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Inglis encouraged by energy proposals  
*Congressman says meeting with Bush highlighted challenges, opportunities*

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GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

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WASHINGTON -- President Bush urged Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., and more than a dozen other lawmakers Thursday to approve his proposals for research and development of energy alternatives.

Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Energy Secretary Sam Bodman, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card and economic adviser Al Hubbard spent about 45 minutes with the group of Democrats and Republicans.

In his January State of the Union address, Bush talked about doubling funding for alternative energy research over the next 10 years and announced an initiative that would increase clean-energy research by 20 percent.

Inglis, already a supporter of the proposals, said he left the White House on Thursday convinced that Bush's background as an oilman will give him the credibility to create landmark energy policies that will make the United States less dependent on imported fuels.

**Advertisement**      The meeting gave Inglis a glimpse of the challenges Bush faces in trying to win support for his proposals. The South Carolina congressman saw lawmakers from different regions that have vested interests in oil and natural gas as well as in certain kinds of alternative fuels.

"It's a great big country ... a place with a lot of divergent interests," he said. "It was pretty clear we are nowhere near the finish line."

But Inglis also took the opportunity to talk to Bodman about BMW's work in South Carolina on hydrogen as an energy source for cars. He plans to send Bodman information about the automaker's research.

Inglis said he doesn't think Bush will be weakened by the congressional backlash over the administration's deal to allow Dubai Ports World, a United Arab Emirates-owned company, to take over some operations at six U.S. ports.

"I don't think that will affect the energy security issue," Inglis said. "I think Republicans and Democrats alike will agree they (Bush and Cheney) know about energy and they know about security."

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