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POINT OF VIEW

Bipartisan Energy Solution for America Fossil Fuels, Alternative Energy Both Required



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America is in an energy crisis—you know it, your customers feel it, and our constituents are demanding that we find a solution. Yet there is no sense of urgency in Washington to aggressively address this crisis.

Folks across the country send us to Washington to address the needs of the nation and our districts—not to point fingers at one another and place blame. Unfortunately, this has become all too common in Washington—election-year politics at its worst.

Recently, we decided to create an informal, bipartisan group of Republican and Democratic House members to try to do the impossible—work together in the nation's interest and craft a compromise energy bill.

When we formed this group, we had a few ground rules. First, no lightning rods, meaning we would not include highly sensitive political footballs such as ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) and drilling within sight of the coastline. Second, we would work with one goal in mind: to provide a comprehensive, environmentally sensitive energy solution for America.

Many folks reading this article would agree that, historically speaking, Republicans are known as advocates for more oil and gas drilling, while Democrats tend to tout conservation and renewables. We realize that in order for America to remain competitive in the global economy, keep jobs onshore, and stop the monu-

mental transfer of wealth, we need a comprehensive energy plan that addresses production, conservation, and investment in alternative fuel sources. Increased domestic production should not compete with alternative fuels and conservation—they have to complement one another.

With that in mind, we drafted the National Conservation, Environment, and Energy Independence Act, H.R. 6709, with 25 of our colleagues. Just 45 pages long, it will transform the environment and put our country on the path toward energy independence.

The United States currently imports about 70% of the energy it consumes, which amounts to roughly \$700 billion a year. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why this is problematic. First and foremost, we depend on foreign countries for almost three-fourths of our energy supply. Second, we send more than \$700 billion out of our country each year to buy it.

To put an end to this ridiculous policy and begin to control our energy destiny, our legislation calls for increased production of natural gas and oil offshore—well over the horizon—and development of oil shale out West.

Drilling alone, however, will not solve this crisis. We need to conserve and invest in next-generation fuels to change our fuel mix and wean ourselves from fossil fuels.

Renewable and alternative fuels are the future. H.R. 6709 would dedicate 40% of the offshore oil and natural gas royalties to fund the research and development of alternative fuels, carbon capture and sequestration, and nuclear waste projects, to name a few.

The bipartisan National Conservation, Environment and Energy Independence Act is not a silver bullet. But it represents a compromise that we believe will put our great nation on the road to energy independence.

We need your support. Call your representative at 202-224-3121 and demand that he or she supports H.R. 6709. Contact our offices for more information.