



Hon. Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui

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MATSUI CONDEMNS CORRUPT PRIORITIES IN ENERGY BILL
“The Republican Majority...subsidizes the past at the expense of the future.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representative Doris O. Matsui (D-CA) criticized the Republican Majority’s priorities in a speech to the House of Representatives during floor consideration of the Rule providing for H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

“We should be investing in renewables and conservation. We should be strengthening our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. We should be doing a lot of things today. Protecting guilty polluters is not one of them,” Matsui said.

One provision in the thousand-page bill provides liability protection to manufacturers of MTBE, a fuel additive that has contaminated groundwater in communities across the country. Several courts have found that manufacturers knew of these dangers prior to use.

“I am particularly troubled about the amnesty this bill gives to MTBE polluters and the effect it will have on my home state of California,” Matsui said. “Making our drinking water clean again will cost an estimated \$29 billion nationwide. I think the polluters should pay that bill.”

Matsui also criticized the bill in light of a report by the Energy Information Agency which stated that legislation similar to H.R. 6 would have raised gas prices by an average of 3 cents per gallon.

“Gas prices in Sacramento have reached an average of \$2.45 per gallon. It is outrageous that the House is considering a so-called ‘energy’ bill which by the Administration’s own admission is more likely to raise gas prices than lower them. We should enact smart energy policies instead of billion-dollar giveaways to fossil fuel industries,” Matsui said.

A report last year by the Department of Energy’s Energy Information Administration (EIA) stated that policies like those contained in the bill would increase gasoline prices by 3 cents per gallon. The EIA report analyzed the conference report to last year’s energy bill. H.R. 6 in the 109th Congress is based in large part on that conference report.

The text of Rep. Matsui’s remarks is below:

“Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and to the underlying bill. The Republican Majority has brought to the floor a bill that subsidizes the past at the expense of the future, and we should not vote for it.

Gas prices in Sacramento have reached an average of \$2.45 per gallon. It is outrageous that the House is considering a so-called 'energy' bill which by the Administration's own admission is more likely to raise gas prices than lower them. We should enact smart energy policies instead of billion-dollar giveaways to fossil fuel industries

I am particularly troubled about the amnesty this bill gives to MTBE polluters and the effect it will have on my home state of California. In 1990, the oil industry began adding MTBE to gasoline in order to make it burn cleaner. The industry knew that MTBE was a harsh groundwater pollutant and it had safe alternatives at its fingertips. But the industry used MTBE anyway. Twenty-five years later, over eighteen hundred water systems in 29 states are infected with MTBE, including three wells in Sacramento County.

Making our drinking water clean again will cost an estimated \$29 billion nationwide. I think the polluters should pay that bill. Our cities and towns agree. Not surprisingly, however, the Texas-based MTBE manufacturers think they deserve a bailout. So they went to their friends in Washington, and the Republican Majority gave them a blanket amnesty from cleaning up their pollution. It's unbelievable. Our constituents should be horrified.

Mr. Speaker, we should be investing in renewables and conservation. We should be strengthening our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

We should be doing a lot of things today. Protecting guilty polluters is not one of them. I urge my colleagues to defeat this rule and the underlying bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.”

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