

By Kevin McCarthy May 16, 2011 [Link](#)

Families and small businesses in our community are continuing to struggle with high unemployment and a slow economic recovery, and the rising cost of gas is only adding to the strain on our pocketbooks.

That's why my colleagues and I are continuing our work to create jobs.

Following last week's launch of the House Energy Action Team and passage of H.R. 1230, which directs that the oil and natural gas lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Virginia that have been delayed or cancelled by the current administration move forward, the House took additional action to create jobs and put America on the path to energy independence. We passed H.R. 1229 on Wednesday to end the de facto moratorium on offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and H.R. 1231 on Thursday to lift the president's ban on new offshore drilling.

Combined, these three bills could create 250,000 jobs in the short term and 1.2 million jobs over the long term, according to Dr. Joseph Mason, professor at Louisiana State University.

And this is just the beginning. I know rising energy prices are straining families and small businesses in our community -- that's why I'll continue to push for solutions that bring down prices and ensure our country's energy security.

On Wednesday, I joined my fellow San Joaquin Valley colleagues Rep. Devin Nunes and Rep. Jeff Denham in introducing legislation to get water flowing in our communities again. This is another key to getting people in our area back to work.

The San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act is a comprehensive regional solution to California's man-made drought. This legislation would knock down onerous government regulations that are limiting water deliveries our farmers and ranchers need to create jobs and produce the crops that feed America.

If enacted, this legislation would deliver an estimated additional 300,000 acre-feet of water annually to State Water Project contractors, including Kern County, and support tens of thousands of acres of farmland. In addition, this legislation could create up to 30,000 jobs in our region. We cannot delay any longer in taking aggressive action to address our man-made drought. Our farmers, ranchers, families and small businesses cannot continue to live year-to-year, praying the government will release the water needed to support our economies. This is common sense action that I will continue to fight for.

It was also great to have Monsignor Craig Harrison of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church here Thursday to give the opening invocation on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Monsignor Craig has had a profoundly positive impact on the lives of thousands in our community, including my own, and I appreciate that a fellow BHS graduate was able to share his words of encouragement. It was also great to meet with students from North Kern Christian School this week. Our community's young people never fail to give me hope in our future.

Much work remains, but we will continue to fight to create jobs and reduce our debt.