction. This [Fuel Choices for American Security] bill can help **America achieve energy independence and brings new voices to the call for safer, cleaner, more reliable energy policy.**”

Karen Wayland, Legislative Director
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

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Reducing Our Dependence on Foreign Oil

Congressman Eliot Engel’s Fuel Choices for American Security Act

Energy sensibility

Engel bill offers incentives to boost fuel alternatives

Rep. Eliot Engel, the Bronx Democrat who represents parts of Westchester and Rockland, is sponsoring a sensible bill that would offer alternative-fuel choices for the future and incentives to bring them to market. It would also reduce dependency on foreign imports, which makes up 60 percent of U.S. oil consumption.

Called the "Fuel Choices for American Security Act," the bill projects a savings of 2.5 million barrels of oil a day, about what we import now from the Persian Gulf region, within a decade.

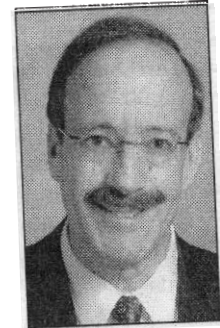
Engel is regarded in Congress as a conciliator, a moderate who looks beyond political posturing to the realities facing citizens and what can be done to help. In this case, he, fellow Democrats, conservatives, liberals, even an odd mix of defense hawks and environmentalists, are behind the bill. Included is the vice chairman of the Republican Leadership Conference, Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga.

Engel proposes to save oil by using a mix of new and existing authorities, and bottom-line cost incentives, including those for automotive manufacturers and parts suppliers, to force investment in more efficient technology.

There are also incentives for American farmers to grow a new generation of fuels made from plants, a potentially huge

supply since the nation still has much farmland. There would even be assistance for gas station owners who install new pumps for special fuel. In addition, there is a call for research and development for bioenergy and much-needed new efficiency performance standards for tires and heavy duty trucks.

All these ideas hold strong promise if the Congress can finally become a leader on the energy issue. It has been decades since former President Jimmy Carter sounded the first warning after the second oil crisis in 1978.



Rep. Eliot Engel

The Ronald Reagan and two Bush administrations essentially pooh-pooohed that, effectively denuding the Energy Department and allowing vehicle manufacturers and oil companies to go back to their profit taking with blinders on — make the money now and forget about the day when there would not be enough oil to run the 16 mpg super-duper fortified SUV.

The United States is far too dependent on foreign oil, which is risky, given political instability in some export states, such as Venezuela, and violence in others, such as Nigeria, and questionable reliability in still others, such as Iraq. Alternatives are needed. Engel's bill offers some sensibility on the subject.

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CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL'S LEGISLATION WILL: Reduce Our Dependence on Foreign Oil and Improve National Security, Economic Strength and Environmental Health

Congressman Eliot Engel, a member of the House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee and co-chair of the House's Oil and National Security Caucus, recently co-authored the Fuel Choices for American Security Act.

The bipartisan Fuel Choices for American Security Act mandates 2.5 million barrels per day in oil savings within ten years. This is more oil than America imports from the Middle East each day.

It is estimated that oil savings would increase to 5 million barrels per day by 2025.

The legislation includes:

- Incentives for the development and mass marketing of hybrid automobiles, including cars that use ethanol and hybrids that give drivers the option to plug them in at night.
- Assisting gas station owners who install new alternative fuel pumps at their gas stations with tax credits.
- Having, for the first time, minimum fuel-efficiency standards for trucks.
- Setting standards to ensure fuel-efficient replacement tires for cars and trucks (this provision alone can increase automobile fuel efficiency by 3% to 4%).
- Providing tax credits for manufacturers to retool facilities for advanced technology and alternative fuel cars and trucks.

■ Closing the gas-guzzler tax loophole that encourages businesses to buy very large low mileage SUVs.

■ Mandating that the Federal government reduce its oil fuel use.

The oil savings goals in the legislation are achievable. They are accomplished by using technologies that are already proven, effective and in use.

"The 'Fuel Choices for American Security Act,' would achieve bigger oil savings faster than the plan that President Bush sketched out in his state of the union speech," Engel stated.

"Most importantly, achieving the goals in the legislation will dramatically improve our national security, economic strength and environmental health."

Working to Improve Mass Transit and Help Commuters

Congressman Eliot Engel has obtained federal funds for mass transit including millions for new energy efficient buses for Westchester.

Engel also secured funds for the Mount Vernon East Metro North Station and for ferry service between Yonkers and Manhattan.

To assist commuters, Eliot Engel is sponsoring the "Commuter Benefits Equity Act" to increase monthly commuter benefits to \$200 per employee.

"Right now," Engel stated, "employers can offer only \$105 per month in pre-tax benefits for employees who take buses and trains, but \$200 per month in pre-tax benefits for parking."

Engel's legislation would end this inequity and provide incentives for workers to use public transit instead of driving to work.



Congressman Engel speaking at the press conference on the introduction of "Fuel Choices for American Security Act." Also pictured are the Act's co-authors Congressman Jim Saxton and Jack Kingston.