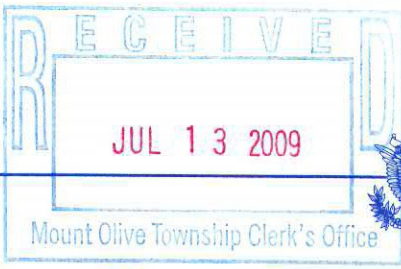
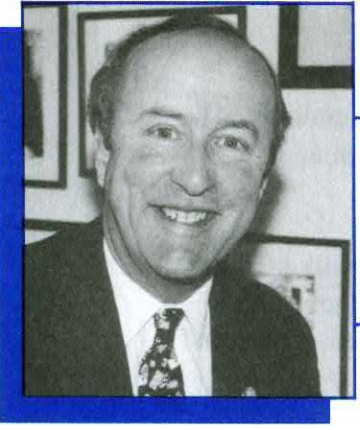


(c)



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Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen

The Process is Disgraceful, the Product is Flawed

As submitted to the Daily Record on June 26, 2009.

As Ronald Reagan once famously said, "There they go again!"

In a disgraceful replay of the process Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid used to ram through Congress a \$1 trillion 'stimulus' bill in February, the House just passed the so-called American Clean Energy Security Act, a warped version of a 'cap-and-trade' scheme.

This final version of their 1,200 page bill was released just hours before the House debate began. Crafted behind closed doors, it was shaped by intimidation and threats to Majority members from their own leadership and 'special interests'. In another reprehensible exercise in legislative horse-trading, the leadership bought off complaining industries and states with loopholes and other sweeteners. Coal, agriculture, rural electric cooperatives and other sectors were exempted from some of the more onerous provisions.

Frankly, I doubt any Member read the bill. (They had neither the time nor the opportunity.) Certainly, very few understand the full implications of this massive, complicated and far-reaching legislation that will affect virtually every part of our economy and the household budget of every American family. The notion that the House would vote to approve such a package without full analysis of its long-range and unintended consequences is appalling.

I should have voted "no" purely to protest not having a bill to read and digest. However, this substance of this legislation also demanded a "no" vote.

To my mind, this "cap-and-trade" program will destroy American jobs, raise prices for gasoline, electricity, and other sources of energy for all families and small businessmen and women.

In the midst of the deepest recession in memory, Americans are justifiably worried. Retention and creation of good jobs is a top concern. And, for good reason: we're hemorrhaging jobs at a staggering rate, with 1.6 million private sector jobs lost since the trillion-dollar "stimulus" spending bill passed.

Where are the jobs?

With the unemployment rate soaring, policies that impose a national energy tax will only make things worse by:

- **Crippling small business.** Small businesses will face energy costs that "necessarily skyrocket," in the January 2008 words of then-Senator Barack Obama, and will have less money to invest and create new jobs.
- **Increasing costs for every American.** The Director of the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) told Congress that "consumers would ultimately bear most of the costs of emission reductions." Gasoline, home heating, food, clothing – flipping on a light switch! – will all cost more. Even President Obama's Budget Director, Peter Orszag, admitted that "cap-and-trade" would increase energy prices on all Americans.

- **Fueling more government spending.** This massive tax hike will undoubtedly fuel more wasteful Washington spending that's burying our children and grandchildren in debt.

This legislation is a gift that 'keeps on giving' to our economic adversaries like China and India whose economies are already sucking away U.S. manufacturing jobs at an alarming rate. Needless to say, these nations impose no restrictions on their emissions!

Of course, we need a better solution. That starts with promoting the use of cleaner energy sources as quickly as we can. And, we know the steps we need to take:

- Substantially improving car mileage (CAFE) standards without making vehicles unaffordable to average consumers;

- Begin creating a new standard requiring retail electricity suppliers to meet 20% of their electricity demand through renewable energy sources;

- Enhancing conservation by working to cut home and business energy usage and creating new incentives to do so;

- Making greater investments in solar, wind power, and other renewable energy sources;

- Making the production of biofuels cost-competitive with gasoline, but end the costly ethanol mandate;

- Building more nuclear power plants, a clean energy source, to produce usable electricity (New Jersey currently gets 53 percent of its power supply from nuclear);

- Using innovation at the National Science Foundation and Department of Energy to help lead the way on clean and renewable energy.

Producing alternative energy sources will help decrease our dependency on fossil fuels (and Middle Eastern and Venezuelan sources of petroleum) which degrade our environment. And, indeed, there is some urgency to this imperative. However, so is the creation and retention of quality American jobs.

Environmental protection and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. As an innovative society, we can and must find the means to do both! Unfortunately, the Pelosi-Reid "cap-and-trade" bill - a 'bastardized' version of a possible free market solution - ignores this fundamental imperative.