



Rodney Alexander / Louisiana's 5th District
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN

THOUGHTS FROM CAPITOL HILL

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Americans Must Get Behind Members With Plan to Lower Gas Prices

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For many families in Louisiana and across the country, the high cost of gasoline has reached crisis level. \$4-a-gallon gas does not put a “strain” on the average family budget; it breaks it.

I am sure it seems to some American families and business owners that Congress is not making an effort to help, but many members in the U.S. House of Representatives have been pushing a comprehensive energy reform plan since early May.

It is a plan I am proud to get behind, one that will boost supplies of all forms of energy right here at home to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, generate jobs, and strengthen our economy.

A key component of the plan is a provision to increase the supply of American-made energy in an environmentally safe way, a measure 57 percent of Americans agree with, according to a Gallup poll conducted in late May.

Yet, if this plan – or any initiative that seeks to solve the gas crisis – is to gain momentum, I believe the American public must put pressure on the members who represent them, as the plan I refer to is one introduced by House Republicans and is therefore disregarded by leadership.

It is far time the American people stand up to the Democratic leaders who have mixed-up views about our nation’s natural resources.

While most nations around the world view their natural resources as an economic engine, many leaders in Congress today view our natural resources as environmental hazards or liabilities. Historically, 91 percent of House Republicans have voted for measures to increase the production of American-made oil and gas; whereas, 86 percent of Democrats have voted against such initiatives.

The Department of Energy reports that 175.28 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.127 trillion barrels of oil are currently “off limits.” *If Congress were to unlock these*

off-limits energy resources, \$60 trillion in federal revenue would be generated.

I personally have voted in support of many measures to responsibly increase U.S. oil production in areas such as the Outer Continental Shelf and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), and I will continue to support measures to open up drilling in restricted areas, such as the Florida coast, Alaska, California and the eastern seaboard.

Increasing the production of American oil is a commonsense solution I have encouraged through introducing a resolution urging American oil companies to increase refining capacity. No new refineries have been built in the United States since 1976, and 170 have stopped operations since then.

Fortunately, the Republican energy plan would cut the bureaucratic regulations that limit the construction of new oil refineries, continuing our long-term efforts to increase the production of American-made oil and gas.

In addition to boosting domestic production, the minority-led plan would improve energy efficiency by promoting new, clean and reliable sources of energy, such as nuclear and next-generation coal, while also promoting clean power from renewable energy sources such as wind and hydroelectric power and advanced alternative fuels like cellulosic fuel.

While encouraging these initiatives, the Republican plan also gives full attention to the importance of reducing personal consumption and protecting the environment. The plan encourages greater energy efficiency by offering conservation tax incentives to Americans who make their homes, cars or businesses more energy efficient.

The average cost of a gallon of gas was \$2.33 when new leadership took over the House and the Senate in January 2007, and prices are continuing to climb every day that leadership does not act. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts the average national cost will be \$4.10 a gallon by July.

I urge citizens who support the policies and ideas in this plan to continue voicing their views and urging Congressional leadership to act.

Suggestions from across the aisle may traditionally be ignored, but the will and the needs of the people should never be.

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