

This Week in Washington

House Approves ANWR Inclusion, Low Income Energy Assistance in Energy Bill

Last night, in the House of Representatives, action on crafting a balanced, comprehensive energy plan included fighting back an attempt to strike provisions allowing responsible exploration of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and a provision making available to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) the expected \$2.1 billion in revenue from ANWR.

By a vote of 197-228, the House voted against an amendment that would disallow responsible exploration of ANWR. The 1.5 million acre coastal plain (also called the 1002 Area) of the 19.6 million acre ANWR is one of the best places to look for oil Americans need. The Energy Department says the coastal plain is the "largest unexplored, potentially productive onshore basin in the United States." The U.S. Geological Survey estimates there are up to 16 billion barrels of recoverable oil present. In addition, by a vote of 226-202, the House approved further environmental protections on ANWR, limiting any development to 2000 acres, roughly half the size of Washington Dulles Airport.

Earlier in the day, the House approved making available the expected \$2.1 billion in expected bonus bids from ANWR to the LIHEAP program by a voice vote. For many low-income families, disabled individuals and senior citizens living on fixed incomes, home energy costs are often unaffordable. These families carry a higher energy burden than most Americans - often spending up to 20 percent of their income on home energy costs.

"The House moved forward on a balanced, comprehensive bill with a balanced, common-sense approach," House Committee on Resources Chairman Richard Pombo said. "We have made ANWR eligible for responsible, environmentally sensitive exploration, while placing the most stringent environmental protections on an area limited to 2000 acres. We have also made sure that money from that exploration goes to the LIHEAP program, so that low-income families won't have to choose between paying their heating bills and buying food."

"Today, the House acted in a responsible fashion to meet our immediate needs while preparing for our future with provisions for alternative fuels, conservation and new technologies," he added. "This balanced approach is a win-win for energy consumers throughout the nation."

Pombo Applauds House Approval of Energy Bill

Congress approves balanced plan for present, future

Today, House Committee on Resources Chairman Richard Pombo applauded House approval of H.R. 6, the Energy bill. The bill, approved overwhelmingly by a vote of 247-175, is a balanced, comprehensive approach that will help this nation meet its immediate energy needs while preparing for the future.

In its jurisdiction, the House Committee on Resources was charged with taking immediate and effective action to make our natural resources work for the good of our national security, our citizens and our economy.

This was done through a balanced approach using fossil fuels and developing alternative energy sources, giving the ability to take federal royalties in actual volumes of natural gas and oil, enabling the government to target those volumes directly to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), or to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to boost U.S. energy security, providing technical expertise and regulatory relief to Indian tribes so that they may develop, manage and market their energy resources, and mandating the Interior Department to do an internal review of their oil and gas leases and permitting processes, identifying inefficiencies in the system and to develop the best management practices to correct those inefficiencies." This bill represents a balanced approach to an energy policy that works for the present and the future," Pombo stated. *(cont. on page 2)*

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Working for the Taxman:

Last year, 100% of the income the average American earned from January 1st to April 18th (108 days) went to pay taxes. Therefore, April 19th was "Tax Freedom Day," the day on which the average American started working for anything besides taxes.

- According to the Tax Foundation, **Tax Freedom Day** would have been 5 days later if the tax cuts in 2001 and 2002 had not been enacted.
- **Tax Freedom Day** would be one day *sooner* in 2003 if the President's proposed economic growth package were enacted.
- Americans spent more time working to pay taxes than they spent working to own a home, put food on the table, or pay medical expenses.

Number of Days in 2003 the Average American Will Work to Pay for:

Federal Taxes: 74
State & Local Taxes: 35
Housing: 61
Savings: 11
Food: 30
Clothing: 14
Recreation: 21
Medical Care: 44
Transp.: 27
Other: 46

Information provided by GAO, IRS, OMB, OPM and The Tax Foundation

This Week in Washington cont.

Pombo Applauds Energy Bill House Approval (cont.)

"We have codified into law that any exploration or energy development done on federal lands be held to the highest environmental standards ever enacted. These standards will be met or the projects will be withdrawn, period."

"This is responsible legislation that required hard work and compromise on both sides of the aisle. This legislation protects our energy security now and for years to come," he added.

Shumway Post Office Bill Unanimously Approved

H.R. 1368, legislation introduced by Congressman Richard Pombo to rename the United States Post Office located at 7554 Pacific Avenue in Stockton, California as the "Norman D. Shumway Post Office Building," has been unanimously approved by the House of Representatives.

Because Pombo had the legislation co-sponsored by the entire California delegation, it was placed on the House Suspension calendar and quickly approved by the full House of Representatives by a vote of 380-0

"Many of my colleagues served with Congressman Shumway," said Pombo. "The fact that this bill was approved by a unanimous vote testifies to the respect he commanded. I am happy that he will have this greatly deserved honor."

Elected to Congress in 1978, Congressman Shumway was overwhelmingly re-elected to each succeeding Congress until his retirement in January 1991. Before his election to Congress, Norm served on the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors for four years, service which gave him a special understanding of the challenges faced by local government.

As the representative of a large farming district, Congressman Shumway worked hard to promote policies enabling farmers to meet the demands of the domestic marketplace. He was also a strong proponent for senior citizens, bringing several Aging Committee hearings to his District to address the needs of older Americans.

The American people are over-taxed

April 15th is a reminder that Americans are over-taxed, and the federal government is the main culprit. The federal government taxes Americans when they earn money, save money, invest money, get on an airplane, talk on the telephone, put gas in their cars, drink beer, and smoke a cigarette. The federal tax code is so complex that Americans will spend an estimated six billion hours and almost 200 billion dollars complying with it! Ultimately, the American people deserve a completely new tax code—not one that's tweaked around the edges. Until tax-code replacement becomes politically feasible, Congress should make the tax code fairer and simpler.

Some ways to do this include:

- Eliminating the double taxation of dividends;
- Accelerating and making permanent the Bush tax cuts of 2001;
- Eliminating or sharply reducing the capital gains tax for individuals and small businesses;
- Repealing the 1993 income tax increase on Social Security benefits;
- Removing the tax on interest earned from savings accounts;
- Lowering the tax on American companies' foreign earnings brought to the U.S.;
- Eliminating the "e-rate" surcharge on taxpayers' monthly telephone bills;
- Permanently extending the moratorium on taxing Internet access; and
- Making military death gratuities exempt from the federal income tax.

Many of these provisions would be feasible under the President's Economic Growth Package and the House Budget. The Senate Budget would not accommodate many of them.

Information provided by www.house.gov/burton/RSC/

By the Numbers Tax Facts April 2003

- There are approximately 700 separate sections of the tax code that apply to individuals. There are over 1,500 separate provisions that apply to businesses.
- As of May 2000, the tax code contained 1,395,028 words – nearly 319 times the number of words in the Constitution.
- IRS Regulations contain over 8,551,444 words – over 11 times the number of words in the King James Bible.
- The IRS produces 649 separate forms, schedules, and instructions with approximately 16,100 lines. Publications providing guidance to taxpayers alone total about 13,400 pages.
- In 1998, 46 tax experts surveyed came up with 46 different answers when determining tax liability. The tax calculations ranged from \$34,240 to \$68,912.
- Over the next eleven years, the federal government is projected to collect approximately \$29 trillion dollars in taxes! The \$726 billion in tax relief proposed by the House Budget would reduce revenues by a mere 2.5% over ten years—which would easily be recouped from the economic growth stimulated by the tax cuts.

Information provided by www.house.gov/burton/RSC/