

Mr. Sensenbrenner's Opening Statement for Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming hearing: "Rising Tides, Rising Temperatures: Global Warming's Impacts on the Oceans."

April 29, 2008

The topic of today's hearing is yet another reason why I believe technological development is one of the most crucial steps in the effort to confront global warming.

Rising carbon dioxide levels and increasing temperatures will have an impact on the oceans. Some prospects are unnerving, like the dying of coral reefs. Others problems can be approached through adaptation, such as a rise in sea levels.

Energy is the life blood of our economy. Right now, much of the energy that is generated creates carbon dioxide, but there already exists some technologies that generate energy without emitting CO₂ into the atmosphere. And if Congress acts wisely, there could be more on the way.

One of these technologies is nuclear power, which generates great amounts of energy without producing CO₂. Another technology that is on the horizon is carbon capture and storage, which has the potential to allow the U.S. to continue to use our vast coal reserves to generate energy, but with only a fraction of the carbon dioxide emissions. Renewable energy technologies and gains in energy efficiency also stand to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and we should strive to achieve all of these key technological improvements.

Nuclear power and carbon capture and storage are technologies that not only would go a long way towards reducing CO₂ emissions, but they will also help ensure the energy security of the U.S. And if the U.S. can't be secure in its energy supply, it certainly can't be secure in its economy.

These days, anyone pumping gasoline into their car knows this. That's why I don't support the array of policy proposals that

unwisely seek to tax away carbon dioxide. This won't work, but it will slow the economy.

The production of carbon dioxide through energy production is a factor in global warming. But it's certainly not the only factor.

There are many natural sources of carbon dioxide that is emitted into the atmosphere. There are still some scientific questions about how large a role humans play in global warming.

It raises some questions as to how much humans can do to stop these changes in the oceans and atmosphere. Even if by some divine intervention humans were able to completely stop emitting carbon dioxide tomorrow, some of these changes would still occur. Therefore, in some cases, adaptation will be the only reasonable choice, and that is something that people all over the world need to be ready to handle.

The witnesses today will present very interesting and well researched testimony on this scientific topic which I'm sure will not only help educate all of us, but will also help to strengthen my belief in the need for the development and advancement of energy technology.

####