

The American Petroleum Institute and like energy industry groups almost killed, and just about neutered, the Waxman-Markey Energy Bill the house narrowly passed this Friday. Their rational, supported by most House Republicans and over 30 crossover bluedog Democrats; the cost of greening the United States' energy needs will be passed down as a defacto tax to the American people. They need to get real!

Living in Miami Beach, Florida, elevation three feet, I have a selfish interest in seeing the country finally embrace the reality of climate change, precipitated by us filling the atmosphere with CO<sub>2</sub>, created by our energy use. You see, as sea level rises, salt water from Biscayne Bay now percolates up through the city's storm drains. This does not bode well for the resale value of my home nor the structures sitting on the 72% of Miami Dade County that would be inundated with salt water should sea levels rise, as some prominent scientists predict, another three to five feet by 2070. The 300 billion dollar passed price tag on the energy bill looks pretty puny when compared to the cost of costal flooding.

Republican politicians and pundits preach fiscal responsibility when attacking the proposed new energy program however, the cost of continuing with "business as usual" will bury this country in a debt that makes the current 9 trillion dollar deficit look small. Think of it this way, according to a Tufts University study, the loss of infrastructure due to sea level rise in Miami Dade county alone would amount to 3.5 trillion dollars. That is just Miami Dade; factor in our costal infrastructure loss, i.e., Huston, Savannah, San Francisco, Newark and New York City. You get the picture.

Don't you think there needs to be a sense of urgency here? Try explaining that to the energy companies (but surprisingly, not FPL) and their Republican protectors. If our flooding worries aren't enough to get your attention, try this! We have a good possibility of loosing the world's oceans and just about everything in them except jellyfish and phytoplankton if we don't stop filling the air with CO<sub>2</sub>. Turns out the ocean sucks in CO<sub>2</sub> at a rate three times that of our atmosphere. In short, we are saturating the oceans with CO<sub>2</sub> and converting their life sustaining waters into an acidic brew (carbonic acid). This acid has the effect of dissolving calcium carbonate, the material that makes up shells and bones of aquatic animals and this trend has so alarmed scientists many, "are calling for immediate action by policy-makers to sharply reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions so as to avoid widespread and severe damage to marine ecosystems from ocean acidification", (Monaco January, 2009).

It is hard to fathom why our south Florida Republican Congressional delegation consisting of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Mario and Lincoln Diaz Balart would chose to vote party lines and place all south Floridians in extreme jeopardy rather than make a sincere attempt at protecting the citizens that placed them in office. Try explaining this to the residents of the Keys, Ros-Lehtinen's district, that a

recent Miami Herald article says is already feeling dramatic effects of sea level rise.

Enough Republican scare tactics and denials of the urgency forced upon us by the politics of climate change. The time is here to face reality and seize every effort to protect our well being. In doing so we must truly become non-partisan. We must all support a change in our energy practices that give us, our wildlife and marine environment a fighting chance to adapt to the massive climate changes that are coming. The wrong decision now will not be correctable in the future. We must do the right thing for a planet that we have placed in peril.

Captain Dan Kipnis  
Member, Miami Dade County Climate Change Advisory Task Force  
Chairman, Economic, Social and Health Committee  
Committee Member, Task Force Steering Committee  
Board of Directors, Florida Wildlife Federation  
Vice Chairman, City of Miami Beach Marine Authority

3156 Royal Palm Ave.  
Miami Beach, Fl.  
33140

305-672-3807

kipnisd@atlanticbb.net