

This Week in Washington

Pombo Secures wide range of funds in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act

Washington, DC -- On Nov. 18, 2003 the House of Representatives approved the Energy and Water Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004 by a vote of 387 to 36.

Pombo stated, "receiving funding for these projects is great news. These funds are vital for California's 11th Congressional district. This year we secured funding for a range of projects. This includes federal funding for flood control, dredging, water recycling and other projects. In sum, these projects will enhance commerce, create jobs and improve our water quality and quantity. I am very pleased with the range of projects secured." *(continued on page 2)*

Comprehensive Energy Plan: Energy, Jobs and the Environment

Washington, DC -- House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo's (R-CA) statement on the Nov. 18, 2003 House passage of the National Energy Plan:

Whether it is the result of the natural gas shortage or the massive electricity crisis in California, Americans are coming to realize how critical energy really is. We must have abundant energy supplies and a strong energy infrastructure to fuel our economy, heat our homes, run our hospitals, power public works, and increase national security. I believe this legislation is a great step in the right direction for each of these goals.

This bill will also help dispel the myth that energy production and environmental protection are mutually exclusive. They are not. In fact, many studies show that as our energy independence grows, so too does our economy and our environmental safety.

This bill is important for the nation, but will also have a significant impact on California's 11th Congressional District. *(continued on page 2)*

Healthy Forests Legislation Passes, Next Stop: White House

Washington, DC - Today, the House passed the conference committee compromise struck by House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA) and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) on H.R. 1904, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The measure was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 286-140. The Senate is also expected to pass the legislation today, paving the way for President Bush to sign the bill into law.

Since 1997, the Resources Committee has passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act twice, held 73 official legislative meetings on the issue, and 32,811,288 acres have burned.

"The overwhelming bi-partisan support for this legislation in both the House and Senate makes the need for and quality of this legislation irrefutable," said Chairman Pombo. "This is the most significant reform of forest management policy in nearly a century, and it could not come any sooner. In recent years, we have seen millions of acres of forestland and wildlife habitat decimated, water supplies and air quality polluted, and family homes and human lives lost forever at the hands of catastrophic wildfire." *(continued on page 3)*

President Bush signs Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Bill into Law

Washington, DC - Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA), along with the Committee on Resources, celebrated the signing into law of H.R. 1442, a bill that authorizes the design and construction of a visitor center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. President George W. Bush signed the bill yesterday as the final step in a long legislative process towards creating a center which will not only honor the memory of Vietnam Veterans, but most importantly educate visitors, especially young people, of the sacrifices our veterans have made in the name of freedom.

"For too long, this visitors center has only been a hope and dream," Chairman Pombo said. "With the President's signing of this bill, the dream has become a reality. I would like to thank the President for his leadership and vision in paving the way towards the creation of this center."

"I can think of no better way to honor the memories of the brave men and women who served our country in the War than to create a visitor center to educate our youth of their sacrifices," said Pombo. *(continued on page 3)*

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(Energy and Water Appropriations Act cont.)

- **Stockton Metropolitan Flood Control Reimbursement - \$500,000**

The San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency commenced construction of flood control improvements for the Stockton metropolitan area in 1996.

- **Farmington Groundwater Recharge & Seasonal Habitat Project - \$1,000,000**

By constructing this groundwater recharge facilities, Stockton East Water District will be able to address the problems created by the "critically over drafted" condition of the sub-basin. Replenished groundwater will restore groundwater levels to improve the quality and increase quantity of water.

- **San Ramon Valley Reuse Project - East Bay Municipal District - \$750,000**

To provide ongoing project assistance for the San Ramon Valley water recycling project. The federal assistance will ensure the timely construction of the project and delivery of recycle water supplies to the regions of the East Bay area.

- **Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project - \$250,000**

Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project will provide flood protection for 1,100 homes, 500 businesses, and over 1,300 acres of agriculture land in southern Santa Clara County. Additionally, it will protect and improve water quality and preserve the river's habitat.

- **White Slough in Lodi - \$300,000**

Funds to assist the City in incorporating a wetland and open space component of its improvements to the White Slough Water Pollution Control Facility.

- **Pinole, Shoal, San Pablo Bay and Mare Island Strait - \$500,000**

Maintenance of this important channel section in San Pablo Bay has not occurred since the Mare Island Naval facility closed several years ago. The Pinole Shoal Channel links the San Francisco Bay to the Port of Stockton. This work is essential to the continued safe transport of ships through the channel.

- **San Francisco Bay to Stockton/ J. F. Baldwin Deepening Project - \$750,000**

To provide funding for required channel deepening from John Baldwin to Stockton within San Francisco Bay to Stockton.

- **Suisun Bay Channel/ New York Slough Maintenance Dredging - \$5,172,000**

Continued maintenance of the Suisun Bay Channel and New York Slough Channel is necessary to prevent ship grounding.

- **San Joaquin River - \$2,500,000**

To provide funding for annual maintenance dredging required at the Stockton Channel of the San Joaquin River.

(Energy Plan cont.)

Zero-emission Bus (ZEB) Demonstration Program:

Santa Clara County's Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and San Mateo County's Transportation Authority (SamTrans) are working in partnership on a Zero-emission bus (ZEB) demonstration program. Under this partnership, VTA and SamTrans are planning to purchase three hydrogen fuel-cell buses initially and three more at a later date, for a total of six buses.

The conference report accompanying H.R. 6 will authorize new programs that will assist communities like Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties with exciting projects like the ZEB. with exciting projects like the ZEB.

"Clean School Bus" Programs:

The bill authorizes two new "Clean School Bus" programs. The first program would provide \$100 million to retrofit existing diesel buses with new pollution control technology. The second program authorizes \$200 million in grants for replacement of older school buses with clean alternative fuel and ultra-low sulfur fueled buses.

Autos and Pollution:

Authorizes \$200 million for an advanced vehicle program. This program, operating under the current Department of Energy "Clean Cities" program, would provide grants to state and local governments to acquire alternative fuel and fuel-cell vehicles, hybrids and other vehicles, including ultra low-sulfur diesel vehicles.

Hydropower:

The bill also promotes hydropower. The Departments of Interior and Energy, in consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers, are directed to study and report on federal hydroelectric power facilities and *(continued on page 3)*

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(Energy Plan cont.)

existing dams that could have hydropower facilities for the purpose of identifying opportunities for increasing hydroelectric power potential.

Renewable Energy Production Incentive Program:

The renewable provisions of this bill are environmentally friendly and assist in meeting our growing energy needs. The bill reauthorizes the Renewable Energy Production Incentive program to provide renewable energy production incentives for solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and other renewables. In fact, 40% of the tax provisions in the bill are dedicated to incentivizing renewables.

Solar Power:

The bill calls for installing 20,000 solar roof-top systems in federal buildings by 2010, as well as a separate \$210 million program for concentrating solar power for hydrogen production.

(Healthy Forests Legislation cont.)

This bill will empower experts to actively maintain our national forests to reduce the risk of these tragedies from occurring in the future. By reducing dangerous fuel loads on the forest floor, we can reverse the trend in our national forests from one of increasing risk and disease to one that reflects healthier and well-managed forests for future generations to enjoy."

This bill will accomplish the following:

(1) Revamp the Forest Service's conflict-ridden administrative appeals process, requiring would-be appellants to participate early in the development stages of a forest restoration project in order to reserve the right to file an appeal. This provision is virtually identical to the House-passed language.

(2) Create a historic paradigm shift in the way Courts consider legal challenges to hazardous fuels reduction projects, mandating that the Courts weigh the environmental consequences of management inaction when the specter of catastrophic wildfire looms. It would also require that federal judges reconsider any injunctions to projects every 60 days.

(3) Expedite analysis and review requirements for priority wildfire mitigation projects, applying House-passed environmental analysis requirements to projects focused on protecting communities, and Senate passed analysis procedures to projects focused on protecting watersheds and endangered wildlife. Senate-passed old growth language was also restructured to eliminate significant litigation loopholes. Requirements related to the retention of certain large trees were clarified ensuring that the bill's wildfire mitigation purposes were not trumped by these new standards as well.

(4) Ensure that the public has a full and thorough opportunity to participate in the decision making process. It embraces the House-passed, bipartisan Western Governor Association 10-Year Strategy's robust public input and participation requirements, ensuring that interested persons will have numerous opportunities to engage decision makers during all phases of a project's development and implementation.

To view statements from other Members of Congress, visit <http://resources.committee.house.gov/>

(Vietnam Veterans Memorial cont.)

"So many people have been instrumental in the passage of this bill, but Jan Scruggs, President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, has worked heroically on behalf of Vietnam Veterans. I offer him my sincere appreciation and continued support as he continues to work to honor our war veterans," said Pombo.

Over half the memorial's annual visitors were born after the Vietnam War ended. The visitors center will facilitate self-guided tours for small groups of students and tourists. It will also serve as a facility to collect some of the more than 60,000 relics left by visitors each year, creating a unique historical record for future generations.

The visitor center will be built at no cost to American taxpayers. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the nonprofit organization authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1980 to build the memorial, will provide the funds for the center.

For more information, visit the Committee on Resources website at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>