



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Rep. Shuler Calls on President to Halt Oil Reserve Purchases House poised to vote on legislation to lower fuel prices

Washington, D.C. – With the U.S. House poised to vote on legislation directing the Bush Administration to temporarily suspend shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), U.S. Representative Heath Shuler (D-NC) joined Reps. Peter Welch (D-VT), Nick Lampson (D-TX), Edward Markey (D-MA), and Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) in urging bipartisan support for this short-term action to lower gas prices for consumers.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act of 2008, H.R. 6022, sponsored by Welch, Shuler, Lampson and Markey, directs the President to suspend shipments to the SPR through the end of the year or until prices drop below \$75 per barrel. This action could reduce gas prices by 5 to 24 cents per gallon, according to experts. The legislation comes as gas prices hit a new record high of \$3.73 per gallon.

“Record gas prices are causing some painful choices for the families of Western North Carolina,” said Shuler. “Families are forced to go into debt just to take their children to school and drive to work. It’s time for Washington to make a choice. Do we represent the American people or the oil industry?”

Filling the SPR takes 70,000 barrels of oil off the market each day and taxpayers are currently paying record prices for this oil. The reserve is 97 percent full, sufficiently full to meet our national security needs.

“This temporary suspension of filling the SPR is a great first step in helping working families and small businesses, but there is more to be done to fix our energy crisis and addiction to foreign oil,” said Shuler.

The SPR has been tapped or temporarily suspended before by President Bush, President Clinton, and President George H.W. Bush. In 2000, after such action, the price of oil dropped by one-third, from \$30 to \$20 per barrel.

The U.S. House is expected to vote on the legislation Tuesday evening. Earlier today, the U.S. Senate passed companion legislation by a near-unanimous vote of 97-1.

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