

Demand Better Energy Choices

President Bush said it best: America is addicted to oil. We currently spend more than \$1 trillion a year on our fossil fuel addiction, and if we are to believe the rhetoric, the answer to kicking the habit is to drill for more. That's akin to falling in a hole and trying to dig your way out.

What America really needs is better energy choices. We deserve energy that is cheaper cleaner, faster to produce and more secure than fossil fuels. The good news is, we can and we will end our addiction and create better energy choices.

Florida is well on its way to creating this energy future. This summer, Governor Charlie Crist signed a major energy bill to advance energy efficiency and renewable energy within the state while cutting the state's emissions of greenhouse gases. In addition to other things, the bill requires the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) and to set goals for the use of customer-located renewable energy systems. It requires each public utility to develop a standardized interconnection agreement and net metering program. The bill requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to create a cap-and-trade regulatory program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And, it advances energy efficiency through utility incentive programs and stricter building standards.

America however, hasn't even left the station because we lack a national energy policy that requires more and better choices. That's why this nation still runs on 1950s-era fossil fuel power. That and because Big Oil largely has been running the show and dictating our "choices." And the strategy has paid off nicely—last year, the five biggest oil companies made \$123 *billion* in profits. All while our energy prices skyrocket.

We now stand at a crossroads in this country—we can continue to drill ourselves deeper into a hole or we can demand better choices.

The technology exists today for renewable wind, solar, and geothermal resources to provide large-scale energy generation. And the technology solutions that help families reduce their forced dependency on fossil fuels are the same technologies that will solve the climate crisis, clean the air, and help protect America's natural resources for our children's future.

With a few incentives that Congress has the ability to create now, large increases in renewable energy production could be brought online in the very near future, giving Americans real energy choices.

Congress should help lead a clean energy revolution and develop "Made-in-America" solutions. Instead of handing out billions of dollars in subsidies to the oil and gas industry over the next 10 years, Congress should use that money to promote clean, renewable energy and extend clean energy tax credits to the wind and solar industries.

Most importantly, Congress must pass comprehensive, cap-and-trade-based climate change legislation. The Climate Security Act, which gained 54 supporters in the Senate

this past spring, would reduce our oil imports four times more than we could by drilling in the Arctic Refuge, off our beaches, and in the Rocky Mountains **combined**. And it would save Americans \$180 billion through the year 2030 on foreign oil expenditures alone, according to the Department of Energy.

Instead of chasing the last barrel of oil, we need to be chasing a new energy economy that reduces dependency on expensive fossil fuels. American families deserve a consumer-friendly, clean energy policy that invests in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The choice is really quite simple.
Cheap, fast, secure and clean or, business as usual.

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