

Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr.

Environmentalists Driving Up the Price of Gasoline (4-15-08)

Mr. Speaker, oil prices have reached \$112, \$113 a barrel, an all-time high. Gas prices have reached an average of \$3.50 a gallon and in some places even higher, and the only people who seem to be happy about this are Sierra Club and some of these other environmental groups. I have noticed that almost all of these environmental radicals or environmental extremists seem to come from very wealthy or very upper-income families. They are elitist types, and perhaps they're not concerned when their policies destroy jobs and drive up prices because who they're really hurting are the poor and the lower income and the working people in this country.

As the previous speaker, Mr. *Poe*, pointed out, now some of these environmental groups, their policies are causing food prices to go up worldwide and, in many countries, leading to starvation. But once again, the environmentalists are hurting the poor and the lower-income and the working people. So perhaps they don't care.

About a year and a half ago in one of my newsletters I wrote this: I said, many experts are still predicting that the price of oil, and thus the price of gas, is going to go way back up. Environmental groups think this is good because it will force people to drive less. However, many people already have difficulty paying their gas bills, especially people from small towns in rural areas where many people have to drive long distances to go to work.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that when you drive these gas prices up, as some of these environmental groups want, to \$4, or \$5, or \$6 a gallon so people will drive less, you'll put the final nails in the coffins of some of the small towns in rural areas. The environmental groups loudly complain about urban sprawl, but yet their policies are leading to more urban sprawl as they continue to drive up these gas prices.

Syndicated columnist Walter Williams wrote recently, "If I were an OPEC big cheese, I would easily conclude I could restrict output and charge higher prices were U.S. oil drilling restricted. I would see environmental groups as allies and make 'charitable' contributions to help them reduce U.S. output," and that's something I thought for quite some time that these OPEC and countries and foreign energy producers I'm sure are contributing big money to these environmental groups, and they're receiving huge multi-million dollar contributions that they were refusing to disclose the source of.

Leonardo Mangeri, of the Italian energy company ENI, said, there are proven oil reserves now, economically and technologically recoverable, of 1.1 trillion barrels, or 38 years of world usage. In addition, he says there are another 2 trillion barrels of recoverable reserves that will be obtainable as technology improves over the next few years.

Also, the International Energy Administration, Mr. Speaker, estimates that at current prices, it will be economic to recover at least another 2 trillion barrels of petroleum from tar sands and oil shale.

Just a couple of months ago, I wrote in another newsletter this: Gas prices are far too high and probably will go even higher. They could be much lower, but very powerful environmental groups want them to go higher so people will drive less. Thus, we have put 85 percent or 611 million acres of the outer continental shelf off limits to oil production. We will not allow drilling in 99.9 percent of Alaska where oil could be found, and have prohibited or restricted production in other parts of the U.S.

We've also placed so many rules, regulations and red tape on all types of domestic energy production that small- and medium-sized businesses cannot compete or even enter these industries in the first place. All of these productions can be done in environmentally safe ways. Some of these environmental groups help the big business giants and foreign energy producers tremendously, but they are really hurting lower- and middle-income people.