

As I've driven up to Washington from Montross each morning this week, I've kept an eye on the price of gas at each service station along the way. I've also watched the other cars with me on the road, such as the farmers, ambulances, long haul truckers, and my fellow commuters and wondered what they are thinking about higher fuel costs. Each of these folks needs fuel to get to and from work, and as the price of gas rises cent by cent, they are all forced to make sacrifices elsewhere in their families' budgets. These sacrifices could be in the form of buying fewer groceries or utilities, or even in deciding not to take the kids to the movies on Sunday afternoon. By limiting consumer spending for other goods and services, high fuel costs hamper overall economic growth, and also cut into a business' ability to hire new workers. The simple truth is that with high gas prices, the economy's recovery is stunted. Congress must ensure that government policies aren't contributing to these rising energy costs, and has to take action to promote an atmosphere where pain at the pump isn't continually controlling folks' budgets.

On Wednesday, I participated in a hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee that focused on the impacts of higher gas prices on our families and the ways in which we can harness American resources to promote job creation and address these rising costs. The discussion ranged from domestic energy production to renewable fuels to the wisdom of government subsidies for alternative energies like solar panels. It is important that we understand all of the factors that are driving energy prices toward record highs, and it is just as critical to address the government regulations that impede the development of American sources of energy.

I personally appreciated hearing about the shared goal to safely explore oil and natural gas resources off the coast of Virginia. This particular proposal is just "one tool in the tool box" of an all-of-the-above energy approach, but it is an important one. It would help to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy while also creating a large number of jobs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Recently, I supported legislation that included the expansion of American energy exploration, including off the coast of Virginia (H.R. 3408). I also have introduced legislation to promote the development of wind energy (H.R. 2173). A responsible, all-of-the-above energy policy must include reliable sources of fossil fuels as well as the exploration of alternative forms of energy in addition to finding greater efficiency in energy usage. As a member of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus, I will continue to promote energy independence and clean energy legislation. You can view my exchange with the panelists at the Natural Resources hearing [here](#) .

I would love to hear your thoughts on how to improve America's energy policy, and I hope you'll fill out the energy survey on my website. I'd also appreciate hearing your stories on how high gas prices are impacting your family. Please keep in touch via phone at (202) 225-4261,

through my website ( [www.wittman.house.gov](http://www.wittman.house.gov) ), via Facebook ( <https://www.facebook.com/RepRobWittman> ), or on Twitter ( [www.twitter.com/RobWittman](http://www.twitter.com/RobWittman) ).