

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
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**Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Markup of “H.R. 4471, the Gasoline Regulations Act of 2012 and H.R. 4480, the Strategic**  
**Energy Production Act of 2012”**  
**Full Committee**  
**May 16, 2012**

Today, we mark up two bills that contain the Republican response to gasoline prices.

Chairman Whitfield told us all we need to know about these bills at the Subcommittee markup. He said, “there is nothing in our legislation ... that would, in and of itself, reduce gasoline prices.” We won’t find any credible experts who would disagree with this assessment.

Every expert at our hearings on gas prices, including the Republicans’ own witnesses, says that gasoline prices are driven by world oil prices. World oil prices have spiked with rising global demand, tensions in the Middle East, and tight supplies. Nothing in these bills will affect world oil prices.

Republicans have two responses to high gasoline prices. First, they propose drilling for more oil. Yet every economist and oil market expert tells us that this will have no meaningful impact on world oil prices.

Just look north to Canada. Canadians drill plenty of oil. They are energy independent and they export to us. But their gasoline prices go up and down in sync with ours – because both are driven by world oil prices.

The experts at the Congressional Budget Office agree. A recent CBO report on energy security says that policies to reduce oil consumption, such as fuel efficiency requirements would be, “more effective at reducing the vulnerability of consumers to disruptions than policies designed to increase the domestic production of oil.”

Republicans also say they can lower gasoline prices by blocking environmental regulations that protect Americans from dangerous air pollution. No one should be fooled by this argument. Under Republican leadership, this body has become the most anti-environment

Congress in history. Since January 2011, the House Republicans have voted more than 200 times to undermine the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and other environmental laws.

The premise of the legislation before us today is that high gas prices are caused by EPA regulations that haven't even been proposed. That's a complete fantasy.

Americans want clean air and less fuel-thirsty cars. They don't want this Committee to use high gasoline prices as an excuse for blocking regulations to reduce toxic emissions from oil refineries. They also don't want us to block clean fuel regulations that the auto companies need to make cleaner, more efficient vehicles. But that is exactly what this legislation does.

Even worse, one of the bills before us contains the Latta amendment – a proposal that will cut the heart out of the Clean Air Act. It would overturn a unanimous 2001 Supreme Court case and repeal a 40 year-old law that says the goal of the Clean Air Act is to achieve air quality that is safe for Americans to breathe. While we can't control crude oil prices on the world market, we can follow CBO's advice and act to insulate ourselves from crude oil price fluctuations. That's exactly what the Obama Administration is doing.

The best way to save money at the pump is to drive right by it. The Obama Administration has issued strong new rules so that every year, new vehicles will go even further between fill-ups.

This puts money back in consumers' pockets. Since 1980, efficiency improvements have reduced the costs per mile driven by over 25%, according to the Energy Information Administration. The new standards will save consumers hundreds of dollars per year net, on average. If you express that in terms of prices at the pump, the net savings are equivalent to lowering prices at the pump by 14 cents per gallon today. This will rise to a savings of \$1.13 per gallon by 2025. That's real action on gas prices.

Unlike increasing efficiency, producing more oil here won't protect consumers from gasoline prices. Oil production in the U.S. is the highest it's been in eight years. The Obama Administration is not shutting down drilling.

Instead of supporting the President's initiatives to help consumers, the Republican-controlled House has done everything possible to frustrate them. The House has passed partisan legislation to prevent the Administration from cutting tailpipe emissions and making vehicles more efficient. The Republican budget would decimate the funding for clean energy.

And House Republicans have even opposed efforts to end the billions of dollars of subsidies that the oil companies receive every year, which the oil companies don't need and the taxpayer cannot afford.

Today's bills aren't really about lowering gasoline prices. They just use high gasoline prices as yet another rationale for advancing a profoundly anti-environment agenda.

Oil companies will surely benefit if these bills are enacted, and just as surely, American families will suffer.