

April 22, 2008

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I write to inform you of relevant congressional accomplishments as we approach Earth Day 2008. Conceived in 1970, Earth Day celebrates our country's environmental progress in preserving and protecting our environmental resources. For more than 35 years, Congress, environmental agencies and environmental groups have made great strides in keeping our air and water clean, preserving our natural resources, maintaining sustainable wildlife habitats and reducing global warming. Throughout my time in Congress, I have sought to continue this tradition and this year has been no exception.

The 110th Congress has been very active on environmental issues. Thanks to the leadership and commitment of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Congress started working on environmental issues immediately after the start of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress in 2007. Throughout the last 15 months, my colleagues and I have worked with industry and trade groups, along with environmental advocates, to create policies that would benefit the nation in both the short and long term.

I believe it is important that we recognize that global warming affects the country and the world. It is time to move beyond arguing about the science. Global warming is happening, it's happening now, and, as a result, the earth's climate is already close to critical tipping points and additional global warming could lead to dangerous consequences. The impacts of global warming are being felt around the world and we only have a small window of time to stop the worst effects of global warming from becoming a reality.

Last year I witnessed the effects of global warming first hand when I traveled to Antarctica and saw the melting glaciers. I have also seen the devastating effects climate change can have on a region and its people when I traveled to Darfur and the Sudan. These first-hand experiences lead me to believe that bold and decisive action is needed now to protect our environment and economy for future generations. We know that human activities, and particularly the burning of fossil fuels and the subsequent emissions, are the primary cause of global warming. While this is a sad fact, it also means that we have the power to change our behaviors and substantially reduce global warming. Toward that end, the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress has been working on the following energy and environmental policies.

### **Energy Independence and Security Act**

At the end of 2007, Congress passed historic comprehensive energy reform legislation. This new law is aimed at moving the U.S. toward greater energy independence and security, increasing the production of clean renewable fuels and increasing the energy efficiency of products, buildings and vehicles. The Energy Independence and Security Act (H.R. 6) authorized a new \$10 billion Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program to provide grants to cities, counties and states for innovative practices to achieve greater energy efficiency and lower energy usage. The legislation also raised the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for cars, light trucks and SUVs sold in the United States for the first time in 32 years to a fleet average of 35 miles per gallon.

## **Water Resources Development Act 2007**

Last year the Democratic Congress also passed important, bipartisan legislation to improve our nation's water infrastructure. For seven years, communities had been waiting for additional federal investment to help address their infrastructure needs. I am proud that Congress passed H.R. 1495, the Water Resources Development Act which authorized projects and programs in the Civil Works Program and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps constructs projects for flood damage reduction, navigation, ecosystem restoration, recreation, hydroelectric power, water supply, aquatic plant control, and hurricane and storm damage reduction. As a result of this new law, many projects that are vital to protecting our communities and families from catastrophic flooding can now move forward.

Orange County has a similar innovative program that has drawn national and international attention. In June, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the passage of H.R. 1175, a bill I authored, that would increase federal funding from \$20 million to \$51,874, 849 to complete the Orange County Regional Water Reclamation Project. This project is designed to use wastewater to recharge the aquifer in northern Orange County, creating a new water supply of 72,000 acre-feet per year. It will help preserve and recharge overdrawn river and groundwater supplies, and help protect our environment from unexpected water shortages.

## **Protecting California's Right to Regulate Vehicle Emissions**

I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 5560, the Right to Clean Vehicles Act. This legislation would allow the State of California to enforce strict vehicle emissions standards in the state, without interference from the federal government. In December 2007, President Bush's Environmental Protection Agency denied California's request for a waiver of federal law and as a result, California was not allowed to cut vehicle greenhouse gas emissions. It is likely that California's law would have also raised the required fuel efficiency of cars and slowed global warming. I believe that the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to deny California's waiver request was a political decision that was not based in fact, defied California's rights as a state, and defied common sense. I will continue working with my colleagues in Congress to pass HR 5560, and overturn the EPA's decision so California can implement its regulation of vehicle greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Promoting Renewable Energy Tax Credits**

Recently, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5351, which would create tax incentives to encourage businesses to invest in renewable energy. The bill included more than \$8 billion in long-term, clean, renewable energy tax incentives for electricity produced from renewable resources, including wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, hydropower, ocean tides, and landfill gas. The bill also included \$2 billion in new, clean, renewable energy bonds for electric cooperatives and public power providers to finance facilities that generate electricity from these renewable resources. Additionally, the bill provides tax incentives to help homeowners and businesses reduce their energy costs by investing in energy efficient property. Manufacturers would be encouraged to build affordable appliances that push the boundaries of efficiency and help finance more energy efficiency improvements to homes and commercial buildings.

I am proud to support environmental protection efforts through the legislation I have described above and other bills. I will continue to fight for policies that improve California's environment and strengthen our national energy policy. On Earth Day 2008, I want to pledge my commitment to continue working for environmental legislation that will positively impact the nation and ensure that our children, and grandchildren, have a healthy environment in which to grow.

Very truly yours,



Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress