

# PRESS UPDATE

U.S. Senate Committee on

**ENVIRONMENT &  
PUBLIC WORKS**



Minority Press Update



## THE GAS PETROLEUM REFINER IMPROVEMENT & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2007 (GAS PRICE ACT)

### FACT VS FICTION ON SENATOR BOXER CLAIMS

1. *Senator Boxer claimed the Gas PRICE Act amendment will “shortcut many environmental laws.”*

**FACT:** The association representing the environmental concerns of every state – the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) – who represents state Departments of Environmental Quality -- clearly stated “the Gas PRICE Act does not weaken environmental laws.” In fact, ECOS and the National Association of Counties acknowledge that the Gas PRICE Act’s streamlining provisions are in compliance with states and local governments. The National Association of Counties stated, “It goes a long way in addressing the concerns of local governments during a refinery siting, ranging from the importance of considering local needs, concerns, and honoring a county’s land use authority.”

2. *Senator Boxer claimed the Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants would be “a taxpayer giveaway to the oil companies.”*

**FACT:** The EDA portion provides grants to local communities, not to companies. An October 25, 2005 letter from the EDA’s Chief Counsel to Senator Inhofe clearly stated: “No for-profit entity is eligible to receive EDA assistance.” Further, the funds seek to promote the development of future fuels – coal-to-liquids and cellulosic biomass ethanol, not oil.

3. *Senator Boxer claimed the amendment will do nothing to increase energy independence:*

**FACT:** The reason why the US is in a vulnerable position is because we do not have adequate supply to meet demand. Reducing demand is only one part of the equation; without a corresponding and robust domestic production increase, the US will never become more energy independent.

Note: about 25 percent of the Eastern US’s finished products are imported from Europe. This year, European stocks are down by about 11 percent, and therefore have less to export in the case of a domestic disruption.

4. *Senator Boxer claimed that the amendment “doesn’t do one thing to expand energy supply” or increase domestic refinery capacity:*

**FACT:** First, this amendment looks beyond traditional oil refiners and focuses on domestic fuels facilities – facilities that will produce cellulosic biomass ethanol, coal-to-liquids, as well as petroleum. Second, experts and members such as Sen. Feinstein have found that an uncertain regulatory environment contributes to the lack of refining capacity. Sen. Feinstein wrote in a May 14, 2004 letter to the governor of California: “I can see where a cumbersome permitting process, with uncertain outcomes, would make it difficult to plan and implement projects...I encourage you to improve the speed and predictability of the permitting process, and believe that this will allow business and government to focus their limited resources on actions that most benefit the environment.” <http://feinstein.senate.gov/04Releases/r-cagov-refinery.htm> This amendment will improve that situation.