

This week, I was pleased the House passed conservation legislation I authored in 2011. I introduced legislation last year aiming to increase online access for federal duck stamps, making a temporary program permanent to allow states to issue duck stamps electronically. I am proud to sponsor this legislation to modernize the sales and distribution of the federal duck stamp program without burdening the taxpayer. This is a small issue for many in our country, but a great step forward for the continued conservation of waterfowl. This program has been very successful, raising millions of dollars for conservation organizations that work toward preserving our natural resources for enjoyment by future generations. I look forward to the bill's consideration by the Senate.

On Tuesday, I joined my colleagues in attending President Obama's State of the Union address. While the president and I disagree on many policies, I was encouraged by his focus on preserving the American dream, a dream fought for by so many in our history, by heroes that gave their lives in the name of freedom. I was also pleased to hear discussion of an "all of the above" approach to American energy production. This is so critical to our economy, with both businesses and families benefitting from lower energy costs and American energy jobs. I am hopeful the President is serious about tackling this country's energy problems and promoting American energy independence. However, despite the dire need for alternative forms of energy in our country, the Administration has denied crucial energy projects and prospective areas of development. The Administration's decision this past week not to approve the Keystone XL pipeline was short-sighted. I believe this decision is misguided and ignores the benefits of the job growth in this area as well as the energy needs of Americans. This pipeline would lead to the creation of thousands of jobs and inject billions of private dollars into the economy, all while reducing America's reliance on oil from unstable regions of the world. Folks from across the political spectrum feel that the Keystone XL pipeline would benefit our nation, and I believe the Administration must reconsider its decision that construction of the pipeline is not in America's best interest. An "all of the above" energy policy must include reliable sources of fossil fuels, in addition to exploring alternative forms of energy.

I believe that another way to make a difference in developing a more sustainable energy infrastructure is to reduce burdensome government regulations in order to make it easier for existing companies to develop this clean energy. A bill I introduced, the Advancing Offshore Wind Production Act (H.R. 2173), would do just that, facilitating the development of wind energy resources off Virginia's coast by streamlining the process of approving temporary infrastructure for testing and development. By taking significant steps in harnessing alternative sources of energy, we can decrease overall energy costs for Americans. I encourage you to contact my

office to express your thoughts on the Keystone XL pipeline as well as energy policy in general. I'd love to hear your opinions.

As the federal deficit continues to rise and families across the nation struggle to pay their bills, Congress must pay close attention to what's needed to get this economy moving. This includes developing an American energy policy that promotes the use of our resources right here at home, and ensuring that existing government regulations aren't hampering the way our private sector innovates and provides services to Americans. As the year progresses, I will continue to support commonsense principles that reduce barriers for businesses to create jobs and spur innovation and economic growth in our country. Please continue to keep in touch via telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), on Facebook (www.facebook.com/RepRobWittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/RobWittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.