

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Miller Votes for Bill to Study State Agencies' Energy Use; Promote Renewable, Clean Energy Utilization



Cautions against Panic Over U. S. Oil Supplies; Wasting Tax Dollars on Non-essential Energy Projects

While a measure approved by the state House of Representatives Monday mandating a study of state departments' and agencies' activities involving petroleum use is prudent, the state legislature should not over-react to alarmist reports of oil scarcity in the United States and around the world by endorsing alternative energy projects that produce negligible energy savings and waste taxpayer dollars, state Representative Lawrence G. Miller said today.

“There are many legislators in the Connecticut General Assembly who want to address the issue of ‘peak oil’ - the point at which adequate supplies of oil become inadequate - on the state level. They want to establish a Peak Oil and Gas Committee that would oversee the energy policies of the state and its citizens. Hartford once again would be attempting to micro-manage an aspect of our lives. Six committees in Hartford currently address energy issues, and one need look no further than the electric industry deregulation of 1998 to see how disastrous their well-intended policies can be,” said Representative Miller, R-122nd District.

“The ‘peak oil’ concept is not an immediate threat to either the economy of the United States or Connecticut’s economy,” Representative Miller said. “By my estimate, peak oil will not occur globally until around 2258. However, that does not mean that we do not need to address the issues of production, conservation, or the fact that we import 60% of our oil right now. That is why I voted for the legislation (House Bill 5724) that passed the House today.”

“Although the world will not begin to run out of oil for many, many years, we should begin developing new methods of extracting oil from known sources and exploring for new oil deposits now,” Representative Miller said. “A new technology developed by Texas A & M University and the U. S. Department of Energy, for example, will enable oil companies to recover an estimated 218 billion barrels of oil from existing fields that previously was left in the ground because it was considered too expensive to remove. The U. S. is not running out of oil. It is running into it.”

“Canada’s tar sands are said to hold recoverable oil equivalent to Saudi Arabia’s oil resources. In addition, there is a minimum of 2.9 trillion barrels of recoverable oil from tar sands globally, including 750 billion barrels in the United States and as many as 724

billion barrels of undiscovered conventional oil worldwide. There is more oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge than there is in Texas, new sources of oil have been discovered in the Dakotas, and there are still untapped oil and natural gas fields in the Gulf of Mexico,” said Representative Miller, R-122nd District.

The measure, which was sent to the state Senate for final legislative approval, would:

- Require the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to conduct a ‘petroleum sensitivity study’ of state agencies. The study would include a statewide assessment and inventory of state departments and agencies and their activities and resource requirements concerning petroleum use.
- Require OPM to establish a pilot program to provide grants not exceeding \$50,000 each to at least five municipalities to develop and plan responses to energy scarcity and cost increases. The plans may include, but not be limited to, the heating and cooling of public buildings, transportation, vital services and food supplies.
- Establish a task force to study energy scarcity and sustainability. The task force must conduct scenario planning for long-term petroleum and natural gas scarcity, steep price increases, and supply disruptions. The study must examine price and scarcity impacts of natural gas and petroleum on the economy, food supply, transportation, education, health and emergency response.
- Require a study that would determine how other states promote and increase the use and supply of renewable energy and clean energy, including, but not limited to, an examination of the funding for and mission of renewable energy and clean energy funds and departments in other states.