

COMPREHENSIVE AMERICAN ENERGY SECURITY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the American people have been speaking for months about the need to increase our domestic energy production. Never has the political will been so strong for the opening up of our domestic resources both on- and offshore. But, this Democrat-controlled Congress is not heeding the voice of its constituents and has failed them by bringing H.R. 6899 to the floor today.

Our Nation is currently facing one of the most significant energy challenges in its history. We are not producing enough energy to provide for our growing economy. This bill inadequately addresses this challenge because it keeps 88 percent of our known resources in the Outer Continental Shelf, OCS, off limits to new domestic energy exploration. If Congress is serious about energy independence and lowering the cost of fuel, this isn't the bill. America deserves a comprehensive, bipartisan energy bill that opens up our domestic resources, incentivizes the discovery of renewable technologies and encourages conservation. This is the policy that will lead America into energy independence in the long-term and bring down the price of gas in the short-term.

Before I get into why this bill fails our constituents, I want to point out a provision I do support. I was pleased the provision that makes it a Federal crime for oil companies with Federal leases to provide gifts to Government employees was inserted in this bill. I am deeply disappointed in recent revelations about improper activities between Federal employees and oil company representatives. And I support actions that would help prevent such improper activities from happening again. However, this bill fails miserably to incentivize the discovery of new technologies and domestic energy sources.

Why does this bill fail our constituents? The Democrat-controlled Congress hastily put together this 290-page bill in the dark of night and brought it to the floor the very next morning. At 9:45 p.m. on September 15, 2008, H.R. 6899 was introduced. At 10 a.m., H.R. 6899 was brought to the House floor without any amendments and no committee input. This is not the process envisioned by our founders. Actually, when the Republicans held the majority in 2005, they allowed 23 Democrat amendments to be offered to the energy bill, H.R. 6. This bill fails our constituents because this leadership has shut out the voice of 48 percent of our constituents by not allowing any Republican amendments.

The bill opens with the words, "Prohibition on Leasing." The Democrat's energy solution for the American people is a prohibition on leasing and limited new energy production that will help us achieve energy freedom. This bill will produce little if any new oil and gas since it locks up, by law, the first 50 miles of our coasts—on the Pacific coast that is over 97 percent of our known resources. Overall, 88 percent of all known resources offshore remain permanently locked under this bill. Instead of producing more American energy with

American workers, the Democrats would rather rely on foreign nations to produce our oil and natural gas. This is economically and environmentally irresponsible.

In the 50–100 miles beyond the Atlantic and Pacific shores, the adjacent state must approve any lease. But what makes this provision even more unlikely to produce any new energy offshore is the fact that the bill does not share any of the royalties with adjacent states. Thus, it effectively removes any incentive for states to "opt in" while changing current policy on state revenue sharing.

Why is this bill failing our constituents? Our country holds the largest supply of clean coal in the world. But this bill does nothing to promote clean coal and coal to liquid technologies.

Why does this bill fail our constituents? Americans face a significant increase in our electricity rates in the coming months. This bill does nothing to increase our capacity; in fact, this bill imposes a new 15 percent renewable energy requirement on utilities. This bill fails our constituents because these new renewable energy requirements will be passed along to them in the form of higher monthly utility bills.

The American people deserve a rational, transparent debate about developing domestic energy resources. Congress should pass a bipartisan energy plan that includes conservation, production, and innovation to help America become energy independent. We desperately need energy freedom in America.

Why does this bill fail our constituents? This bill fails our constituents because it doesn't bring us any closer to energy independence. Instead of introducing a bill in the dark of night, this Democrat majority should bring up a bipartisan bill that has been vetted by both sides of the aisle. The Speaker has an abundance of legislative options that address our short-term and long-term energy needs. But she refuses to allow a full debate and vote on a comprehensive plan.

For instance, a bipartisan bill, H.R. 6709, the National Conservation, Environment and Energy Independence Act, has been introduced by Representative ABERCROMBIE (D-HI) and JOHN PETERSON (R-PA). I am a cosponsor of this bill. One of the principal areas of this legislation is production—the exploration for and extraction of oil and natural gas in places such as the Outer Continental Shelf. There's also a call to establish conservation and environmental reserve funds that will help to preserve and to maintain wildlife refuges and public parks and to develop alternative energy, including solar, wind, and biofuels. The production of oil and natural gas from within U.S. borders will serve as a bridge to the Nation's "alternative energy future" and will see to it that the royalties from the leasing and sale of that oil and natural gas go to alternative energy, environmental, and conservation projects.

A second option is H.R. 6566, the American Energy Act, of which I am also a cosponsor. The American Energy Act is an "all of the above" energy strategy that will increase the supply of American-made energy in environmentally sound ways. It will accomplish this by opening energy-rich deep ocean resources, Arctic coastal plain, and Inter-Mountain West oil shale resources for more environmentally safe oil and gas exploration. This bill will also improve energy conservation and efficiency by

providing tax incentives for businesses and families that improve their energy efficiency. This legislation focuses heavily on the promotion of alternative and renewable energy technologies through spurring the development of alternative fuels by permanently extending the tax credit for alternative energy production, including wind, solar and hydrogen and promoting coal-to-liquids technology.

These are the policies that will lead America into energy independence. While I cannot support this bill today, if H.R. 6709, the bipartisan energy bill were to be brought to the House floor, I would vote "yes." If H.R. 6566, an "all of the above" energy bill were brought to the House floor, I would vote "yes." It is my hope that these bills will be brought to the floor of the House of Representatives before the 110th Congress adjourns. These are the bills that actually address and allow America to explore our own domestic resources and build a bridge to our future energy sources.

HONORING THE CAREER OF CHIEF
JAMES J. MULLANE, JR.

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate retired Norristown Fire Department Chief James "Jim" J. Mullane, Jr., on his selection as president of the Firemen's Association of Pennsylvania. Jim's distinguished career as a firefighter started in April 1972 when he joined the Hancock Fire Company. He became assistant chief for the Norristown Fire Department in 1983 and served as chief from 1992 to 1993.

Jim also served as charter member and captain of the Norristown Dive Rescue Unit. In addition to protecting the community as a firefighter, Jim also was actively involved in the civic life of Norristown. He has been a member of the Norristown Zoning Hearing Board for the last 8 years and has held the post of chairman of that panel.

The members of the Firemen's Association of Pennsylvania have benefited from Jim's outstanding leadership and keen insight on emergency services issues since 1974. He has held the posts of southeast director, eastern vice president, senior vice president and chairman of an ad hoc committee instrumental in establishing Pennsylvania's Fire and Emergency Services Institute. The institute is a valuable tool for keeping fire departments and other first responders informed about grant opportunities and important State legislation.

Jim will be installed as association president on Friday, September 26, 2008, during the group's 129th convention in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing James J. Mullane, Jr., for attaining this well-deserved leadership post and for commitment and work on behalf of all firefighters who bravely put their lives on the line to protect residents and property each day.