

*Statement from*

# **Congressman Eliot Engel**

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Climate change is a pervasive threat, which presents clear challenges. To protect our nation and our environment, it is essential that we reduce our consumption of oil and promote the use of clean alternative fuels. The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. These gases accumulate in the atmosphere, cause the planet to warm, and in turn threaten widespread environmental impacts such as stronger hurricanes, rising sea levels, and the destruction of coral reefs.

I have led the charge to mitigate the threat of climate change. In 2005, I introduced with Congressman Jack Kingston the Fuel Choices for American Security Act (H.R. 4409). That was a bi-partisan bill designed to develop a broad array of reliable and clean domestic fuels, reduce the amount of oil we need to fuel our economy, increase our national security, protect jobs now at risk in the automobile sector, and expand the market for fuels made from agricultural products grown right here at home.

We modified the bill and reintroduced it in 2007 as the DRIVE Act (H.R. 670) – the Dependence Reduction through Innovation in Vehicles and Energy Act – with over 60 co-sponsors from both parties. Once again, this bill enjoyed broad bi-partisan support. It was designed to promote the national security and economic stability of the United States by reducing our dependence on foreign oil through the use of clean alternative fuels, advanced vehicle technologies, and other cutting-edge transportation options.

I am proud to say that many provisions of our DRIVE Act were successfully included in the energy package passed by the full House on August 4, 2007 (H.R. 3221 and H.R. 2776). This package will reduce our reliance on oil by providing an historic investment in homegrown biofuels, giving incentives for plug-in hybrid vehicles, and promoting the use of mass transit and cleaner, more-efficient buses, ferries, and trains.

The Senate passed its version of the energy bill on June 21, 2007. Differences between the bills will now be worked out in a joint House-Senate conference committee. As a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I will work to preserve the strong provisions of the House bill, and to ensure that the final piece of legislation is an effective one.

In addition to the transportation sector, many facets of our society contribute to climate change. That is why I have introduced H.R. 2651, the Greenhouse Gas Accountability Act of 2007, which would provide a comprehensive look at the nation's greenhouse gas footprint. This legislation would establish a complete inventory of greenhouse gas emissions – telling us what is being emitted and who is emitting it. I believe that this is a crucial step in determining how and where it makes the most economic sense to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, I am a proud co-sponsor of H.R. 1590 – Congressman Waxman’s Safe Climate Act – which is designed to implement a cap and trade system for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This bill would reduce GHG emissions economy-wide to 80% below the 1990 emissions levels by 2050. A cap-and-trade system will help solve the climate crisis, while giving businesses the flexibility and time they need to achieve carbon emission reductions without harming our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these important issues with you today. I assure you – as a 19-year veteran of the United State House of Representatives, and a Senior Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee – I will continue to fight to minimize our emissions of greenhouse gases, and to control the looming threat of global climate change.