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**GOP Fights for American Families, Forces Vote on
Hensarling/Conaway/Blackburn Bill to Promote
Alternative Fuels, Lower Energy Costs**
*Discharge Petition Forces vote on Legislation to Repeal
Misguided Section 526 from Energy Law*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Chairman of the Republican Study Committee, Congressman Mike Conaway (R-TX) and Congressman Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) have introduced legislation that repeals section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) which became law last year. Section 526 prohibits federal agencies from contracting for nonconventional, or alternative, fuels that emit higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions than “conventional petroleum sources.” Though short, this section – which raises concerns over national security, economic security, and bureaucratic uncertainty – has powerful and harmful implications and needs to be repealed immediately.

Section 526 was added to the 2007 Energy bill largely to stifle the Defense Department’s plans to buy coal-based jet fuels, which radical environmentalists contend will ultimately produce more greenhouse gas emissions than would traditional petroleum—a contention that is uncertain at best and does not consider ongoing improvements in carbon-capture technologies. The Air Force is interested in procuring unconventional fuels over the long-term as a way to reduce its reliance on fuels from unfriendly or unstable countries and increasing its use of fuels from North America. Coal-to-liquids, oil shale, and tar sands are all abundant in the United States and Canada.

The Air Force wants to use its purchasing power to spur the development of a domestic coal-based synthetic fuel industry by signing long-term fuel contracts with coal-based fuel producers, ensuring that producers have a guaranteed market to offset the millions of dollars in up-front investment needed to produce coal-based fuel.

Canada is currently the largest U.S. oil supplier, sending 1.8 million barrels of crude oil and 500,000 barrels of refined products per day to the United States in 2006. About half of Canadian crude is derived from oil sands, with sands production forecast to reach about 3 million barrels per day in 2015. Section 526 could choke this flow of fuel from one of our nation’s most reliable allies and economic partners.

Section 526 would be problematic enough if it were written clearly, however the language contains ambiguities, causing a flurry of attempts at legislative interpretation by the Air Force, the Canadian Government, the Center for Unconventional Fuels, and even the proponents of the language. Some claim that a *study* is needed to determine if coal-

based fuel is clean enough to use under the law. Others claim that Section 526 does not apply to the military, while proponents claim that it most certainly does.

Hensarling, Conaway, and Blackburn issued the following statements on a discharge petition filed by Congressman Randy Kuhl (R-NY) to force Democratic leaders to schedule on their bill, H.R. 5656:

HENSARLING STATEMENT:

“Section 526 is a perfect example of a misguided provision covertly tucked into a broad piece of legislation shortly before it was passed. “Not only could Section 526 result in increased fuel costs for our military, it severely restricts the Pentagon’s ability to get fuels from our strongest allies, putting our national and economic security at risk by forcing increased petroleum importation from unstable or even dangerous countries. At a time when American forces are combating terrorists abroad, the Pentagon must have the versatility to secure and develop alternative sources of fuel. Given the enormous consequences and potential harms to both our national and economic security, we need to repeal Section 526 immediately.

“As prices at the pump continue to soar, Americans are calling out for relief and we hear them loud and clear. If the Democrat controlled Congress is serious about finding alternative energy sources, they will support this common-sense action. With all of the potential dangers in the modern world, the Defense Department should not be wasting its time studying fuel emissions and should not have to be stifled by the arguments over how to interpret a small section of an energy law.

CONAWAY STATEMENT:

“I have long stated that with record-setting prices at the pump, Americans are desperate for real relief. Section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act handcuffs the Federal Government to only conventional sources of diesel, gasoline, or jet fuel thus barring the purchase of American coal shale, American tar sands and American coal to liquid fuel. It does not make sense to restrict our access to American fossil fuels and then continue buying those same fuels from countries that are, at best, not our allies.”

BLACKBURN STATEMENT:

“Innovation on the part of the Air Force helped put a man on the moon, break the sound barrier, defend the country from ballistic missile attack, and surgically strike our enemies wherever they are in the world. This is an area where national security must trump experimental environmental policy. Democrats trust their environmental radical allies’ opposition to energy independence more than the innovative capacity of our military. The “pay more, drive less” policy that liberal Democrats have adopted for America simply can’t be applied to the Department of Defense.

A decade ago, Democrats said that missile defense was technologically impossible and the Air Force has proven them wrong. Today, Democrats say that carbon based fuels with low greenhouse gas emissions are also impossible. I know that if given a free hand, the Air Force will prove them wrong again.”

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Congressman Jeb Hensarling is Chairman of the Republican Study Committee (RSC).