



The Olver Report

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
JOHN W. OLVER
FIRST DISTRICT — MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester & Middlesex Counties

Environmental and Energy Issues Update

Climate Change Issues in the Congress

Global climate change is one of the most urgent environmental issues we face today. There is widespread consensus among scientists that the burning of fossil fuels leads to a steadily rising concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, which in turn causes global warming. Global average surface temperature is rising, the sea level is rising, and ice sheets and glaciers are disappearing. These symptoms and many others will get worse if we do not act boldly to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide that we add to the atmosphere.

Given the urgency of these issues, I have worked with my colleague Representative Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD) to form a bi-partisan Climate Change Caucus in the House of Representatives. We will focus on educating Members of Congress about climate change and developing a legislative advocacy agenda that will slow global warming.

Legislative Action

In the first major legislative initiative of the Caucus, Congressman Gilchrest and I have succeeded in removing restrictive language from annual federal agency funding bills that could have prevented our agencies from doing anything to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The Bush Administration should embrace the challenge of lowering our greenhouse gas emissions, rather than simply ignoring the problem.

Scenic Trails

Massachusetts' unique landscape and wildlife must be protected from sprawl and over-development. I have sponsored a bill to authorize the National Park Service to conduct a study of the Mattabesett-Metacomet-Monadnock-Sunapee trails for possible addition to the National Scenic Trail system. This group of trails and potential links, starting at Long Island Sound and connecting with the Appalachian Trail in New Hampshire, would provide over 250 miles of continuous walking trail of scenic, historic and cultural quality.



Earlier this year, I received a national award for my legislative efforts on behalf of First Congressional District hiking trails.

My legislation asks the National Park Service to examine both existing trails and potential extensions. Designation as a National Scenic Trail would provide the Mattabesett-Metacomet-Monadnock-Sunapee network elevated status to help protect wildlife and preserve wilderness. In addition, it would provide federal funding and other assistance to enhance recreation, conservation and regional tourism.

Legislative Action

On July 24, I testified in support of my bill before the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands. I will be seeking approval by the full Resources Committee later this year.

Freedom's Way

Massachusetts is blessed with a rich history that influenced the development of our nation and shaped our civic values. Sites such as Minute Man National Historical Park and Walden Pond are already recognized as symbols of American democracy and culture. In order to preserve all of Massachusetts' natural, historical and cultural resources, however, we must expand our focus across the state. As a sponsor of the Freedom's Way Heritage Act, I hope to provide a cooperative framework to help cities, towns, citizens' groups and the National Park Service conserve "heritage assets" in approximately 30 historic communities along Route 2 in north central Massachusetts. Protecting these sites will help ensure their existence for future generations.

Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Compact

The Connecticut River has been designated an American Heritage River. The River supports extensive tourism, provides recreational opportunities and, as an ecosystem, provides habitat for species such as American shad and striped bass. The late Representative Silvio Conte created the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission to restore migratory Atlantic salmon to the Connecticut River.

An interstate compact arrangement currently provides for coordination of state (CT, MA, NH and VT) and federal agencies along the River, but the compact is set to expire in 2003. I have introduced legislation to reauthorize the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Compact and authorize \$5 million annually for the restoration project that will continue the multi-state co-operative effort to bring back salmon.

Legislative Action

On July 19, the House Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans approved my Salmon Compact reauthorization bill, which now awaits further action by the full Resources Committee.

A Long-Term Energy Strategy

The Bush Administration has proposed an energy policy that depends heavily on increasing domestic supply and burning of fossil fuels. As a member of the Democratic Energy Task Force in the House, I have worked on an alternative to the Bush energy plan. The plan I support would increase oil and gas production domestically in areas that are not ecologically sensitive, demand greater fuel efficiency and conservation, and promote the development of alternative and renewable energy sources.

Any long-term energy plan must reduce our dependence on burning fossil fuels that cause global warming. I believe that energy efficient appliances, buildings and vehicles must be a key component of any comprehensive energy strategy. I support increasing funding for research and development of alternative and renewable fuels, including wind, solar and geothermal energy sources.

No Drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge!

I strongly oppose the Bush Administration's plan to drill for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This proposal poses a serious environmental threat without solving any of our energy problems. Oil development in ANWR provides no new energy in the short run, and risks irreparable damage to a fragile ecosystem and national treasure. In fact, there is only a 6-month supply of oil in the entire Refuge, and we would not get a drop of it for 10 years. I believe we must protect our nation's wilderness areas, and, as a cosponsor of the Morris K. Udall Arctic Wilderness Act of 2001, I am working to prohibit any and all efforts to extract fossil fuel from within the ANWR boundaries.

Consumers and Gasoline Prices

Gas prices increased sharply earlier this year in part because of low inventories and market fears caused by refinery problems. Although refineries have increased production to nearly 96% of their total capacity, prices could rise again.

I have called on the President to promote energy conservation and urge OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers to increase production of crude oil for short-term relief. I have also joined many of my colleagues in the House to request the Justice Department to investigate possible energy price fixing and give thorough anti-trust reviews to any proposals to further consolidate energy companies.



In my work on conservation issues, I recently surveyed with other visitors this striking vista near the Appalachian Trail.

Better Fuel Efficiency for SUVs

The extreme demands that automobiles, in particular gas-guzzling Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs), place on our environment are intertwined with our nation's energy problems and global climate change. Gas mileage for cars and trucks is at a 20-year low, and poor fuel economy is one of the causes of the record gas prices this year. And the more gasoline we burn, the more carbon dioxide is released into our atmosphere to cause more global warming.

I have introduced a bill, H.R. 1815, to improve the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) of SUVs and light trucks as part of a strategy to address both climate and energy concerns. By requiring SUVs to attain the same average fuel economy as passenger vehicles by 2007, it is estimated that we could save one million barrels of oil a day, reducing U.S. oil imports by 10 percent and preventing over 200 million tons of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere each year. My legislation would not only reduce environmental degradation but also help consumers save dollars by fewer trips to the gas pump.

How to Contact Congressman John Olver

WASHINGTON OFFICE

1027 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

202-225-5335

FAX: 202-226-1224

<http://www.house.gov/olver>

DISTRICT OFFICES

57 Suffolk Street, Suite 310

Holyoke, MA 01040

(413) 532-7010

Fax: (413) 532-6543

78 Center Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 442-0946

Fax: (413) 443-2792

463 Main Street

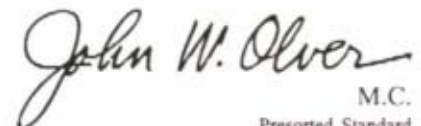
Fitchburg, MA 01420

(978) 342-8722

Fax: (978) 343-8156

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business



M.C.
Presorted Standard
W/S Carrier Route