



The House Energy Bill -- What You Can Do to Help Change Federal Energy Policy for the Better

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on June 25, 2007 - 9:45am

Topic: [Alternative energy](#)

Tags: [committee reports](#), [energy](#), [energy bill](#), [house of representatives](#), [oil](#), [peak oil](#) [[list all tags](#)]

I have some homework for the readers of TOD, if you all are up for it. We need many pairs of eyes and excellent minds to contribute to a project that could be important for our democratic Republic.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi has more influence over what will make it into the House Energy Bill than any other Member. Under House procedure, the Rules Committee has the job of taking all of the energy-related bills approved by the various committees that have some jurisdiction over energy and combining them into one bill -- hundreds, if not thousands of pages with no time to consider the interaction of the pieces and parts.

A draft Energy bill will be released at a news conference perhaps on a coming Friday afternoon--we're not exactly sure when. By close of business the following Monday or Tuesday, proposed amendments to the bill have to be drafted into legislative language by Legislative Counsel and submitted by Members to the Rules Committee.

The next day or so after that, the Rules Committee will meet to consider which amendments are "in order" and will be allowed to have a 10 minute debate and a vote on the Floor. Any proposed amendments have to be "germane" -- the non-partisan Parliamentarian's office has to declare the amendment is related to narrowing or changing a specific provision already in the bill. If it's not related to something already in the bill, it's not germane. The Rules Committee is stacked with Members in a 9 to 5 ratio of Democratic Majority to Republican Minority. The Democrats are loyal to the Speaker, Republicans to Boehner, as it usually goes. So amendments that are politically undesirable to the Speaker and the Majority can also be denied a Floor vote.

Bottom Line -- There's a lot to do, lots of rules to follow and little time to do it. What The Oil Drum folks can do to help can be found under the fold.

There's a lot of detective work involved in this little experiment.

The plan is right now for TOD to blast the House of Representatives with a link to this thread and the comments as the time becomes right. It's time to make some hay. Keep it civil. Staffers will be reading this thread. Be conscious of that, please.

Here's what The Oil Drum can do:

It all starts at <http://www.house.gov> and CRS: <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/> (Congressional Research Service).

The priority: We need to review the Committee-approved bills that will be sent to the Rules Committee and propose changes to improve them that would promote conservation, efficiency, transition to renewables and sustainable EROEI.

Provisions that are egregious violations of these goals are targets for amendments to "strike" or delete them or to strike and replace them with something similar, but different and better.

For sure, everything in the Senate or House bill will not be/is not worthy. The bottom line consideration -- would the overall bill be better or worse than perpetuation of the status quo? So, let's do what we can to steer the rudder.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has been regularly updating its analyses of major energy bills moving through Congress. These reports are available for downloading off the internet by the public.

Places to find specific likely bills to be combined into THE SINGLE House Energy bill (that's how this sausage is going to be made):

H.R. 6 already approved by the House had a lot of placeholder provisions -- so it has to be reviewed-- it will be back as part of the bill Rules will put together.

The Ways and Means Committee has approved a bill with tax changes.

The Natural Resources Committee has approved a bill sponsored by its Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV, biggest coal district in WVA).

The Energy and Commerce Committee hasn't yet approved a bill. Energy and Air Quality Subcomm. Chairman Rick Boucher (biggest coal district in Appalachian VA) has produced a draft that has been reported on. Energy and Commerce Chairman is John Dingell (MI).

The Agriculture Committee may have approved a bill(s). There is a draft Farm Bill with an Energy Title--some of that might also make its way into the House Energy bill.

The NOPEC bill and the Price Gouging bills from the Judiciary Committee already approved by the House may come back as part of the comprehensive House bill. There is a veto threat against the price gouging bill.

The Science and Technology Committee has approved a half-dozen bipartisan R&D energy bills.

The Transportation Committee may have approved some bills. Can't find them yet.

Remember, the Senate bill will NOT be the House bill. Even the House bill that is passed will go to a Conference (which is another whole set of problems, but let's cross that bridge later). However, to the extent there are provisions in the Senate bill that are good or bad -- those should be flagged for action in the House -- to support/add the good and oppose/strike the bad. And that's where you all come in.

Time Frame -

Energy and Commerce is supposed to mark up the Boucher bill this week.

Perhaps a comprehensive bill will be introduced on Friday, June 29 and a summary if not draft

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legislation circulating for review over the July 2-6 District Work Period. Legislation might not be posted on the Thomas website <http://thomas.loc.gov>, or the House website <http://www.house.gov> for several days after it's introduced because of its size. That means that you need to dig through the committees' websites linked at the house.gov site.

Remember also, the House of Representatives is constituency driven. What I mean by that is that congresspersons and their staffers really only listen to their constituents or their leadership, that's about it. That means you need to share these ideas and recommendation(s) whether it is for/against specific amendments and the final package with your Member.

The main Capitol Switchboard phone number is 202-225-3121. They will connect you to any requested Member's office or committee office. At www.house.gov -- the main House home page, there is a link to all of the Committee websites and Members' websites and a zipcode locator search function that will identify your Member for those who don't know.

(fyi, this post will be in existence for quite a while, and it will be kept somewhere in the top 10 posts until the Energy bill makes its way through the House.)



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