

In addition to high prices, gas stations in some areas have run out of fuel all together. It is vital that we take every possible step to ensure that the gasoline market is priced fairly and it is important that we take steps to increase the supply of gasoline available to the market.

This week in my district I highlighted a 5-point plan to reduce the price of fuel. These steps include:

1. Take tough action against price gougers.
2. Waive boutique fuel requirements so that supply can be easily transferred between regions of the country.
3. Temporarily waive the 2.5 percent and 54 cent per gallon tax on ethanol so that imported ethanol can help make up the difference with the recent phase-out of MTBE in our gasoline supply.
4. Make use of coal—West Virginia's natural resource—as part of our fuel supply. Coal liquefaction technology has been available for many years and our government has invested in research that would allow for fuel to be produced now. Our nation has a 250-year supply of coal that already provides over half of our nation's electricity. Coal is an answer to the gasoline problem as well.

5. Allow for responsible drilling in ANWR and the Outer Continental Shelf to increase our domestic supply of crude oil.

I am pleased that the House took action today on two elements of this important plan. I strongly support H.R. 5253, passed by the House today that will punish price gougers with tough fines or jail time. Provisions of the bill will allow for enforcement by either the Federal Trade Commission or state Attorney Generals to provide the maximum possible protection for consumers. We must investigate and punish instances of gouging wherever they occur on the energy supply chain.

I am extremely disappointed that the House did not take action today on H.R. 5254 to improve the permitting and approval process for new refineries. Our nation has not built a new refinery since 1976 and it is clear that the regulatory process is a major reason why. This improved permitting process would also have been applied to coal liquefaction facilities—another step that should be taken to increase our fuel supply. Once again opponents of increased fuel supplies and lower prices blocked action on common sense energy solutions.

Passage of price gouging legislation is a positive first step. I urge my colleagues to support further legislation to increase supply by allowing new domestic exploration and waiving tariffs and boutique fuels.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON VOLUNTARY PRAYER

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today is a significant day for me, the people of West Virginia and the Nation. Today we commemorate the National Day of Prayer.

As a people of faith, we know that prayer is a powerful instrument. And as one Nation under God, we know that many times our most powerful tool is prayer.

With that in mind and in celebration of National Prayer Day, today I have proposed in

the House of Representatives a Constitutional Amendment that would restore voluntary prayer in our Nation's schools.

West Virginia's senior Senator, ROBERT C. BYRD, introduced identical legislation in the United States Senate last week.

I believe that the Framers of the Constitution made their intent clear when they wrote the First Amendment. I believe they wanted to keep the new government from endorsing one religion over another, not erase the public consciousness or common faith.

For hundreds of millions of Americans who believe in God, prayer is our bridge between Earth and Heaven, our way of opening our hearts to the Lord. Through this intimate relationship we find peace and guidance. It is as important to us, as Christians, as the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. It nourishes our souls and makes us strong.

Nothing in this Constitution, including any amendment to the Constitution, shall be construed to prohibit voluntary prayer or require prayer in school, or to prohibit voluntary prayer or require prayer at a public school extra-curricular activity. Nor does this resolution alter the language of the First Amendment.

The Constitutional Amendment I am introducing today simply clarifies our right, and the right of our children in school, to bow our heads and give thanks for our bountiful blessings, to begin the day as many of us do—with the comfort of prayer. It is a right that is protected by both the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of our Constitution.

Today, during the National Day of Prayer, I am reminded of the verse in Second Chronicles that reads, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Today we thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon this great Country and ask Him to continue to heal our land and meet our needs—and we do so through the power of prayer.

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF JOSHUA BEN TELLER

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today, I am happy to congratulate Paul and Maxine Teller of Washington, D.C., on the birth of their son. Joshua Ben Teller was born this morning, May 4th, 2006, at 8:31 a.m., weighing 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and measures 19 inches long. Joshua is blessed to have been born into a loving home, with wonderful parents, and his birth is a blessing to our Nation.

THE TESTIMONY OF PENELOPE A. GROSS

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the Chesapeake Bay is one of our region's

greatest assets. Keeping the Bay clean is a major priority for the state and local governments.

Our colleague Wayne Gilchrist recently held a hearing on the status of the Bay. One of the participants in that hearing was Supervisor Penelope Gross from Fairfax County, Virginia. I would like to enter into the RECORD her thoughtful comments presented at that hearing. Supervisor Gross has long been an advocate for Bay restoration and her testimony reflects how local governments can be critical partners in that effort.

WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MAY 4, 2006.—Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss Chesapeake Bay restoration activities and the vitally important role of local governments in those efforts. I am honored to be invited to provide testimony. Chesapeake Bay issues are of particular interest to me, which is why I serve on the Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, was a member of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Blue Ribbon Financing Panel and recently was elected Chair of the Bay Program's Local Government Advisory Committee, also known as LGAC. I also chair Virginia's Potomac Watershed Roundtable, and I represent the Mason District on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. As you may know, Fairfax County is one of the largest jurisdictions, population-wise, in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Each of these responsibilities has helped shape my perspective on what is needed to keep our efforts to achieve a clean Bay on track. I would like to share several themes that are the basis of my remarks today:

Implementation and restoration happen primarily at the local level and we need more state and federal funding to get the job done; EPA and their state counterparts need to provide stronger leadership on regulatory issues that will drive much of the multi-billion dollar Bay cleanup effort; a more focused approach to enforcement of existing federal laws, regulations, and policies by EPA to the state would alone make significant strides to clean up the Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners need to set clear implementation priorities, emphasizing those measures that offer the greatest pollution reduction return on investment;

The implementation and funding burden must be shared equitably between and among sectors and levels of government.

Of the 98 commitments in the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, 22 specifically involve local governments, and other commitments imply local government involvement. And I want to remind you that there are more than 1,650 local governments throughout the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay Watershed. From a local government perspective, we know what to do to continue making progress, but we need more help from our state and federal partners. The Bay Program has successfully generated plans and documents that outline what actions local governments should take to help restore the Bay. However, I believe we're heavy on written plans, and we're struggling on the follow-through—i.e., technical and financial assistance to get more done. This was the most common and strongly voiced concern

among LGAC members from all jurisdictions at our most recent meeting, held right here in this building. And I want to take this opportunity to thank Congressman Gilchrest and his staff for engaging in substantive dialogue with LGAC members about this legislation.

Local governments throughout the watershed are currently spending millions of local citizenry dollars to do our part in cleaning up the Bay. However, there needs to be a greater emphasis on developing mechanisms to capture those substantial implementation efforts by local governments and others which are not funded through state or federal Chesapeake Bay funds. For instance, the Commonwealth of Virginia still does not have an effective mechanism to track urban nonpoint source Best Management stormwater facilities. This could be accomplished through a direction to the Chesapeake Bay Program Office and the states to develop an enhanced tracking and reporting system. I understand that the states may already be working on such a system, but to facilitate reporting by implementing entities, I would recommend that this system be web-based and simple to use.

I'm sure it is no surprise to you that the biggest help we could use is additional federal and state funding. The "Cost of a Clean Bay" report prepared by the Chesapeake Bay Commission estimated that more than half of the cost for meeting C2K nutrient and sediment reduction goals would be borne by local governments. In some of the most expensive programmatic areas, such as stormwater management and urban nonpoint source pollution control, the local government share is closer to 100% since there are virtually no federal or state funds to help address the problem. While, sadly, the thoughtful recommendations of the Chesapeake Bay Blue Ribbon Finance Panel seem to have faded from memory, the needs that were identified there have not. It is critical that the federal and state governments in the watershed assume a major role in providing financial assistance for implementation at the local level.

On the issue of funding, I also need to mention my concern with deep cuts being proposed to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). While local governments and our State partners are working to increase funding for clean water programs, the federal SRF is being targeted for cuts totaling \$199.2 million. Many local governments, especially in rural areas, in the Bay watershed depend on this federal funding to pay for high priority water pollution control projects, and the proposed budget cuts are exactly the opposite of what's needed to achieve our goal of a clean and healthy Bay.

But funding alone isn't enough. We also need our state and federal partners to work cooperatively with local governments on a watershed basis to:

1. Clearly articulate measurable goals for local governments to achieve and couple these with appropriate levels of funding support. I support the requirement for measurable goals for local governments under the Local Government Involvement section, with the provisions that this be woven into a realistic implementation plan that includes equitable levels of funding support. To guarantee success of the Tributary Strategies, it is critical to have a detailed plan for implementation that explains who, what, when, where, why, and how.

2. Increase the level of support for the Small Watershed Grants Program to the proposed authorized amount of \$10 million. While far short of the estimated funding necessary to achieve the C2K goals, the Small Watershed Grants are perhaps the most effective

mechanism for engaging local governments in the common effort to achieve water quality and habitat goals. The current funding level of \$2 million translates into just \$1,212 for each of the 1,650 local governments in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. In addition, I recommend increasing the cap on individual small watershed grants to as much as one million dollars, a substantial increase over the present \$50,000 limit. Let me give you an example: in Fairfax County, we often do not apply for small watershed grants because the staff time involved in preparing the grant application actually costs more than the grant itself. The current \$50,000 cap effectively eliminates larger jurisdictions from participating in the Small Watershed Grants Program. In addition to the review and prioritization of grant proposals by the Chesapeake Bay Local Government Advisory Committee, there also should be a mechanism for prioritizing grants within watersheds or metropolitan areas to ensure that grants address priority local or tributary-specific issues. A good example of a priority might be the ongoing efforts to restore the Anacostia River which flows into the Potomac River just a few blocks from here.

3. Establish a "Measurable Goals" provision for Soil Conservation Districts comparable to the provision for local governments. As the level of accountability and responsibility for local governments is increased, equity suggests that there be a comparable provision for "Measurable Goals" for the agricultural sector. A logical geographic unit would be the soil conservation district. As above, implementation should be coupled with equitable levels of funding support.

4. Enhance the Tributary Strategies and Implementation Plans to explicitly address nutrient and sediment "Cap Management" as growth continues. Cap management is clearly required by the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement, and the population of the watershed is projected to increase by upwards of 2 million between now and 2030. If not explicitly addressed at the State level in Tributary Strategies and related implementation plans, there is a very real risk of losing ground, literally, as new development occurs.

5. A one-size-fits-all approach to local government coordination and C2K Agreement implementation will not work. Outreach and implementation must be tailored to the abilities of large and small jurisdictions to undertake those efforts. Differences in local government access to technology must be considered during the development of communications strategies. A strong, structured technical assistance program to local governments is needed, especially in smaller, more rural jurisdictions that lack staff expertise in stormwater management and watershed protection. In many localities, watershed management still is not reflected in land use planning. As a result, development patterns and practices ignore the many values that riparian buffers, protected floodplains and protected natural resource lands offer for water quality, water supply, and wildlife habitat. More importantly, as a local elected official, I know that local government officials need to understand the local benefits that would result from changes in land use policies. Otherwise, they won't be persuaded to defend these changes before their constituencies.

6. We are concerned about the proposed language that requires tributary strategy goals or BMPs to be included in NPDES permits, both point and nonpoint source, or MS4 permits. In Virginia, nonpoint source pollution standards should not be written into MS4 permits because, as mentioned earlier in my testimony, the Commonwealth does

not yet have an effective mechanism to track urban nonpoint sources.

Each of these areas is of strong interest to LGAC. With appropriate staff and requisite resources, I can envision an activist role for LGAC, as the Tributary Strategies are turned in to action plans, including:

Developing goals at the local level and helping to ensure that localities live up to their responsibilities;

Partnering with state and local agencies to achieve an equitable allocation of funding;

Reaching out to other sectors, especially agriculture and private industry. We need to open or continue dialogue with all our partners in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. We are all in this together: from those who labor under the Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol dome to the Pennsylvania farmer, the Maryland waterman, the Virginia technology worker, the long-time resident, and the new Americans. Finger-pointing won't clean up the Bay; working together just might.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today and for your leadership in helping to keep the Bay restoration effort moving forward. We are looking forward to working with you, other members of Congress, and our State and federal partners to achieve our shared goals of a restored Chesapeake Bay watershed.

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK
HIGHLIGHTS NATIONAL PROBLEM

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the nearly 46 million Americans who lack health insurance, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Cover the Uninsured Week (May 1–7, 2006) aims to raise awareness of this National problem and the will to solve it.

One in seven Americans, including more than 8 million children, does not have even basic healthcare coverage. Each day, these men and women hope they do not become sick or are not injured. Parents hope their children remain healthy. As healthcare costs continue to rise, it becomes more difficult for many families to continue healthcare coverage.

During the week of May 1–7, events will be held at hospitals, medical centers, community centers, on campuses and in place of worship worldwide. Volunteers will help to enroll uninsured adults and children in public programs that provide low-cost and free coverage to those who are eligible. Information about local help available will be distributed as well.

Ensuring Americans have access to adequate medical care should be a priority for all of us. Cover the Uninsured Week gives all of us the opportunity to say that we care—and we want this issue to be a national priority.

THE REMARKABLE LEGACY OF
U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI
ANNAN

TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reflect on the distinguished legacy of United Nations