

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

The Need for a Sensible Energy Plan

As we head into the summer vacation season, gas prices are once again on the rise, and none of us will soon forget the nearly \$4 gas prices of last summer.

In south Alabama, we are currently paying \$2.48 per gallon, up 35 cents in just the last month alone. As our national economy continues to struggle – and as most Americans are budgeting every dollar – higher energy prices are the last thing struggling families need.

At the forefront of the president's energy discussion is a cap-and-trade proposal which would create an overall limit on greenhouse gas emissions, a program that would act very much like a national energy tax.

Some estimates suggest millions of jobs would be lost as manufacturers ship their plants to

countries with less stringent environmental regulations, hurting American workers and the environment.

The Administration's plan would require greenhouse gas reductions of 17% by 2020, growing to over 40% by 2030. It is widely accepted that electric utilities do not currently have the technology to meet these goals, and until those technologies are available, the costs will be passed to the American people in the form of large increases in electricity, natural gas, and petroleum prices.

The Democrats' national energy tax would have a particularly devastating impact on the state of Alabama.

Last month, I joined the rest of the Alabama House delegation in writing a letter to the chairman and ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee specifically addressing the use of renewable energy sources.

In our letter we wrote, "States like Alabama that do not meet the Renewable Electricity Standard (RES) requirement will be forced to purchase renewable fuel credits, the cost of which will inevitably be passed along to the consumer in the form of higher utility rates.

“For the 1.4 million customers of Alabama Power Company the cost of the proposed RES to customers would be roughly \$300 million annually by 2020—this is simply unfair.”

The plan only promises to further damage the national economy, and for the sake of our economic security and our environment, we need a better plan.

I can honestly say I never heard anyone claim they were not taxed enough, wished they had more government intrusion in their daily lives or had weaker job security. We must increase American energy production made by American workers, encourage greater efficiency and conservation, and promote the use of alternative fuels.

To that end, I have cosponsored H.R. 2828, the American Energy Innovation Act, which would provide the United States with a comprehensive energy package that secures our economic future through increased energy innovation, conservation and production.

The American Energy Innovation Act would also promote alternative sources of energy like wind, solar and nuclear. By creating renewable fuel options and by utilizing all available resources and technologies, we will be able to create a cleaner, more sustainable environment

while not increasing energy costs and keeping jobs here at home.

It is fair to ask why the Obama Administration wants to impose a national energy tax at a time when Americans can afford it the least.

Two Young Officers Lost in the Line of Duty

One of Mobile's finest, Officer Brandon Sigler, was laid to rest early last week. The 26 year old Mobile police officer was killed in the line of duty as he was trying to break up a fight between two young women.

In an emotional tribute, people – many of whom had never met Brandon – lined the procession route from St. Mary's Church to Mobile Memorial Gardens, where he was buried. Many stood along the route with their hands on their hearts and waving flags.

Brandon leaves behind a fiancée, LaKenda Craig, parents, brothers, sisters and a host of other relatives – who are all in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

I hope that we will also pause and honor the memory of Stephen Tyrone Johns who died last week defending the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. An anti-Semitic gunman burst into the museum and opened fire killing Stephen and injuring another before other guards critically wounded the gunman.

Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), who serves on the board for the museum, noted the shock that the "attack took place at a museum designed to prevent violence and remind us of the dangers of hatred and bigotry."

In remembering the lives of these two brave young men, we should thank God for them and all of the first defenders who put their lives on the line each and every day to protect us.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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For release the week of Monday, June 15, 2009. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.