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The Honorable **Ciro D. Rodriguez**
Of Texas

U.S. should reduce dependence on foreign oil by reducing oil demand

Mr. Speaker, the events of September 11 highlight the danger in continuing to ignore our oil dependence on other countries, especially our dependence on Middle East oil. More than 51 percent of the oil we use is imported. Our nation in a very vulnerable position, at the mercy of unstable regimes in the Middle East and other volatile regions. Our dependence on oil has many negative ramifications including the threatening of our environment and our economy.

Our oil dependency places a heavy burden on our environment. It contributes significantly to making the United States the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide, responsible for one-fourth of the world's total global warming pollution. Our high demand for oil also pressures us to drill in our remaining unspoiled wilderness such as Utah's Redrock canyon county and the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. Our land, water, wildlife and the livelihood of coastal communities are also threatened by oil spills, an inevitable consequence of oil transportation.

Our oil dependency is also very costly to

our economy. The United States spent \$106 billion on imported crude oil and petroleum products in 2000. That is equivalent to almost one-third of the total U.S. trade deficit. Over the past 30 years, Americans have transferred \$1.16 trillion of their wealth to oil-producing countries.

As we develop our energy policy, we must ensure that it is one that can both reduce oil use and its burden on our environment and economy. Shifting the drilling for oil from one country to another will not resolve our oil crisis. We need to reduce our oil dependence by utilizing innovative technologies that focus on reducing oil use such as gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles which get double the mileage of today's cars. We must also encourage smart growth in our cities instead of suburban sprawl so that communities are more liveable with less driving.

The only effective way to reduce dependence on foreign oil, and at the same time protect our environment, is to reduce our oil demand. If we lower our oil consumption, more of America's wealth will stay in this country.