

Oklahoma Farm Report

On the Climate Change Front- Lucas and Chambliss Blast Away at Waxman-Markey

October 5, 2009

It was a tag team effort by the ranking Minority Members of the House and Senate Ag Committees last week- as Oklahoma Congressman Frank Lucas and Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss jointly wrote a scathing editorial in opposition to the Waxman Markey Climate Change Measure- and the problems that it could cause agriculture. The Editorial appeared even as the Boxer-Kerry Measure was being unveiled in the Senate- a measure that as we reported earlier- has Farm Bureau saying that the House bill, while not very good for agriculture, is better than what the Senators have proposed.

The Republican lawmakers write "Numerous studies conducted on H.R. 2454's cap and trade provision show that invariably there will be real costs to agriculture, while the benefits, if any, are difficult to quantify. It is worth noting that more than 120 agriculture groups still oppose H.R. 2454 today. They do so for good reason. If this bill were to become law, it would dramatically change agriculture for the worse not just because this industry is energy-intensive, but because this bill impacts the entire network that supports agriculture. From input suppliers to processors to retailers to consumers, no part of the food chain is left unscathed."

Lucas and Chambliss go on to say further down in the Editorial that "Proponents of H.R. 2454 often argue that farmers and ranchers can mitigate higher costs by participating in an offset program. However, not every farmer and rancher will be able or even eligible to participate. Under H.R. 2454, participating in an offset program depends upon the producer's location and farming operation. As noted above, some analyses show that a farmer's best and almost only chance to participate in an offset program would be if the farmer stops farming altogether and plants trees instead. Most of the offset benefit is generated by afforestation on agriculture lands. This underscores another troubling part of H.R. 2454 in that it estimates 40-60 million acres of land are likely to shift from commodity production to forestry."