

# Our view: Energy bill doesn't drill deep enough

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The Town Talk

Seven weeks before American voters elect a new president, members of Congress have found the political will to do something about the nation's energy policy. There's a surprise.

The House of Representatives on Tuesday passed the Comprehensive American Energy Security and Consumer Protection Act. House Resolution 6899 passed by a vote of 236-189.

We're happy to see any action at all, but this falls far short of what's needed.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, voted against it and called it "flawed."**

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-New Orleans, dubbed the bill dead on arrival in the Senate.

**"This bill is not a true attempt at energy reform, as it fails on multiple levels to address our immediate and long-term concerns," Alexander said. "If this bill is enacted, it would put more restrictions on drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf than would be in place if Congress simply allowed the moratorium to expire on Oct. 1. This bill is a step backward."**

We agree.

**"The major flaws of this bill are not what it tries to do but what it does not do," Alexander said. "It does not allow coastal states to share in the**

**revenue generated from exploration, it does not increase U.S. refineries, it does not allow environmentally responsible exploration of the Arctic coastal plain in Alaska, and it does not expand emission-free nuclear power or do enough to lead America away from carbon to renewable forms of energy."**

Common sense says that an effective energy plan must go far and deep. That should start with a realistic assessment of current and projected energy consumption; the provision of incentives to encourage the development of new technologies; and a modification of drilling restrictions so they reflect the industry's technological ca-

pabilities, its environmental and safety records and the will of the consumers.

H.R. 6899 does some smart things, including amending the Internal Revenue Code to establish some tax credits in relevant areas: renewable-energy bonds, coal project investments, transportation and domestic fuel security, and energy conservation and efficiency.

But H.R. 6899 just doesn't drill deep enough, and that perpetuates the nation's biggest energy problem: Even with gas pushing \$4 a gallon, we are complacent.

That needs to end.

Read H.R. 6899 online at <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2008/index.asp>.