

DEVIN NUNES UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, CALIFORNIA
21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ★★★★★



Feature Story

Domestic Challenges to Energy Production

In part 1 of this 4-part series, we examined the current situation: U.S. dependence on foreign oil. This month, we look at domestic challenges as we seek to increase energy production.

As most Americans now realize, our nation failed to meet the demands of growing domestic energy consumption in the late 20th century. Today we are suffering the result. If we are to achieve energy independence, it is important to understand why we are forced to purchase fuel from foreign sources.

Conflicting policies, outdated laws and organized opposition

The United States is currently experiencing the consequences of federal, state and local government policies that limit energy production. Not only are we failing to exploit our

nation's abundant resources but we are also under-investing in alternative energy sources.

Conflicting policies, outdated laws and well-organized opposition to new energy production in the United States often prevent investors from building the infrastructure needed to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

By way of example, in 2005 it was publicly reported that more than 30 environmental and regulatory impairments were stalling domestic natural gas production. These problems persist today. At the same time, we continue to experience significant growth in demand. In total, approximately 23% of energy consumption in the United States is now sourced from natural gas. However, domestic production of this important energy source has *declined*. While we have abundant supplies and could be an exporter of this key

energy source, we are forced to import 16% for our own domestic energy needs. It may come as a surprise to many Americans that approximately 40% of our domestic supply of natural gas is off limits. Federal laws, including the Coastal Zone Management Act, broad interpretations of the Endangered Species Act by Federal Courts, and public land use restrictions are among the barriers we face to greater development of this essential resource.

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In My Words: The Iraq Resolution, by Rep. Nunes

During the week of February 12, the U.S. House of Representatives debated House Concurrent Resolution 63. The resolution articulates Congressional opposition to President Bush's plan to send more troops to Iraq. However, this non-binding resolution has no

meaning in law and was an obvious political ploy.

During debate, I noted that House Concurrent Resolution 63 contained no constructive criticisms of the war effort and would do nothing to increase our chances of victory. However, on a largely party-line vote, the House adopted the resolution. I fear this is the first step in an effort to de-fund the war entirely.

My question for those who oppose the Iraq war is simple: What's next? What is your plan for assuring victory in the War on Terror? Will you stand by and allow the entire Middle East to be consumed by an ideology of hate? What will it take for you to understand the nature of our enemy? The empty criticism and crass political maneuvering must end and a serious debate must begin. Congress owes the American people leadership and we also owe them the truth. Iraq is ground zero



Congressman Nunes meets Lt. Commander Correia, a Tulare native, during his July 4th visit to Iraq.

in the global War on Terror. If you don't believe this fact, you are gravely mistaken.

For the full text of my remarks on the Iraq resolution or to watch the video clip, visit www.nunes.house.gov.

Devin

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Health Beat: Community Health Centers

Health centers are an integral component of our nation's medical safety net. They offer a full range of medical services, including preventative medicine and an array of specialties. Patients are treated with dignity and respect at local clinics and are able to establish a primary care relationship with a doctor, vastly improving health outcomes.

The health center model was adopted by President Bush as one of his key national initiatives to improve access to care among the uninsured and Congress has responded with substantial investments in the program. Federal funding for clinics help to ensure that patients are provided the care they need. This funding is necessary because, while patients are asked to

help pay for medical services at clinics, they are afforded significant discounts.

When unable to pay, patients are not denied care. The ability of clinics to see patients, even when they are unable to pay, is essential to the overall health of our community. While federal policy seeks to promote market-based health options, including affordable insurance coverage, maintaining a safety net that is responsive to the needs of our community is important.

For more information about health centers, please visit the U.S. Department of Health Services Health Center Program online at <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/chc>.



Pictured above: Visalia Oak Health Center, part of the Family Healthcare Network.

Where are health centers located?

Dinuba, Visalia, Cutler/Orosi, Goshen, Hanford, Ivanhoe, Springville, Three Rivers, Porterville, Woodlake, Tulare, Farmersville, Lindsay, Earlimart, Firebaugh, Huron, Kerman, Mendota, Orange Cove, Sanger, Fresno, Raisin City, and San Joaquin.

Rumor Mill

Myth: The president's budget sets annual funding levels for government agencies.

Fact: The president's budget is simply an outline of the fiscal priorities presented to Congress by the Administration. In fact, Congress is constitutionally tasked with setting funding levels for the Federal government.

After receiving the president's budget proposal, Congress begins the process of developing its own budget resolution. The budget resolution is a "concurrent" congressional resolution and therefore does not go to the president for his signature or veto. Once a budget resolution is passed, Congress can begin to pass appropriation measures that fund all aspects of the government. In fact, Congress often provides funding for programs that were not funded in the president's proposal. The budget process is a key priority and responsibility of the Legislative Branch.

Guest Column

by: **Megan DeLain**

As a student at UC Davis, I have had the opportunity to participate in an internship program that allows me to spend the term living and working in Washington, DC. For the past two months I have been interning in Congressman Nunes' office and exploring everything the city has to offer.

Between working on Capitol Hill, visiting museums, and playing in the snow, Washington has quickly become my favorite city. In less than fifteen minutes I can walk from my dorm to great restaurants and shops, the monuments on the National Mall, and even the White House. Although I have taken countless history and government classes, it is really amazing to see such historical and significant institutions in person.

Walking the halls of Congress and leading tours through the Capitol have been the most enjoyable aspects of working for Congressman Nunes. Walking through the Capitol building where Abraham Lincoln once sat at his desk, watching from the gallery as Congress creates new legislation, and coming to work in the same building as U.S. Representatives has not only been exciting, but has put my classes at Davis into context.

Congress, law-making, and governance are no longer excerpts from my textbooks,

but processes I get to witness and take part in every day. In my time here, I have had so many unique experiences that I will always remember and be grateful.



Want to Join the Nunes Team as an Intern?

Visit Rep. Nunes' website at www.nunes.house.gov to download the application.

For questions about interning in Rep. Nunes' Visalia or Washington, DC offices please contact Melissa Mederos at (559) 733-3861.

ENERGY *continued from page 1* Environmentalists

Environmental groups also represent a significant obstacle to the development of increased domestic energy production. The Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, and many other liberal activist groups spearhead opposition to policies that provide real energy to Americans. Opposition from envi-



Environmental activists dump coal during a protest in West Virginia.

ronmental groups encompasses the entire range of options available for large-scale energy production today:

- *Environmental groups oppose construction of coal-fired power plants. This, despite the fact that coal plants can be equipped with “clean coal” technology and are fueled by abundant domestic supplies of coal.*
- *Environmental groups oppose construction of nuclear power plants. Nuclear power plants are the most efficient source of energy today and produce no air pollution.*
- *Environmental groups oppose construction of hydro-electric facilities. New dams offer California clean hydro-electric power and reliable supplies of water.*
- *Environmental groups oppose natural gas power plants. Natural gas plants produce large quantities of power.*

Unfounded fears about environmental impacts and “not-in-my-backyard” campaigns have significantly raised the costs associated with development of energy. In many cases, these challenges have driven production out of the United States.

Production challenges

In addition to basic resource development shortfalls, we face significant energy production challenges throughout the country. Advanced nuclear energy production, the most efficient and environmentally-friendly method

of producing power, is not even a lawful option in California today. Furthermore, fuel refining capacity in the United States has not kept pace with increasing demand. Refinery capacity has declined as consumption has increased, and regional fuel standards have complicated efforts to balance supply shortages. A host of regulatory and environmental challenges have contributed to this problem, as have activists who oppose refinery construction.

Demonstrating the challenges faced by domestic energy producers, a Phoenix based company (Arizona Clean Fuels) has been trying since 1989 to build a new refinery. This situation deserves our attention because it is a case study explaining why America is not expanding its energy infrastructure.

In the case of Arizona Clean Fuels, several federal permits are required prior to beginning operations. Environmental organizations have challenged the project. One such organization, known as Don’t Waste Arizona, has battled the proposed refinery since 1992. These activists believe if they can prolong the process, the company’s permit from the Arizona state environmental agency will expire forcing the company to start over. In this case, environmentalists successfully



Oil refineries, such as this refinery in California, process crude oil into more useful petroleum products, such as gasoline.

convinced housing developments outside of Phoenix that the planned refinery was too close to the city. The company was forced to move the project to a rural part of Arizona.

The move was not enough for Don’t Waste Arizona, which represents fewer than 100 people. They changed their position and opposed the refinery because it was now too far from a major urban center. Consequently, the environmental group, when asked to suggest an acceptable site for the refinery, said: “I think it might make more sense to refine it in Mexico.”

Environmental activists, who wage dishonest campaigns against energy production in

the U.S., often generate “not-in-my-backyard” activism. Energy producers, faced with burdensome local, state and federal regulations, endure years of government inaction. When they receive favorable government decisions, they are subject to litigation. This has a significant impact on domestic energy investment.



There are 65 nuclear power sites in the United States, producing 20% of our nation’s energy.

Advanced nuclear energy production faces similar challenges. Since 1979, 28 aged nuclear power plants have become uneconomical to operate or have otherwise reached the end of their service lives. No new plants have been built.

The incentives, both environmental and economic, for nuclear power generation are substantial. They produce no emissions and are environmentally friendly. Furthermore, the nuclear energy industry has a safety record unmatched by conventional power production facilities. They operate 24 hours a day, 7 days per week with limited service outages. Indeed, the average plant operates 90% of the time. These compelling facts have driven many developed countries to rely heavily on nuclear power. France, for example, relies on nuclear power for 80% of its energy needs.

Looking Ahead

The decline in infrastructure development throughout the United States energy sector has to be reversed if we are to stabilize long-term prices and provide reliable energy to fuel our economy. Next month we will examine what the government is doing to address these challenges. In June, we will conclude the series with options for the future.



**Congressman Nunes
wants to hear
from you!**

**You can email him by
visiting www.nunes.house.gov**

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