

Congresswoman Matsui Calls for Strategic, Long-Term Energy Policy Drilling in the Arctic Refuge Won

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Drilling in the Arctic Refuge Won't Address the Growing Energy Crisis

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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) issued the following statement on her vote against allowing drilling for oil in the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"As Congress considers H.R. 5429, it is important for us to recognize that this bill is simply a distraction that ignores the growing energy crisis facing our constituents.

"In my hometown of Sacramento, my constituents, like yours, continue to bear the burden of the high cost of gas - a tighter family budget, shorter vacation, or not eating out at a restaurant. Simply put, they want relief from these persistently rising gas prices.

"However, drilling in the Arctic Refuge is not the answer to this problem. The Energy Information Administration has indicated that, even twenty years down the road when Refuge drilling would be at the height of its production, our constituents would see savings of just one cent per gallon. Surely, my colleagues will agree with me that our nation's crown jewel of wilderness and wildlife is worth more than a single penny per gallon.

"And, by approving this legislation, we will put ourselves on a slippery slope toward additional shortsighted drilling. This is a path we chose not to follow just last week, when the House of Representatives rejected a misguided proposal to drill off the coasts of states like Florida and California. We should avoid contradicting ourselves by approving ill-conceived oil and gas exploration in one part of the country just days after blocking it in another location. Defeating this bill today will help ensure that pristine areas off the coast of my home state - as well as in Alaska - remain free of unsightly drilling rigs and immune from oil spills for years to come.

"This latest attempt to allow drilling in the Arctic Refuge is no substitute for the strategic, long-term energy policy that America still desperately requires. As we debate whether or not to begin exploration for oil, the benefits of which will not be available until well into the next decade, let us not forget our constituents are paying sky-high energy costs today. It is simply disingenuous to claim that this bill will help our constituents afford gas for their cars, or air conditioning and

light for their homes.

“Instead, Congress must turn its attention to the real energy problems that confront our nation today: lack of diversification in our energy supply, insufficient incentives to conduct research on new fuel sources, and poor governmental oversight. Increasing energy efficiency and expanding the supply of alternative sources of fuel through research and innovation should be our focus. This bill does nothing to address these important goals.

“Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the American people to create an energy policy which moves our country toward energy independence and flexibility, not one which further binds us to fluctuations in the oil market.”

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