

The wise stewardship of our natural resources is critical to our nation's national security, public health, and quality of life, and I am a staunch supporter of efforts to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat from environmental contamination.

In order to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment – today and for future generations – we must continue to build on landmark environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act. We must also continue to provide robust funding for programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the National Park Service, which help protect important wild places and make them accessible to the public. Coming from a family of avid animal lovers, I am also a strong supporter of legislation to protect animals, wildlife, and the habitat on which they depend.

In the Fourth District, we also understand the importance of new energy and environmental technologies to our economic development, and I have worked as a member of the Appropriations Committee to promote federal investments in environmental research, renewable energy technologies, and other "green" industries that will be essential to our future economic competitiveness. I am a member of the [Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition](#), and together we are working to promote a more sustainable national energy policy that includes conservation and renewable energy provisions and moves us away from our dependence on fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, in the previous Congress our landmark environmental laws and our investments in a cleaner and greener future [came under threat like never before](#). As your Representative, I will continue working to resist attempts to undercut critical environmental laws and to provide adequate funding for energy and environmental research. As Congress debates these important issues, I hope you will keep in touch with your views.

{mooblock=Climate Change}

Global climate change is perhaps the single greatest long-term threat to our nation's security and economic prosperity, and [the scientific evidence](#) linking it to human activity is now beyond dispute. Yet, despite some progress in recent years, the United States has failed to adopt a comprehensive strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the growing impact of climate change. We have also failed to exercise the international leadership that will be required to adopt an enforceable global framework on climate change, most notably by

refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol that was signed by President Clinton in 1998.

I believe we can and must do better. In 2009, the House passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which would have reformed our nation's energy policy by expanding investments in clean energy resources, increasing energy efficiency, and improving air quality. Specifically, the bill would have established a market-based incentive system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enabling the United States to achieve the 80 percent reduction that scientists say we must reach by mid-century if we are to avoid a dangerous climate tipping point. It also would have required electric utilities to generate 20 percent of their electricity through renewable energy sources; invested in research to develop new clean energy technologies; mandated new energy-saving standards for buildings, appliances, and industry; and safeguarded consumers against energy price increases. North Carolina's Fourth District would have been a major winner in this new, clean-energy economy.

Unfortunately, the 111th Congress adjourned without final action on comprehensive climate legislation, and rather than moving forward with solutions, the current House leadership has been working to undo the progress we have already achieved, including attempts to limit the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) existing authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. I will continue to oppose these and other efforts to turn back the clock on our nation's climate change policy, and to advocate for greater leadership by the United States in addressing this important issue on the international stage.

- For more information on international efforts to address climate change, visit the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) or the [United Nations Framework on Climate Change](#)

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{mooblock=Oil & Gas Development}

For far too long, our nation has been dependent on fossil fuels, primarily purchased from foreign sources, to meet its energy needs. This oil-driven energy policy has had a negative impact on

our environment, economy, and national security, as we witnessed tragically in the oil spill that devastated the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

The United States will continue to rely on fossil fuels in the short-term, and responsible domestic drilling can, and should, continue to be a part of our broader energy policy. In fact, under the Obama Administration domestic oil and natural gas production and exports have increased, while imports of foreign oil have decreased. I also support efforts to compel oil and gas companies to produce on the drilling leases they already own, rather than exploring new leases in environmentally sensitive areas.

But over the long run, we will simply never have a sufficient domestic supply of oil to meet the demands of our economy, and our energy policy should more clearly reflect that. We must reduce our dependence on oil – whether from foreign or domestic sources – and enact a comprehensive federal energy policy that holds Big Oil accountable and allows our country to promote energy independence and move towards a clean energy economy. In order to pay for the necessary clean energy investments, I support efforts to eliminate decades old tax incentives and subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Despite the record profits for the oil and gas industry, the Republicans repeatedly block attempts to level the playing field.

We should be making significant investments today in energy efficiency and by providing incentives for the production of energy that is clean, domestic, and affordable -- including technologies ranging from wind and solar power to carbon capture and sequestration to the production of electric and other alternative vehicles. This research creates jobs today, lays the foundation for our future economic competitiveness, and makes alternative energy sources more affordable for consumers – and the Fourth District is poised to be a big winner in this new economy.

- [Congressional Research Service Report: U.S. Energy: Overview and Key Statistics \(pdf\)](#)
- For information on our nation's energy outlook, please visit the [Energy Information Administration](#)

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{mooblock=Natural Gas}

Recently, in response to energy policy proposals such as the Pickens plan, as well as to discoveries of natural gas and shale deposits in the U.S., there has been heightened interest in natural gas as a transportation fuel, or natural gas vehicles (NGVs). Natural gas currently accounts for about one quarter of the fuel used for energy in the U.S., but less than one-tenth of 1 percent of this amount is currently used for transportation fuel.

Proponents note that increased use of natural gas as a transportation fuel could help to reduce our importation of foreign oil because most natural gas is produced domestically or imported from politically stable countries, primarily in North America. And some advocates in the Congress are promoting legislation to provide tax incentives that focus on natural gas as a transportation fuel, promoting the production and purchase of NGVs, as well as the installation of commercial and residential natural gas refueling pumps. However, some scientists and experts claim that NGVs are not necessarily better due to the life-cycle emissions generated in the production, transportation, and consumption of natural gas.

Experts also have expressed concerns over hydraulic fracturing, a process that has been increasingly utilized to retrieve oil and natural gas from shale formations, which could contaminate underground aquifers and drinking water supplies. Hydraulic fracturing was exempted from Safe Drinking Water Act requirements under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPA Act 2005) and regulation of the drilling practice currently lies with the individual states. Currently, North Carolina law does not allow horizontal drilling or hydraulic fracturing, but the laws vary widely from state to state. I am a cosponsor of legislation that would eliminate this exemption and require oil and gas companies using hydraulic fracturing to disclose the chemicals, if any, that they use during the process.

Two Duke University researchers recently studied the issue and found that shale drilling is potentially risky and that the presence of methane in water wells was likely due to leaking drill casings; and they have called for further studies to be conducted. It may also interest you to know that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced plans to spend \$12 million on a new study of the safety of hydraulic fracturing, which will also research problems with methane contamination of water wells. This report is to be completed in 2014, with a preliminary report expected in 2012. In addition, although the Department of Energy does not regulate oil and gas production, the Secretary has assembled a panel of experts to look at shale gas drilling safety, to make recommendations about how to make drilling safer, and to offer advice to other agencies on how they could better protect the environment from shale gas drilling.

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{mooblock=Nuclear Power}

I believe that nuclear power should be part of the discussion about reducing greenhouse gas emissions and diversifying our energy policy away from fossil fuels. Unlike natural gas and coal, nuclear energy does not emit carbon or produce greenhouse gases. Our country's nuclear power plants – including the [Shearon Harris facility](#) in the Triangle - provide 20 percent of our national electrical output, and have the potential to provide much more.

However, I share concerns about the potential security and environmental hazards posed by nuclear power facilities in the United States, especially in the wake of the tragic nuclear accident that occurred in Japan in early 2011. In the wake of the catastrophic accident, the NRC undertook a comprehensive review of the safety of all U.S. nuclear plants and established a task force to develop recommendations to enhance safety at America's reactors. In July 2011, the near-term task force released a report making 12 safety recommendations to the NRC. I joined other Members in urging the Agency to move quickly to adopt the near-term recommendations, and I am pleased to report that the NRC recently announced that it will begin [immediately implementing 7 of the 12 near-term recommendations](#) .

As the Ranking Member of the [House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security](#) , I have placed a high priority on providing close oversight of nuclear power plant security issues, including programs that protect radioactive source materials from falling into the wrong hands and enhanced security measures for critical infrastructure facilities such as power plants.

In addition, I have worked to hold the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which is responsible for the safety of nuclear power production and other civilian uses of nuclear materials, accountable on issues of power plant safety and security. I have been particularly active in ensuring that we have adequate fire safety regulations at nuclear power plants and that our plants are prepared for emergencies. For example, I was able to include language in an Energy and Water Appropriations bill directing the NRC to require nuclear plant operators to come into full compliance with regulatory requirements on an expedited basis.

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{mooblock=Renewables & Clean Energy}

I believe we need to pursue a long-term energy policy that moves us toward energy independence through alternative sources, efficiency and conservation. The U.S. is well-positioned to become the leader in new energy technologies that will create millions of new jobs over the next decade. To do so, however, we need the proper policies in place that will provide incentives for the production of energy that is clean, domestically-produced, and affordable. I am a member of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition. The Coalition is working to forge a new direction for energy policy that will emphasize renewable fuels and energy efficiency and it has already had some success.

Congress could help eliminate potential pollution problems caused by some of our traditional sources of energy and could also help to level the playing field, making alternative sources of energy (including wind and solar) more cost-effective. I have supported efforts to level the playing field between federal incentives for fossil fuels (such as coal, oil and gas) and federal incentives for renewable energies (like wind and solar), as well as investments in energy initiatives such as a new, smart power grid to make the electricity grid more efficient and reliable, advanced battery technology, and energy efficiency measures.

We can also help to fund the development of more viable consumer products that use renewable fuels and are energy efficient. The market for these products exists, but it has been hindered by limited choices and, in some cases, higher costs. I strongly support our national efforts to weatherize homes. A number of incentives exist to help citizens weatherize their homes and purchase energy efficient products. Since transportation is one of the primary causes of our high energy demand, I am also a strong supporter of [increased fuel economy standards](#). I also support the development of alternative fuels (such as biofuels and natural gas) and the advancement of new vehicle technologies, including flex-fuel vehicles and plug-in hybrid and electric cars. I will continue to defend federal investments in the research needed to develop new and better alternative fuel technologies and offers incentives to create the necessary infrastructure, as well as support transportation investments that provide alternatives to driving cars.

I believe the next step is for Congress to enact comprehensive climate and clean energy legislation. This would be good for the environmental health of the planet, but would also help our nation to be a leader in finding solutions that create a new generation of jobs and provide climate and energy security for us and the generations to come. That's why I voted in favor of

the American Clean Energy and Security Act when it was approved by the House in June 2009.

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{mooblock=BP Oil Spill}

In the summer of 2010, our nation suffered what most consider to be the worst environmental disaster in its history when the British Petroleum (BP) Deepwater Horizon oil well exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, releasing nearly 5 million barrels of oil into the ocean and devastating the economy and ecosystems of our Gulf Coast.

On the positive side, the environmental damage appears to be far less dire than the worst predictions. However, we know that a variety of birds, fish and other sea life are struggling, and it will likely be years before we know the full extent of the damage to the Gulf Coast. Furthermore, some communities have seen a rise in health concerns that they believe are related to the spill, and there are no clear overall estimates of the total economic damages.

Congress still has not changed a single law in response to this tragedy. In January 2011, the National Oil Spill Commission released 300 pages of findings and, citing "systemic" problems, made recommendations for reforms. Under Democratic leadership, the House approved a comprehensive response bill that would: reform the scandal-ridden agency responsible for conducting oversight and collecting royalties from oil and gas companies; impose new safety measures and strengthen safety oversight; remove the \$75 million liability cap for economic damages paid by oil spillers to families and small businesses; invest in R&D on things like improving drilling, use of chemical dispersants; and restore the Gulf. Unfortunately, the bill did not receive consideration in the Senate, and the new Republican-led Congress has largely ignored the Commission's report.

The Administration has begun issuing new permits with some new environmental and safety standards in place, but there is more we should do to reduce the likelihood of future spills. Our "fail safe" technology still isn't fail safe; companies can still obtain new leases regardless of their safety record or ability to deal with an accident; the liability cap for companies is still just \$75 million; and companies can avoid compensating families when workers die on oil rigs. Now, oil companies, buoyed by Republican leaders, are rallying to get back to business as usual and are

pursuing new opportunities for deepwater drilling in the Gulf, the Arctic, and elsewhere off the U.S. coast -- and they want to do so with even less environmental review. A year ago, we were discussing a comprehensive energy overhaul to transition away from fossil fuels – upon which our nation has been dependent for far too long – and move toward renewable energy sources. Today, we are moving backward as House Republicans push to open new areas to drilling and to further weaken offshore safety regulations.

Although much of the oil from the spill is no longer on the surface, and the story is no longer in the news, we must make good on the promises made to make the Gulf whole again. We owe it to the workers that lost their lives one year ago, to the communities that lost their livelihoods, and to the American people to pass legislation that will address the systemic failures in the oil and gas industry, increase worker safety and protection of our coasts, and hold Big Oil accountable.

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