

The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009

The House of Representatives passed legislation on June 26, 2009 that stands to make monumental improvements to our nation's energy policy. I voted for H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, because it is consistent with my highest priorities – creating U.S. jobs, reducing our national debt, and protecting both our national security and God's creation.

➤ **H.R. 2454 will keep our jobs here and create new job opportunities.**

This bill takes care to protect American industries and jobs. It allows industries that are “energy-intensive” and “trade-sensitive” more time and resources to adjust to new regulations, ensuring that they can continue to be competitive with foreign products. The bill also provides the option of a trade tariff that can be placed on goods imported from countries that do not have similar carbon-reduction regulations. These provisions ensure that there is fairness in the world market and protection for our domestic producers and the millions of Americans that they employ. The investments in clean energy and efficiency in this bill will help **create** thousands of jobs in North Carolina and boost an already growing sector of our regional economy.

➤ **This bill improves our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.**

H.R. 2454 would reduce our dependence on foreign oil, decreasing our imports by 150 million barrels annually in 2020. That represents more money that we keep here in the U.S., and less that we send to unstable governments abroad. This bill reduces our vulnerability in global affairs and will allow us to make our decisions with greater autonomy and security. Because the U.S. only holds about 3 percent of the world's known oil reserves, the price at American gas stations is set by numerous global factors. Terrorists, including Al-Qaeda, have stepped up attacks on overseas oil producers because they know it will cause energy price spikes around the world. Developing new U.S. sources of energy makes us less vulnerable to those kinds of economic shocks.

➤ **H.R. 2454 has the support of a broad coalition of businesses, advocacy groups, religious organizations, veterans, and national security coalitions.**

The following groups are among those who have voiced support of H.R. 2454:

National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, American Farmers Union, VoteVets, National Consumers League, Consumers Union, Baptist Center for Ethics, Duke Energy, Alcoa, BP America, Exelon Energy, Shell, Conoco Phillips, Edison Electric Institute, Caterpillar, Chrysler, John Deere, Dow, Dupont, Ford, GE, General Motors, United Steelworkers, Building and Construction Trades, Johnson & Johnson, Siemens, Sun Microsystems, Applied Materials, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, American Chemical Society, National League of Cities, National Council of Churches.

Other groups like the *Christian Coalition of America* and the *National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association* have voiced approval of the improvements that were made to this bill, due in part to their participation in negotiations.

➤ **H.R. 2454 will not cost our ratepayers thousands or even hundreds of dollars each year in increased energy prices.**

The House worked for months with electric producers and distributors, industries, and consumer groups to drastically cut the cost of this bill, which would not go into effect until 2012 if passed by the Senate.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has told Congress that the average ratepayer will pay less than \$175 each year (less than 50 cents per day) in additional energy costs as a result of this bill. According to CBO, households in the lowest 40% on income-earners on average would not be affected by this legislation. Also, independent estimates show the average annual cost to North Carolina ratepayers to be well below the average of most other states, with totals reaching 25 cents per day.

Many are aware of a misrepresented MIT study that reports the average cost of this bill to American ratepayers will be over \$3,000 each year. The author of that study has actually written a letter to Republican leadership, letting them know that his study was being misinterpreted and that the figures they were using were far too high.

➤ **H.R. 2454 takes significant steps to slow climate change, which poses a serious threat to our economy, environment and way of life.**

In 2007, a group of 2,000 scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published internationally written reports in unanimous agreement that global warming is real, verifiable and happening now – several of those scientists are based at the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville. These same scientists stated with a 90% degree of certainty that human actions contribute to global warming pollution. As a point of reference, scientists believe with a 90% degree of certainty that smoking causes lung cancer.

Even those who are skeptical of climate change can see the damage that our current energy practices are doing to air quality and visibility in the Great Smokey Mountains.

➤ **The legislation would not prohibit coal-fired or nuclear power plants.**

H.R. 2454 makes substantial investments in technology that will assist coal-fired power plants to lower their carbon emissions and increase their efficiency. It also provides greater access to loans for the construction of nuclear reactors.

➤ **Members were given time to review this bill prior to voting.**

H.R. 2454 was debated and improved upon in the House of Representatives over the course of several months. A large amendment was made to the bill roughly 12 hours prior to debate on the House floor. My staff and I spent the majority of the day reviewing this amendment, portions of which incorporated suggestions from conservative members and improved the bill for states like North Carolina. As a result, several members of the progressive wing of the party chose not to support this final bill.

I utilized the assistance of experts from several organizations, including the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, to make sure I had a clear understanding of new language in the bill. By the time the House voted on H.R. 2454 later that evening, I felt fully prepared and capable of making an informed decision on this important piece of legislation.