

June 3, 2008

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The outcome of vote is in question due to expected unanimous Republican opposition to the legislation. The opposition stems from the fact that the measure is fully paid-for by closing a loophole in oil and gas leases. Republicans appear to be siding with big oil rather than the dire economic needs of counties in southwest Oregon.

Congressman DeFazio's comments and instructions for downloading the available audio are below.

"Finally we have gotten the critical issue of extending county and school payments to the floor of the House.

Unfortunately, today we're confronted with a situation where it appears that every Republican intends to vote against the bill because it is paid for by requiring Exxon Mobil and other oil companies to drop a subsidy that was extended to them, by mistake, by the Clinton Administration and pay a fair fee for the extraction of oil and gas off of federal lands. This would raise more than \$3.3 billion -- way more than enough to pay for county payments for the next four years funding teachers, schools, law enforcement, sheriff's deputies, corrections officers, public works and other critical county services. This money is essential.

I can understand that for some people it's tough when they're being pushed from the one side by big oil and the other by their constituents. For me, it's not a hard decision. But, apparently, for some others, it is.

I'm very disappointed but I'm going to continue to fight. I'm hopeful when the bill comes up tomorrow, some people will think this through over night and change their minds and vote to send it over to the Senate. If they want to continue subsidies for oil companies, they can work with their friends in the Senate to protect the oil companies and find another way to pay for county and school payments. No matter what, it's critical we get these funds."