

# Necessary New Direction: Energy Independence

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ence on oil. This act mandates 2.5 million barrels per day in oil savings in 10 years and encourages mass production of cars that can burn alternative fuels and have hybrid engines. Since the Fuel Choices Act promotes alternative fuels and more efficient use of oil, it will ultimately drive down the demand for oil and lower our gas prices.

By adopting fuel technologies that are al-

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ready available and not overly expensive, we can radically reduce the amount of oil we use in the next few years. Plug-in hybrids, which are only a few years from production, will get more than 100 miles per gallon. If each hybrid is a flex-fuel vehicle using E85 or another alternative fuel, our cars will get more than 500 miles per gallon of gasoline.

We have the technology right now to reduce the amount of oil this country uses. Our legislation outlines a bold plan to reduce oil consumption and expand the fuel and vehicle choices of the American consumer. By passing this legislation, oil would have less power over our economy as we expand the choices of domestic fuels available to the consumer. With home-grown choices comes competition in the marketplace, cleaner air, lower prices at the pump and greater security abroad.



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**From left, Reps. Jack Kingston, Eliot Engel and Lamar Smith prepare to ride in a plug-in Toyota Prius.**

I am proud to join my colleagues who are willing to come to the table to create solutions to our nation's oil addiction. It is time to take our country in a new direction, one that works for everyone with lower gas prices and energy independence. Together, America can do better than settling for an energy policy of record gas prices, record giveaways and record profits for oil companies.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) is the chairman and co-founder of the Oil and National Security Caucus and sits on the Energy and Commerce subcommittee on energy.

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carnelina, are being produced and can be  
turned into a cleaner diesel. Nationally, we

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America's roads today. In response to con-  
sumer demand, automobile manufacturers

AGED THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES, INCLU-  
dating the use of 7.5 billion gallons of  
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## What can Congress do to promote wider use of fuel alternatives?

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# America Needs to Explore Oil Alternatives

By Rep. Eliot Engel

“America is addicted to oil,” was the tagline of this year’s State of the Union address. We continue to hear a lot of rhetoric from the Bush administration, but no real solutions to lower gas prices for the American consumer and to wean our economy off oil. Instead of writing legislation to benefit the oil companies, it’s time to commit ourselves to alternative energy sources that will reduce our demand for oil.

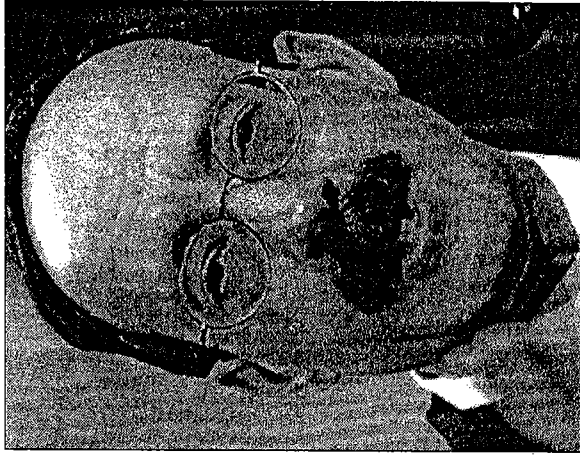
One needs to look no further than the skyrocketing gas prices that are weakening our economy and squeezing middle-class families. “Big Oil” is reaping record profits while the American people are stuck with the bill. Last year, Exxon Mobil raked in record profits of \$36 billion, yet our administration provided more than \$8 billion in tax breaks and subsidies for oil and gas companies instead of making serious investments in the energy technologies of the future. Already, we consume nearly 21 million barrels of oil per day and our demand is increasing. Today, the American economy consumes more than 25 percent of the global oil production while our known oil reserves make up only 3 percent of global supply.

Much of our imported oil comes from unstable nations. Whether it’s the ongoing war in Iraq or the nuclear threat from Iran, it’s time for

America to take a new direction when it comes to oil. While we can and are able to tackle the problem here at home, we are instead compromising our national security as our dependence on unstable oil-rich nations increases.

I believe we need more flex-fuel vehicles on the road, and we should utilize the purchasing power of the federal government to pursue this. Since 1992, the federal government has had a law on the books requiring that 75 percent of new government vehicles be able to use different types of fuels. We aren’t even close. I have been offering an amendment to the fiscal 2007 appropriations bills to remind our federal agencies to comply with this law. The federal government must demonstrate clear leadership on this if we are to wean ourselves from our oil addiction.

The next step is to make alternative fuels



File Photo

Rep. Eliot Engel

available throughout the nation. Many of my colleagues know that in the past I opposed the mandate for ethanol as an additive. Instead, ethanol needs to be a full-blown alternative. Instead of making gasoline with 10 percent ethanol, we should be making ethanol with 15 percent gasoline (E85). Brazil already has switched from gasoline to E85 ethanol made from sugar cane. We can achieve energy independence, too. Fuels made from abundant or renewable resources, such as ethanol made from corn, switchgrass, sugar or other natural materials, should be widely available.

Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.) and I have introduced the Fuel Choices for American Security Act, which has a real plan to reduce our depend-

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