

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) helped pass a responsible energy bill today to help meet the nation's need for affordable energy and reduce our reliance on foreign oil. The "Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection, and Energy Efficiency Act" (H.R. 6) increases fuel efficiency standards by 40 percent, requires the use and development of renewables and biofuels, and reduces carbon dioxide emissions scientists say contribute to global warming. The measure passed the House of Representatives today by a vote of 314-100.

"This bill makes progress in our effort to protect consumers from higher energy prices, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and invest in the fuels of the future," said Buchanan. "The bill increases fuel efficiency standards and invests in clean domestic renewable energy sources. It would also help protect the environment by reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Although this bill is a step in the right direction, we need to do more to encourage the development of clean and reliable sources of energy, including nuclear power, to meet increased energy demands of the future."

The energy bill increases fuel efficiency standards for motor vehicles for the first time in 32 years, requiring that cars and light trucks get 35 miles a gallon by 2020. The current standard is 27.5 mpg for cars and 22.2 mpg for light trucks. The bill also mandates the use of 36 gallons of renewable fuel by 2022 --a nearly six-fold increase -- and provides incentives to boost production of biofuels and vehicles that can run on alternative fuels. Finally, the bill requires new efficiency standards for appliances, light bulbs, and commercial buildings.

Last week, Buchanan sided with Governor Crist and opposed an energy bill that would have damaged Florida's effort to develop alternative energy sources by imposing unrealistic renewable energy mandates on state utilities -- resulting in an estimated \$14 billion electricity tax on Floridians. Leaders in the House and Senate removed the renewable energy mandates opposed by Buchanan.

The compromise bill now goes to President Bush where it is expected to be signed into law.