



Kingston eyes oil independence

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Georgia congressman proposes Fuel Choices for American Security Act

By HANK ROWLAND
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Imagine living in a nation that no longer relies on foreign oil.

U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-1, can. And as vice chair of the House Republican Conference, he is making an effort to share his vision with the rest of Congress.

He's already on his way to accomplishing that, picking up bipartisan support for legislation he's introduced that he says will help the nation achieve oil independence by the year 2015.

Called the Fuel Choices for American Security Act of 2005, the bill details an energy strategy that pivots on stronger conservation, new fuel choices and modern-day wizardry.

"For far too long, the United States has been at the mercy of foreign nations for its fuel," Kingston said. "This dependence is one of our greatest risks because it not only threatens our national security, but also our economic security. America can and must do better."

Among other things, the legislation calls for the nation to establish an aggressive oil savings goal to reduce the amount it imports from the Middle East.

It also would provide incentives to consumers and producers to move faster at offering technological advances to the American public. Incentives would include doubling the consumer tax credit for the purchase of flexible fuel-electric hybrid vehicles and providing tax credits to manufacturers who produce more efficient lightweight materials.

New fuels would prove helpful in reducing the need for Arab oil, too, he said.

"In 20 years we seek to replace 20 percent of our oil-based vehicle fuels with alternative fuels like ethanol produced from corn, sugar or other bio products, diesel that can be made from coal, bio or waste sources, methanol, hydrogen or electricity," Kingston said.

The bill's bipartisan support includes Rep. Eliot Engel, D-NY, co-sponsor of the legislation.

A similar bill was introduced by U.S. Sens. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., Evan Bayh, D-Ind., Norm Coleman, R-Minn., and Joe Lieberman, D-Conn.

Kingston said the goal of the legislation is attainable.

"America has proven in the past that when it sets a goal, it always crosses the finish line," Kingston said.

"The time to start and win this race is now."

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