



Bush: Short Term Conservation Needed

Posted by [Glenn](#) on September 26, 2005 - 3:23pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)
Topic: [Demand/Consumption](#)

From today's [NY Times](#), in particular, he said:

"We can all pitch in by being better conservers," Mr. Bush said after being briefed on the situation at the Energy Department. "People just need to recognize that these storms have caused disruptions." In addition to urging consumers to cut back, he said federal employees should use carpool and public transport and not take non-essential trips.

Of course, he's talking about short term conservation efforts, but it's nice that he is at least acknowledging that demand is part of the equation too.

At the same time, he's also promising as much from the SPR as is needed and not making any bold gestures at improving long term conservation efforts, or even asking for a return to the 55mph speed limit.

Update [2005-9-26 21:49:0 by ianqui]: The White House released a [press release](#) (signed by Bush himself) about this today that's also fun to look at. Specific conservation measures cited by the president include the following:

All agencies should conserve fuel so we can reduce overall demand and allow extra supplies to be directed towards the hurricane relief effort. In particular, agencies should temporarily curtail non-essential travel and other activities that use gasoline or diesel fuel, and encourage employees to carpool, telecommute, and use public transportation to reduce fuel use. Federal agencies should also take action to conserve natural gas and electricity during periods of peak consumption by shifting energy-intensive activities to non-peak periods wherever possible and by procuring and using efficient Energy STAR-rated energy intensive appliances and products.

So, uh, does that mean that government workers can use their newly approved credit card limits of \$250,000 to buy Energy STAR products?

From a NYT article called "Here Is Your New Federal Credit Card. Here Is Your New Purchase Limit" (published Sept 18, available on LexisNexis or if you have Times Select):

The government buys everything from warships to paper clips, the latter being an example of a "micropurchase."

Before this month, micropurchasing with government-issued credit cards meant anything up to \$2,500 on a single shopping trip, with certain purchases relating to homeland security allowed to reach \$15,000 domestically and \$25,000 abroad.

On Sept. 8, the definition of "micro" was stretched, by quite a bit. When Congress approved \$51.8 billion in Katrina relief, the ceiling on individual purchases with the cards ballooned to \$250,000. Overall credit limits can be much greater.

The thought of individual employees able to charge up to a quarter-million dollars per trip with only the plastic in their wallets, directly payable by Uncle Sam, has government watchdogs agog.

"I am astounded," said Danielle Brian, the executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, a nonpartisan group that monitors waste and fraud. "This is theoretically a fiscally conservative Republican Congress. I don't get it."

Wouldn't it be ironic if encouraging people to "procure" ENERGY Star products actually ended up being more wasteful of taxpayer money?



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