

Congressman Pence, Chairman of the American Energy Solutions Group and Congressman John Shimkus (R-IL) and Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI) co-authored the following op-ed that was published in today's *Wall Street Journal*, laying out the need for the American Energy Act:

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

OPINION JUNE 11, 2009

## **The GOP's Energy Alternative**

***We need more nuclear power.***

By MIKE PENCE, JOHN SHIMKUS and FRED UPTON

While the price of gasoline has risen 50% in the past five months, Democrats in Congress nevertheless seem determined to make our energy situation even worse. Case in point: Legislation sponsored by Reps. Henry Waxman and Edward Markey to establish a cap-and-trade system that will sharply limit carbon-dioxide emissions and increase energy prices.

Independent analyses by Charles River Associates Inc. and the National Association of Manufacturers predict the Waxman-Markey bill will cost millions of domestic jobs as manufacturers relocate plants to countries with less draconian environmental regulations.

Meanwhile, the electricity rates under a cap-and-trade system would, as President Barack Obama said in January 2008 "necessarily skyrocket," by some estimates up to \$4,300 each year.

This is not the way to go. Instead, House Republicans this week unveiled legislation that will lead to lower prices, more jobs, a cleaner environment, and greater energy independence. The centerpiece of our American Energy Act is a commitment to increase the production of our abundant domestic natural resources, and not to punish traditional energy producers and consumers.

The cleanest way for utilities to control CO2 emissions is to increase the supply of carbon-free nuclear energy. This is obvious and simple, but in the thousand-page Waxman-Markey bill nuclear power is hardly mentioned.

The American Energy Act establishes a national goal of licensing 100 new nuclear reactors over the next 20 years. With 31 announced reactor applications already in the pipeline, this goal can be achieved -- and it will revitalize an entire manufacturing sector, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. The bill also streamlines a cumbersome regulatory process by offering a two-year, fast-track approval program for power-plant applications that employ safe reactor designs already approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

As for the problem of spent nuclear fuel rods, our bill emphasizes safe storage and fuel recycling. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be allowed to finish its review of a national repository without political interference, and the federal government will be prevented from blocking other storage facilities if a state and locality choose to contract with a private company for that purpose. The legislation also directs the Department of Energy to contract with private sector entities to recycle spent fuel, lessening the demand on Yucca Mountain and other sites.

Nuclear energy is only one part of a common-sense energy strategy. America also needs to develop more of its own natural resources such as oil and natural gas. Yet areas with tremendous energy resources continue to be off-limits.

The American Energy Act allows for exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and for environmentally sound leasing of oil and natural gas fields in the outer continental shelf and on

federally owned lands with oil shale in the West. Revenues generated by the leases would fund development of technologies to increase clean, renewable and alternative energy sources such as wind and solar.

While ensuring plaintiffs their day in court, our bill stops frivolous lawsuits designed to obstruct energy exploration. It does so by establishing a 60-day deadline on legal challenges and by requiring cases to be filed in the D.C. District Court, which has a particular expertise in energy litigation.

Finally, the American Energy Act encourages personal responsibility through conservation. The bill offers tax incentives for the purchase of new plug-in cars and hybrid vehicles. It also expands the successful tax incentives that have encouraged many people to make their homes more energy efficient.

In the midst of a deep recession, Democratic leaders want to impose higher fuel bills on all of us and relocate American jobs overseas in pursuit of an unproven environmental agenda. Instead, the American Energy Act will produce more energy, lower fuel bills, create more jobs, yield a cleaner environment, and lead to a more secure nation. Can there be any doubt what path is best for the country?