

## Legislative Update

### Farm Bill Undercut by Tax Hike

The House recently considered the Farm Bill, or [H.R. 2419](#), the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007. As you probably know, our Northern California congressional district is home to one of the most productive and diverse agriculture areas in the United States. The legislation that was unanimously approved by the Agriculture Committee recognized this diversity by providing new funding for specialty crop research, pest detection and eradication, and market promotion. The bill also maintained the farming safety net for rice and wheat producers.

Unfortunately, just hours before this bipartisan bill was brought before the full House for consideration, a controversial \$6 billion tax increase was attached to it by House Democratic leaders. The tax hike was targeted toward international companies operating in the United States. Though these companies are headquartered in other countries, their U.S.-based operations provide good-paying jobs for American workers, including an estimated 500,000 jobs in California alone. The sudden decision to add this tax provision to the Farm Bill drove a partisan wedge into what is traditionally a very bipartisan process. Though the Farm Bill passed the House, it did so by a relatively small margin - something out of the ordinary for this important and popular legislation. [Read more](#)

### Alert Citizens Protected from Lawsuits

Ever since September 11, the American people have been told, "If you see someone behaving in a suspicious manner, you should report it." Americans have responded by staying alert, and the result has been that a lot of terrorist attacks have been foiled. For instance, the FBI arrested the terrorists who were plotting to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey after one of them was reported by a video store owner. Yet, earlier this year, several airline passengers who had reported suspicious activity were threatened with a lawsuit.

On July 27, the House passed the final version of [legislation](#) implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, sending it to President Bush for his signature. The

bill included a provision I strongly supported to protect Americans who report suspicious activity for being sued. Several leading members of Congress had attempted to remove the provision, claiming that it would lead to unfair profiling. Fortunately, their efforts were unsuccessful, and I am pleased that citizens who have a genuine concern about suspicious activity will now be able to call the police without having to worry about being grilled by trial lawyers.

[Share your thoughts](#)

### **Local Flood Control Projects Advance**

The House recently passed two spending measures that would strengthen flood protection in Northern California. [H.R. 2641](#), the fiscal year 2008 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, includes funding for high priority projects in Sutter, Yuba, and Glenn Counties.

[H.R. 1495](#)

, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, also contains important flood protection, including Section 3041, which authorizes the continuation of the Yuba River Basin project in Yuba County. Section 1001(8) authorizes the construction of the new Hamilton City J Levee along the Sacramento River in Glenn County.

[Share your thoughts](#)

### **Darfur Legislation Passed**

With my support, the House passed [legislation](#) that would intensify economic pressure on the Sudanese government to stop the genocide in Darfur. The measure would encourage foreign companies to stop doing business with Sudan until the genocide ends. It would require the Secretary of Treasury to establish a list of companies whose business activities are helping the government continue the horrible tragedy. It would also forbid U.S. government contracts from going to businesses that are on the Treasury Department's list. Perhaps most significant, the measure would authorize state and local governments to divest from companies facilitating the genocide.

It is estimated that as many as 400,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed during the genocide in Darfur. I believe our nation has a moral obligation to try to help stop this

monumental tragedy. The United Nations recently passed a new resolution authorizing a 26,000-person peacekeeping force, and I will continue to support efforts to pressure the Sudanese President to allow this force into Darfur. It is my deepest hope that the efforts of our nation and the international community stop this genocide. [Share your thoughts](#)

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Pending Legislation and Issues Important to Northern CA

### **Misguided Klamath Basin Hearing**

On July 31, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing based on allegations made in a recent Washington Post article that Vice President Dick Cheney had improperly interceded on behalf of Klamath Basin farmers following the 2001 shutoff of the Klamath Basin Irrigation Project. I [testified](#) before the Committee to rebut these allegations. I reminded the committee of the Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation of similar claims, which had found them to be unsubstantiated. I also shared the results of an independent scientific peer review of the decision to shut off water to Klamath farmers that performed by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) with the Committee. The NAS report found that this decision was not justified by science and in some cases inconsistent with data available to federal agencies at the time. The NAS's independent review also confirmed the fact that the Klamath Irrigation Project was **not** responsible for an unfortunate salmon "die off" that occurred in 2002.

[Read Testimony](#)

In my view, it is unfortunate that this hearing occurred at all. Both the NAS independent peer review and the OIG report were finalized in 2004. Conducting a committee hearing to dredge up untrue allegations takes time and resources away from actually addressing the legitimate challenges faced by Klamath Basin residents. For that reason I urged the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee to instead convene a field hearing in Yreka, California to learn about how local farmers, fishermen, and Native American tribes are working together to forge a compromise on the river. While their efforts may not address each and every problem that exists in the Basin, and may not fully satisfy the concerns of each party involved, politicizing Klamath Basin issues - as I believe the July 31 hearing did - does a true disservice to the local dialogue that is occurring. [Read more](#)

### **Real Progress in Securing Iraq**

[General David Petraeus](#) has been our commanding general in Iraq since February of this year. He is an expert in combating insurgencies that work day and night to terrorize local communities and undermine security. His security plan redoubles efforts to defeat al Qaeda in Iraq, which he described as "probably public enemy number one," and militia death squads that perpetuated sectarian violence through much of 2006.

Although the Petraeus Plan has been fully in place since only the first part of June, our commanders on the ground are already reporting considerable progress in improving security in Iraq. Violence in the Anbar Province is at a two year low. This province was previously Iraq's most dangerous region and was al Qaeda's primary safe haven. Security in Baghdad has also improved. Sectarian violence is down and coalition forces are gaining more control of Iraq's capital each week. These important security improvements will hopefully lay the foundation for passing critical legislation aimed at bolstering reconciliation among the Iraqi people.

I believe we should give General Petraeus and our troops the time they want and need to fully implement the security plan. Congress should wait until General Petraeus provides his progress report in September before we reexamine our nation's policy in Iraq. It would be a terrible mistake for politicians in Washington to overrule the recommendations of our top generals on the ground, especially since we're starting to see real progress in improving security in Iraq. [Share your thoughts](#)

### **Reassessing *No Child Left Behind***

A high quality education is vital for each American student and critical to our nation's future. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) was originally created in 2002, and is currently up for reauthorization. So far, NCLB has had mixed results. Some studies suggest that NCLB's accountability standards have helped narrow the "achievement gap" between students from different social and economic backgrounds. However, after listening to parents and teachers

throughout Northern California, I have some concerns that NCLB may be hampering local efforts to improve academic achievement and implement reforms to address unique needs. Further, NCLB established difficult and sometimes unreasonable standards for teachers in rural communities.

For these reasons, I have co-sponsored the [A-PLUS Act](#) , which is intended to provide state and local governments the flexibility to meet their students' needs without the intrusive mandates which are often tied to federal funding. This legislation would give states the option to opt out of most of NCLB's requirements. Those choosing to do so would be required to assume full responsibility for the educational needs of students. Additionally, they would continue to be held accountable to parents, schools and local government. I think this legislation strikes the right balance between ensuring accountability in federal education spending, while at the same time ensuring that schools are accountable to parents at the local level, not bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.

[Share your thoughts](#)

### **Concern with UN Human Rights Council**

I have cosponsored a [resolution](#) condemning the Nations Human Rights Council for ignoring severe human rights abuses in other countries, while choosing to unfairly condemn Israel. The Council was established in March of 2006 with the mission to "promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" as well as address situations of violations of human rights. However, since the Council's adoption, there have been numerous human rights abuses around the world (such as Sudan, North Korea, and Iran), yet the Council has expressed condemnation only for Israel. This is simply outrageous. I hope the House sends a clear message that the Council should immediately end its sole focus on Israel and instead condemn legitimate human rights abuses that are occurring worldwide.

[Share your thoughts](#)

### **Quick Stats: Benefits of Trade**

While many Americans may not recognize the benefits of free trade, they experience them

every day. By lowering tariffs and other barriers, free trade opens new markets for farmers and businesses across our nation, lowers prices for consumers, and creates new and better-paying employment opportunities for workers. Consider the following:

**Benefits of Trade - Quick Stats**

- U.S. is largest trading nation in the world

- Jobs that depend on trade pay about 13 to 18 percent more than average wages

- Although the economies of the nations in which we currently have free trade agreements make up

One-in-ten jobs in the U.S. (about 12 million) is dependent on exports

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Free trade has helped contribute to our very robust economy and historically low national unemplo

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## District News

### Combating Mexican Drug Cartels



I recently had the opportunity to help kick off a major drug raid, *Operation Alesia*, in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

#### *Operation Alesia*

targeted Mexican drug cartels and others who have exploited our federal lands. It involved several hundred law enforcement personnel from 17 local, state, and federal agencies. I

understand that sixteen arrests were made and over 280,000 marijuana plants removed, with an estimated value of over \$1 billion. I want to commend every law enforcement official who participated in this successful operation.

## **Promoting Local Business**

