

# Fiscal Year 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Bill

## Floor Statement of Peter J. Visclosky, Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development

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As the Chairman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, our subcommittee worked in a bipartisan fashion to make critical investments to address four areas of great importance to the American people: Gas Prices, Climate Change, Our flood control infrastructure, and advancing nuclear nonproliferation efforts.

### **Confronting Rising Gas Prices**

All our constituents are in shock at the high price of gas. In order to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, and invest in new technologies that will make our nation more energy dependent, this bill provides \$411 million for the research and development of new vehicle technologies as well as for biomass fuels like ethanol and biodiesel. This is an investment of \$55 million over the President request. Given the high price of gas, the fact that the people we represent our paying and the energy crisis we find ourselves in, this is the type of investment we can make now to strengthen our nation's energy security for the future.

Now, these efforts will not bring prices down immediately, but they help put us on a path to decreased dependence on imported oil and greater fuel efficiency.

### **Climate Change**

As we work to address our nation's energy crisis, it is also imperative that we do so in a way that lessens the impact on our environment. This bill provides funding to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency programs, as well as through new alternative technology research and development. For renewable energies like solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, and biofuels, this bill provides a total of \$1.7 billion, which is \$486 million more than the President's request.

To use our American energy sources in a more environmentally-friendly fashion, this bill provides \$119 million for carbon capture and sequestration, which is \$40 million over the

President's request. This increase supports demonstrations of sequestration at multiple locations throughout the country, and funds innovations in existing coal plants.

### **Flood Protection and Infrastructure**

In addition to funding our nation's energy programs, this bill also provides funding for our nation's flood control efforts. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and its revelation of severe gaps in our nation's flood protection infrastructure, a nationwide effort has been made to assess these needs. They are substantial. Right now, there is an estimated \$1 billion backlog for the operation and maintenance of our nation's coastal and navigation infrastructure. This bill provides an increase of \$716 million over the president's request for the Army Corps of Engineers to address our flood-control and infrastructure needs facing this nation. From the Gulf Coast, to the Sacramento basin, to areas throughout almost all of our Congressional Districts, one of the biggest obstacles to flood-control infrastructure is funding. Certainly, this additional investment in our infrastructure will not complete our national need, but it is a step in the right direction.

### **Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Nonproliferation**

The Energy and Water portion of this bill also provides funding for nuclear nonproliferation efforts and our nuclear weapons complex. One of the wisest uses of funding contained in this bill is the fact that zero dollars went to fund the Reliable Replacement Warhead, or RRW, which is this administration's proposal for a new nuclear weapon. Moving forward on a new nuclear weapon is not something this nation should do without great consideration. Despite the fact that the Cold War has ended, and we now face different national security threats that include terrorists acquiring nuclear material, the administration has not yet established a revised nuclear defense strategy and stockpile plan to reflect the new realities of the world.

Instead of a new nuclear weapon, the U.S. needs a comprehensive nuclear defense strategy, and a revised stockpile plan to guide the transformation and downsizing of the complex. To put it simply, funding the RRW right now puts the cart before the horse.

Additionally, this bill increases funding for a variety of nonproliferation activities, including the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the Second Line of Defense detection systems, called

MegaPorts. It also establishes a nuclear fuel bank at the International Atomic Energy Agency, as proposed by former Senator Sam Nunn.

Mr. Speaker, I again voice my support for this legislation, as it makes progress on issues ranging from gas prices, to climate change, to investing in our nation's flood control infrastructure, nuclear nonproliferation. I yield back the balance of my time.