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Kratovil Calls for Comprehensive Energy Strategy to Bring Down Gas Prices

Dem calls for curbing speculation, expanding domestic production, investing in renewable energy; Criticizes opponent's gas tax ploy

SALISBURY (July 17, 2008). At a speech today to the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, Frank Kratovil called for a major change in America's energy policy to bring consumers relief at the pump and move the country toward energy independence. Kratovil, the State's Attorney for Queen Anne's County and Democratic nominee for the First Congressional District, discussed his plan of short-term and long-term energy strategies.

"Families and small businesses all across the district feel the pain every time they refill their tanks," said Kratovil. "By stopping rampant speculation, increasing domestic energy production, and investing in renewable sources of energy, we can ease prices in the short term and move toward energy independence in the long term."

Kratovil's energy plan included calls to:

- Close regulatory loopholes that have allowed rampant speculation in the energy futures market and artificially driven up oil prices.
- Support PAYGO rules and require balanced budgets to slash the federal deficit and strengthen the dollar, making energy imports less expensive.
- Expand domestic oil production, focusing on the 68 million acres of leased lands that the oil companies have not yet developed.
- Aggressively promote the development of alternative energy sources through tax incentives, block grants, and funding for green-collar job training.
- Improve energy efficiency standards for automobiles and public buildings.

Kratovil also criticized Sen. Andy Harris's record on energy, highlighting his opponent's votes against alternative energy and pointing out that his opponent's plan offers no short-term relief.

"Andy Harris has had eight years in Annapolis to be a leader on renewable energy, but instead he has stood in the way of progress at every turn. Just this year, he voted against three major bills that would have made Maryland a national leader on renewable energy and energy efficiency," said Kratovil. Harris's 9% lifetime environmental record is the 6th worst in the entire 188-member Maryland General Assembly, according to the League of Conservation Voters.^[1]

"Now he's pushing a gas tax holiday that would cost Maryland 4,000 construction jobs and do next to nothing to lower prices. Even his own supporters at the conservative Washington Times have mocked that idea^[2]," continued Kratovil. "He's also talking about opening up the Maryland coast to drilling, despite the fact that oil companies are already sitting on 68 million acres of untapped leases. I favor expanding domestic production, but we don't have to do it the Andy Harris way."

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Among the coastal regions that would be opened for exploration and drilling under Harris's proposal is a vast 4,700 square mile area not far from Assateague Island.^[3]

^[1] <http://www.mdlcv.org//deepockets/contshow-313>

^[2] "Gas Tax Suspension Offers No Relief," *Washington Times* 5/6/08

^[3] "Concerns Raised about Offshore Oil Drilling," *Maryland Coast Dispatch* 5/4/08