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Thank you for reading The Conaway Chronicle, a weekly review of my activities in Congress. This newsletter is to let you know what’s going on in Washington and what important issues are being debated in Congress. Yesterday marked the end of the first session of the 110th Congress. The House will stand in recess until mid-January.

FutureGen Heads to Illinois

On Tuesday, the FutureGen Alliance announced that the Mattoon, Illinois location has been selected as the future site for the first clean-burning FutureGen coal gasification electric power plant. Since the day I took office in January of 2005, the FutureGen project has been at the top of my list of priorities. It has been a long decision process with extensive research and numerous site visits, and I applaud the hard work of the Odessa community who made a great presentation and truly represented the best that West Texas had to offer.

Although I am extremely disappointed that the Odessa/Penwell site was not chosen, I firmly believe that initiatives such as FutureGen are important for the future of American energy. Having passed all of the Environmental Impact Studies, the Penwell site is an ideal location for other energy development opportunities. As our country moves to find additional ways to produce power, and as the Department of Energy continues to work to develop energy alternatives, I am confident that West Texas will continue to be a key player as we pave the way to improve our energy security.

A Good Step for Immigration Reform

In July, I introduced an amendment to the Homeland Security Appropriations bill to aid the border patrol in interdicting illegal immigrants trying to enter the U.S. illegally. The amendment would provide the border patrol with \$5 million dollars to create a pilot program to eradicate the tactical cover that runs along the banks of the Rio Grande River on the Texas-Mexico border. Agents have expressed problems with people using the tall weeds along the river as cover while attempting to sneak across the border. This amendment was included in the omnibus appropriations bill that passed through the House this week. By creating a pilot program for the Border Patrol to use to eradicate invasive species of weeds, our agents will be safer and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV’s) and cameras will be more effective in stemming the tide of illegal immigrants crossing our border. This amendment also brings up the issue of conservation. The weeds along the river use up to 200 gallons of water every day. If the weeds were removed,



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the Rio Grande would be stronger and harder to cross.

While I am glad that this important amendment was included in the Omnibus appropriations bill, I am disappointed that my Democrat colleagues chose to roll eleven spending bills into one giant spending bill. Although the House Majority was eventually able to meet the President's spending limit, and finally included a combined \$71 billion to fund our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, I still feel like there are significant problems with this massive piece of legislation. [Click here](#) to view a comprehensive review of the omnibus spending bill.

AMT Fix Passes House, Heads to President's Desk

In 1969, the Alternative Minimum Tax was put in place by Congress to ensure that the wealthiest Americans were paying their share of income tax. At that time, the tax was imposed on 169 people. The tax was never adjusted for inflation and, without Congressional intervention, this year could target over 23 million tax payers. For years, House Republicans have passed an annual AMT patch by June at the latest so American taxpayers can plan for the upcoming tax season. This year, however, the Democrats tried time after time to add billions of dollars in unrelated tax increases to this legislation. In the end, Republicans were victorious and a bill was passed yesterday to protect 23 million additional taxpayers from the AMT without unnecessary tax increases. Most of my colleagues in Congress support fixing the AMT permanently. I believe that Congress should reduce spending to balance the budget and prevent this tax from impacting millions of middle-class Americans.

SCHIP and Medicare Extended

Along with the Senate, the House passed S. 2499, the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007. Modeled after the SCHIP extension introduced by fellow Texan Congressman Joe Barton, the bill will extend the vital SCHIP program for low-income children while protecting American taxpayers and the Medicare budget. In response to the President's responsible veto of the previous wasteful SCHIP measure, my Republican colleagues assembled an accountable and successful plan that would insure children, save physician payment rates, and extend important Medicare agendas such as the special diabetes and qualifying individual programs. These measures are a good victory for House Republicans and hardworking Americans who have battled the Democratic Majority to keep children and seniors insured while preserving these health programs and the American taxpayer's pocketbook.



Energy Bill Signed by the President

On Tuesday, I voted against the Democrats final version of the energy bill, which passed the House 314-100 and the President signed into law yesterday. The bill increases federal corporate average fuel economy standards and federal biofuels mandates. Fortunately, renewable energy mandates and tax provisions (which totaled around \$21 billion) were dropped from the final version of the bill.

There are many reasons why I voted against this legislation. The bill discourages production of domestic oil and gas supplies, and calls for a renewable fuels standard (RFS) of 36 billion gallons by 2022, 21 billion of which must be met with "advanced biofuels," or non-corn-based biofuels. Also, the bill does not address the issue of the future U.S. water supply, which is already scarce, and will have to be used to grow enough corn and other biomass to meet the overwhelming demand. We must also consider how we intend to transport 36 billion gallons of ethanol, given that our current pipeline systems are not compatible. This legislation is one of the most onerous mandates placed on the American business community in recent history and will do nothing to increase production of domestic oil & natural gas.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

As the year comes to a close, I am eager to return home to Texas. It has been quite a year in Congress and I look forward to the challenges of 2008. Representing you in Congress has been a

wonderful gift and I hope to see many of you before I return to Washington in January. I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

* [Click here](#) to listen to my weekly podcast and [click here](#) to watch me on CSPAN's Washington Journal this morning.

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every week when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at www.house.gov/conaway or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at www.conawayblog.com!

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