

Washington, DC - This evening Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20) joined a bipartisan group of lawmakers to pass H.R. 6899, the Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act. The landmark legislation represents a bold step towards lowering energy costs and reducing American dependency on foreign oil.

"The legislation we've passed today represents significant progress with respect to our nation's energy policy. The Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act will take immediate steps to lower energy costs for all Americans while also putting us on a path towards ending our dependency on foreign oil," said Congressman Gonzalez. Specifically, the legislation will temporarily release almost ten percent of the oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a measure that in the past has brought down gas prices significantly. At the same time, the bill extends and expands tax incentives for renewable energy production. The incentives will retain and create hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

In addition, the bill mandates that utility companies generate 15 percent of their electricity from renewable sources - such as wind power, biomass, geothermal, and solar - by 2020. The new Renewable Electricity Standards will not only reduce global warming emissions but will also lower energy prices, saving consumers an estimated \$13-18 billion cumulatively by 2020.

And finally, H.R. 6899 expands the domestic energy supply by permitting responsible drilling for oil on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). While still imposing strict environmental protections, the bill would allow leasing between 50 and 100 miles offshore if a State approves the leasing of the coastline by enacting state law. The remaining OCS beyond 100 miles offshore will continue to be open for oil and gas leasing.

"In the face of skyrocketing energy costs, it is obvious that our country is in the midst of a serious energy crisis and Congress needed to act," said Congressman Gonzalez. "This compromise legislation represents significant progress towards addressing the challenges we currently face. The comprehensive nature of this bill will result in both short and long term benefits for our economy and the American consumer, and it is a piece of legislation I am proud to have supported," he added.

###