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MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0530

HENRY A. WAXMAN
30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
September 28, 2005

Today, the Committee takes up the so-called, "Gasoline for America's Security Act of 2005."

The Gulf Coast of the United States was devastated by a catastrophic hurricane. As under-funded levees crumbled, a million people were displaced. Hundreds of thousands of Americans lost their homes and their possessions. Making matters worse, the victims of the storm waited agonizing days for relief. Many had no food, no water, no medical attention, no help.

Gasoline prices jumped 46 cents per gallon overnight. No area of the country was shielded. Price gouging was rampant. As the refiners recently testified before this Committee, they charged more simply because they could. The big oil companies dramatically ran up their prices after the Hurricanes, and made record profits in the process.

And now with no legislative hearing, no subcommittee markup, and an unprecedented 8 am markup, this Committee launches a mad dash to jam this bill through before the country has any idea of its radical provisions.

This Committee is trying to use this tragedy and misery to undermine our environmental laws and pass more special-interest giveaways to the oil industry. It wants to exploit Katrina for a special interest bonanza.

This is the legislative equivalent of price gouging. And it's unconscionable.

The bill before us is supposed to be a response to Katrina. It is supposed to respond to the damage done to our nation's energy infrastructure and address the nation's runaway energy prices. But what it does is give the oil industry even more taxpayer subsidies and exemptions from environmental laws.

And the bill is not even limited to the oil industry. This bill undermines the Clean Air Act by allowing thousands of major pollution sources across the nation to dramatically increase their emissions.

The ideas in this bill aren't new. They are same egregious environmental assaults that Republicans in Congress have tried unsuccessfully to pass for years. All that's new is the rationale.

These were bad ideas when they were first proposed. To pass them now — in the guise of helping hurricane victims — would be shameful.