

Larson Demands Hearings on Soaring Gas Prices

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WASHINGTON D.C. – As oil hovers at record prices, Congressman John B. Larson called on Congress Monday to hold hearings to investigate whether oil companies are taking unfair advantage of Americans at the pump and to hammer out an action plan to provide relief from spiking costs.

Based on these hearings, Larson intends to introduce legislation aimed at recapturing excess oil profits and channeling them into veteran's health care and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

"There is a pervasive culture of greed that reeks at every gas pump around the country," Larson said. "Congress has an obligation to the citizens we are sworn to serve to get to the bottom of this."

Larson is also asking Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodham to report to Congress the actions – if any – his department has taken to control soaring prices.

"Solving our nation's energy problem is today's Apollo mission," Larson said. "We have to marshal the same national will in conquering our crippling dependence on foreign oil as we devoted to putting a man on the moon."

Co-creator of the House Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Caucus, Larson said he will continue to press Congress to embrace a strategic shift in the nation's energy policy away from its reliance on oil and towards alternative fuels and technology.

In the short term, Larson is urging his colleagues to lessen the financial burden of high energy costs by releasing oil from the strategic petroleum reserve.

"People are feeling it at the pump today, but soon fall and winter will be upon us," Larson added. "This Administration can't simply ignore this crisis. Too many people are being hurt, directly and indirectly, and this is not something that Karl Rove can spin away."

"The energy bill that the Republican-controlled Congress just passed is soaking Americans at the pump and the oil companies are mopping up record profits. Instead of helping to hold down oil prices, the bill showers billions of dollars on the oil industry in unneeded tax breaks and incentives as they continue importing at record breaking levels – 12 million barrels a day and counting."

"The Administration and Congress gave the special interests what they wanted. It's time for them to act in the interest of the American people. The Administration, the energy secretary need to explain what steps they are taking to give Americans a break and to prevent galloping prices from running down the economy. The Republican-controlled Congress needs to develop a backbone and provide the leadership that has been lacking by aggressively pursuing a policy that replaces foreign oil with sustainable, American-produced, economy-growing forms of energy from ethanol to fuel cells. We have the ability. We've lacked the political will."

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