

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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House of Representatives
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “The Federal Green Jobs Agenda”
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
June 19, 2012

Today’s hearing is about the Administration’s efforts to invest in clean energy and clean energy jobs.

I commend the Obama Administration for its focus on developing America’s green economy, funding loan programs for renewable energy, encouraging use of energy efficient technology in our electric grid, and investing in energy efficiency.

These investments have made a big difference in the short term – and will pay big dividends in the long term. In the short term, DOE expenditures and loan guarantees under the Recovery Act have supported 100,000 jobs.

In the long term, these investments are helping move the economy toward a new clean energy industry. The environmental case for a shift to green energy is indisputable. And the economic reasons are just as strong.

Last year, the American Energy Innovation Council, a business group that includes Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, the CEOs of Xerox and General Electric, and the former CEO of Lockheed Martin recognized the federal government’s vital role in promoting clean energy. Here’s what they said: “If the U.S. fails to invent new technologies and create new markets and new jobs that will drive the transformation and revitalization of the \$5 trillion global energy industry, we will have lost an opportunity to lead in what is arguably the largest and most pervasive technology sector in the world.”

I agree with these business leaders. America must invest in building a cleaner energy future. We need to do this for environmental and public health reasons, and we need to do it for economic reasons.

Unfortunately, this Congress is moving in the wrong direction. House Republicans are voting for more oil and coal at the expense of renewable energy; House Republicans

overwhelmingly deny the scientific evidence of climate change; and House Republicans continue to vote to roll back environmental protections. This Congress has earned its title as the most anti-environmental Congress in history.

Mr. Chairman, a report I released yesterday found that nearly one in five of the 1,100 legislative roll call votes thus far this Congress – 247 votes – were votes to undermine environmental protection. In 2011 and in the first half of 2012, the House has voted 109 times on legislation that would enrich the oil and gas industry. This includes 45 votes to weaken environmental, public health, and safety requirements applicable to the oil industry and 38 votes to prevent deployment of clean energy alternatives.

This is the wrong path. We have to address this nation's energy and environmental issues or future generations will lose out.

We have to accept the findings of the National Academy of Sciences that “climate change is occurring, is very likely caused primarily by human activities, and poses significant risks to humans and the environment.”

We were elected to address the challenges this nation faces head on. We can't simply stick our heads in the sand and hope these problems go away. We can't simply hope that climate change stops on its own.

This nation needs a strong green jobs and green energy plan to ensure that its children have a strong future. The Obama Administration has moved in this direction. I commend them for their effort.

We should be working with the President, not seeking to obstruct his agenda at every turn.