

A Conversation with Congressmen McCarthy (R-CA), Terry (R-NB) and Latta (R-OH)

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The second conference call of the day was a regularly roughly-bi-weekly hosted by Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-CA).

Today's topic was the ongoing swirl surrounding the Waxman-Markey "cap-and-trade" legislation, and the special guests were Congressman Lee Terry (R-NB) and Congressman Bob Latta (R-OH).

The biggest structural surprise on this matter when Congress returned earlier this week from the Memorial Day break was the change of focus; it had been earlier stated that the #1 priority matter was going to be health care, but suddenly the #1 priority was stated to be the "cap-and-trade" circus. Speaker Pelosi made a visit to China over the break, and earlier in the week she stated that she wanted to have this be done and out of the House by 19 June; earlier today, she bowed to reality and waffled that this isn't a "firm" deadline - as the widespread chaos associated with the legislation in the various committees becomes apparent.

Rep. Terry noted that the whole "cap-and-trade" effort has always been a "global warming" environmental bill - but that it's now being re-branded as an "energy bill." When I was in Washington earlier in the week, it was noted by many observers that "global warming" (or "climate change" or whatever it's being called this week) ranks absolutely dead-last in polling of

issues of importance to the general populace - this whole thing appears to be solely an inside-the-Beltway obsession. So perhaps this "re-branding" is a recognition of that reality.

Being from the industrial Midwest (he represents the Omaha area), Rep. Terry noted that the present legislation will be disastrous for that region; in the general Midwest, 65% of electricity is generated from coal power, and the present legislation is extremely punitive toward coal. *We should*

be talking about finding ways to produce more oil domestically and to generate more electricity - but the present state of the legislation ignores nuclear power and tries to force things toward wind and solar; this is going the wrong way, trying to invest in the mere hope of non-existent technologies.

This hostility to nuclear power remains odd; as I noted earlier in the week in that massive "[Rhapsody in Green](#)

" essay, while we do nothing many other nations (such as China (!) and South Africa) are engaged in major efforts to build up their nuclear power generation capabilities. I'll make the following statement as an engineer:

Any effort in "energy" that does

not

include nuclear fission as a primary power source simply is not serious

. That can serve as a benchmark for all forthcoming discussions of "energy supply."

When I was in Washington earlier in the week, I personally heard the comments of Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) that Rep. Terry quoted. Rep. Sensenbrenner was in the delegation that went to China; while he was there, he directly asked the highest-level Chinese officials if they planned to participate in any of the goals that may come out of the big Copenhagen climate meeting later in the year - and was told flat-out that NO, China will NOT participate at all. Instead, China will "set its own goals." Thus, the present farcical climate legislation being batted about in Washington amounts (in Rep. Sensenbrenner's memorable phrase) to "unilateral economic disarmament."

Rep. Latta, also being from the industrial Midwest (he represents the Bowling Green area), noted that this legislation promises to be disastrous for manufacturing, particularly in the Midwest. There has been a study (I think it was said that it came out of MIT, but I don't have that detail in my notes) that ranked the vulnerability of Congressional districts (all 435) to the loss of manufacturing jobs to "cap-and-trade" legislation - and his district is the *third most vulnerable*. Of the top-twenty vulnerable districts, eight are in Ohio and eight are in Indiana. In contrast, the

districts of Congressman Waxman and Speaker Pelosi rank near the very bottom in vulnerability. This kind of legislative approach is a jobs-killer - promising to send great heaps of jobs out of the country.

Rep. Latta finally noted that when he goes back home, he's always asked "Who the heck is FOR this kind of stuff?" He can only show the map of district-vulnerability noted above - and note that this is very clearly a "coasts-vs.-interior" issue.

A final noted irony is that President Obama has recently said that he's basically okay with Iran having nuclear power generation capacity for "peaceful" purposes. So he's okay with Iran having nuclear plants, but not with the United States having them. Hmm....

