

This week, your concerns about the uptick in gas prices continued to come into our offices through your emails, calls, letters, Facebook postings and Twitter comments. We are all beginning to notice higher gas prices at the pump and feel the pinch in our wallets. On Thursday, I participated in the House Natural Resources Committee hearing about the rising cost of gas and the impact on jobs. There was much discussion about ways to increase the domestic production of energy. Witnesses before the committee noted that, “motorists currently experiencing a jump in prices will likely see further [gasoline price] increases.” Additionally, they added that certain market indicators were suggesting the average retail price for gasoline could exceed \$4.00 per gallon during summer 2011. Energy is an essential element of our everyday lives, and with rising costs the burden is shared across all sectors of our economy. Increased offshore energy production right here in the United States would reduce fuel prices, stimulate the economy and create good paying jobs. Offshore energy production can be accomplished in a safe and environmentally responsible manner. Just in Virginia, offshore drilling and renewable energy development such as wind power, could lead to the creation of 25,000 new jobs and make the Commonwealth a leader in energy production. Unfortunately, the Administration has essentially halted any further oil and gas development in the Atlantic Ocean, further delaying any addition to U.S. production. With the government’s failure to issue new permits to drill along the coast, American energy loses and further inaction costs jobs. We must allow for more exploration and development of American energy to get prices down.

Folks, if you’ve watched the movies within the last few years, you may have seen the film Apollo 13, where the command module spacecraft has suffered from an explosion onboard and the astronauts are trying to figure out how to survive and get home. The experts back at Mission Control Center in Houston gathered all the tools and materials the astronauts had available to them onboard and in a very short timeframe figured out a way to keep them alive and get them back to Earth. I believe we must take the same approach with our energy issues – we must use every tool and resource available to solve our energy problems and combat rising costs. I support an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy to utilize all of our resources and apply advanced science to the fullest, to meet the future demand and needs for energy in this country.

Also on Thursday, the entire Virginia Congressional Delegation came together for a meeting with Governor McDonnell. We discussed many issues important to the Commonwealth, and the Governor shared some of the work his administration is doing to get our economy going and improve the quality of life here in Virginia. The Governor noted the 16 percent growth of our state economy in February, which is great news. We also discussed issues such as transportation, the Chesapeake Bay, and the development of wind and nuclear energy. Plans are on schedule to build another reactor for the nuclear facility at Lake Anna, and the Governor pointed out that Virginia is not located on a fault line, so the chances of the horrific situation with an earthquake is not likely to occur in Virginia. I support these efforts to develop our own sources of energy right here in Virginia, to create jobs, lower prices, and promote a cleaner

environment. Lastly, we talked about the contributions that the defense community makes to our economy in the Commonwealth. Our men and women who work to protect this nation are doing great things right here in our back yard.

Lastly, this week we [announced the launch of the 2011 Congressional Art Competition](#) , for high school students living in America's First District. All high school students living in the First District are eligible to enter their work in this contest by the April 29, 2011 submission deadline. I am excited to announce this competition, and encourage students to enter their original artwork to be considered for display in our nation's Capitol Building. This is a great opportunity for the aspiring artists in our area to showcase their talents. For more information, visit my website www.wittman.house.gov or call my office at 202-225-4261.