

As gas prices continue to skyrocket, Western New Yorkers are forced to choose between putting food on their tables and filling up their gas tanks. These record prices demand immediate action to bring relief to struggling families and steer our nation toward a cleaner, smarter energy future.

More than two years ago, President Bush admitted what all of us long knew, that “America is addicted to oil.” But 18 months later, as gas prices soar, the President has done nothing to break our dependence on oil. It’s time for real solutions to solve our energy challenges.

Yet instead of solutions, many have called for more of the same energy policies of the past. They urge us to drill on public land, drill in the oceans, and drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Never mind that oil companies already have 68 million acres of taxpayer-owned federal land in their possession for drilling: leased, available, and sitting unused.

My issue with their call for more drilling is a simple one: It does next-to-nothing to solve our energy crisis. Because even if the oil companies drill everywhere they want, the facts remain the same. There is a finite amount of oil in the world and demand for that oil keeps rising which in turn causes gas prices to skyrocket.

It’s time to invest in a clean energy future to begin breaking our fossil-fuel addiction. This is why this Congress is working to help lower gas prices in the short term while investing in a new energy economy.

This Congress suspended shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which has helped lower gas prices in the short term, and we moved to force oil companies to drill on the millions of acres they already have leased.

I am a proud cosponsor of the Prevent Unfair Price Manipulation Act, critical legislation to restrict excessive speculation in oil markets which some experts believe has added \$20-\$30 to the price of a barrel of crude oil. This bill would close the “Enron” loopholes that allow speculators to trade in oil futures with next to no regulation or oversight from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. In 2001, we saw the devastating effects of this loophole that

allowed Ken Lay to drive Enron to collapse.

Congress also passed a landmark energy bill which ensures that, in 12 years, the average car will get 35 miles per gallon, the first real change in fuel efficiency standards in more than three decades. We are also investing in renewable and alternative energy.

Instead of feeding our addiction for just a little longer, some of us are planning for the long run. Because if we do not, gas prices will continue to spiral out of control —until we get the message.