

Thoughts From Capitol Hill
By US Rep. Rodney M. Alexander

Americans Must Get Behind Members With Plan to Lower Gas Prices

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON, D.C. For many families in Louisiana, gasoline has reached crisis level. \$4-a-gallon gas does not put a strain on the average budget; it breaks it.

I am sure it seems to some American families and business owners that I am sure it seems to some effort to help, but many members in the U.S. House of Representatives have not introduced a comprehensive energy reform plan since early May.

It is a plan I am proud to get behind, one that will boost supplies of all forms of energy right here at home to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, generate jobs, and strengthen the economy.

A key component of the plan is a provision to increase the production of oil and gas in an environmentally safe way, a measure 57 percent of Americans agree with, according to a survey conducted in late May.

Yet, if this plan or any initiative that seeks to solve the gas crisis, the American public must put pressure on the members who represent the American people. One introduced by House Republicans and is therefore disregarded by leadership.

It is far time the American people stand up to the Democratic leadership and demand action about our nation's natural resources.

While most nations around the world view their natural resources as an economic engine, many leaders in Congress today view our natural resources as environmental liabilities. Historically, 91 percent of House Republicans have voted for measures to increase the production of American-made oil and gas; whereas, 86 percent of Democrats have voted against such measures.

The Department of Energy reports that 175.28 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.127 trillion barrels of oil are currently off limits. ***If Congress were to unlock these off-limits resources, \$60 trillion in federal revenue would be generated.***

I personally have voted in support of many measures to responsibly increase production in areas such as the Outer Continental Shelf and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I will continue to support measures to open up drilling in restricted areas in Alaska, California and the eastern seaboard.

Increasing the production of American oil is a commonsense solution I have encouraged through introducing a resolution urging American oil companies to increase production.

