

## Texas Republicans bash Democratic energy plan

**HOUSTON, TEXAS:** Four Texas Republican congressmen and a panel of industry experts and government officials lashed out at Democratic leaders and the American Clean Energy and Security Act (HR 2454), which narrowly passed in the house with a 219 to 212 vote last Friday.

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Speaking at the "Texas Energy Summit" in Houston today, House Energy & Commerce Committee Ranking Member Joe Barton, Congressman Joe Culberson, Congressman Pete Olson and Congressman Pete Sessions blasted House Leader Nancy Pelosi and other Democratic leaders for rushing the massive bill to a vote with little debate, no cost/benefit analysis, and questions remaining over the science behind the bill and an alleged cover-up concerning suppression of a report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that may have changed the outcome of the vote if it had been released.

The general sentiment at the meeting was expressed by Sessions, who reiterated a written statement that also appeared on a large photograph of Pelosi. "The facts are clear," Sessions said. "Nancy Pelosi's National Energy Tax will kill Texas jobs, raise prices on hardworking families, and do little to clean up our environment."

Summit host Olson, referring to the Republican American Energy Act, called for an "all of the above" energy plan incorporating fossil fuels, renewable energy sources and nuclear power "to keep energy reliable and affordable."

Barton said the legislation, if enacted, would cost millions of jobs nationwide as fossil fuel producers, refiners and other industries shut down their U.S. operations and moved to other countries such as Mexico, China and India.

Texas in particular has a lot to lose, according to the summit participants, by virtue of its place as the top producer of oil, natural gas, refined products and petrochemicals in North America. Barton said the 83-percent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions mandated by the bill means that no fossil fuels would be burned at all in the U.S. by 2050.

Culberson said it was "vitaly important we stop this legislation" in the Senate and he predicted the "complete annihilation of the oil and gas industry in the United States" if the bill is enacted in anything resembling its present form.

In addition to the Republican congressmen, the chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission, the founder and CEO of the Institute for Energy Research (IER), a representative from the Texas Alliance of Energy Producers (TAEP) and the president of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) each presented their views on the subject and then were questioned by the GOP representatives.

Texas Railroad Commission Chairman Victor G. Carrillo referred to the new legislation as "devastating" and said it "falls woefully short of its goals."

"Texas will be disproportionately damaged by this legislation," said Carillo. "It will likely result in the largest tax increase in U.S. history. Cap and trade will cost Texas jobs and money."

Carillo urged the congressmen to "work with your Senate colleagues to kill this legislation."

Robert Bradley of the IER called the legislation a "public policy abomination" with no public policy purpose and said it was "a qualitative and conceptual failure" on a cost/benefit basis because the costs cannot be calculated and the benefits are minuscule.

Bradley also had harsh words for proponents of renewable energy, noting that the only reason Texas produces five percent of its energy from wind power is because the state legislature demanded it in the late 1990s. "Wind is an entirely artificial industry in Texas brought about by government edict," he said, and he said the pending federal legislation is no better.

Bradley called for bi-partisan, wide spread public opposition to the bill, saying, "HR 2454 is a recipe for public-policy failure and wealth destruction. It should be opposed by open-minded climate scientists and climate economists of all political persuasions."

Pat French, senior vice president of TAEP, said the program's impact on the Texas economy is "hard to overstate" and he predicted 200,000 jobs would be lost in the first few years after the legislation is enacted. "Texas would lose US\$20 billion out of its economy in the early years of the program," French said.

In addition, French said the cost to refiners nationwide could amount to US\$60 to US\$70 billion per year, with Texas bearing a significant share of that cost. The industry panelists and the congressmen repeated that the oil and gas industry was unlikely to shoulder the burden, and instead would opt to move their operations to other countries.

At a press conference immediately following the summit, Barton, Olson and Sessions continued to blast the Democratic bill. Sessions urged Texans to oppose the bill, saying, "We deeply disagree with this radical environmental policy. Texas will be the biggest loser if this bill passes."

Also at the press conference, Barton accused the EPA of illegally suppressing a report that would have had an effect on the agency's finding that greenhouse gases pose a public danger.

In April, the EPA issued its proposed endangerment finding, stating, "In both magnitude and probability, climate change is an enormous problem. The greenhouse gases that are responsible for it endanger public health and welfare within the meaning of the Clean Air Act."

The finding provided a basis for the administration's controversial cap and trade proposal as a way to regulate greenhouse gases.

Barton said that an EPA report indicating the science behind the finding was not conclusive was suppressed, and he has demanded that the EPA make the report public, along with any documents related to its suppression. Barton called the suppression of the report and subsequent EPA actions relating to it a "cover up" that is "against the law."

Two senators have joined Barton in calling for a full investigation of the EPA's actions in relation to the report.