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# CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views  
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers

**Congressman Gary G. Miller**  
**42<sup>nd</sup> District, California**



July 18, 2008

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## **Federal Reserve Chairman Testifies Before Congress**

At a House Financial Services Committee hearing on Wednesday, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke testified on the state of the American economy. While noting that growth has slowed because of high commodity prices and instability in the housing market, Chairman Bernanke also observed that economic growth is projected to pick up gradually over the next two years. Congressman Miller, who serves on the Financial Services Committee, questioned Chairman Bernanke about efforts to revive the housing market and urged his colleagues to support a permanent increase in the loan limits for Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Housing Administration. Over the coming weeks and months, Congressman Miller is committed to taking steps that will increase the availability of safe, affordable mortgages in Southern California, allowing more families to achieve and maintain the dream of homeownership.

## **Administration Lifts Presidential Ban on Deep Ocean Energy Exploration**

To reduce gas prices, Congressman Miller and 93 of his colleagues sent a letter on Monday to President Bush urging him to lift the presidential ban on the exploration of oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). In response to the letter, the Administration this week announced its decision to lift this outdated ban. The announcement overturns a 1990 Executive Order that prohibited offshore drilling leases in places other than Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and parts of Alaska until 2000, and later was extended until 2012. It is estimated that the United States' deep ocean energy resources hold over 85 billion barrels of oil and have the potential to reduce the cost of a gallon of gasoline by \$.90 to \$2.50. The only thing that stands in the way now is Congress overturning its ban on OCS drilling, a step Democratic leaders have so far refused to take. Congressman Miller stands ready to work with his colleagues in Congress to overturn the Congressional ban on deep water energy exploration and will continue to work towards American energy independence.

## **House Passes Intelligence Authorization**

This week, the House approved legislation setting policy relating to our nation's intelligence gathering activities and laying out funding numbers for the 16 U.S. intelligence agencies for Fiscal Year 2009. Provisions in the bill cover everything from general intelligence operations to signals intelligence, clandestine human-intelligence programs, analysis, and covert action capabilities. Although many details of the bill, including funding levels, are classified, the overall spending level of the bill is the highest ever. Congressman Miller is pleased that this legislation moves to address the critical needs facing the intelligence community and looks forward to continuing his work in Congress to ensure Americans are safe at home and abroad.

## **IRS Cautions Taxpayers to Beware of Scams**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) cautions taxpayers to be on the lookout for a new wave of scams using the IRS name in identity theft emails, also known as phishing, that have circulated during the last two months. Taxpayers can take steps to keep their personal information out of the hands of identity thieves by not falling for any of the phony emails or faxes now in circulation pretending to come from the IRS regarding tax refunds and economic stimulus payments. It is important to note that the IRS does not discuss tax account matters with taxpayers in emails nor request security-related personal information, such as PIN numbers, from taxpayers. This year alone, taxpayers have reported about 1,600 phishing incidents to the IRS. Those who have received a questionable email claiming to come from the IRS may forward it to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) or call Congressman Miller's Brea office for assistance at (714) 257-1142.