

Climate change is a serious issue that demands a full and open debate with a broad range of legislative proposals.

For example, I support alternative energy tax credits for solar, wind and hydrogen projects. Investment in clean energy from these renewable sources is important for both our economy and our environment.

The more than 700-page cap and trade legislation currently making its way through the halls of Congress, sponsored by Reps. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., and Edward Markey, D-Mass., is purported to curb the emission of greenhouse gases and reduce the energy footprint within our country. Unfortunately, the reality is this cap and trade plan would slow economic growth, penalize employers, reduce job opportunities and ultimately increase taxes for every single American. Estimates show the impact would be roughly \$3,100 for every American household annually.

A cap and trade system would set a limit, or a cap, on carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel use. Essentially, the federal government would establish limits on carbon emissions. Companies that emit less carbon dioxide than permitted under the cap would be allowed to trade their carbon credits to other companies. The right to emit carbon would be auctioned off to the highest bidder, which equates to approximately a \$2 trillion national energy tax.

One might ask, "Who is paying for this new cap and trade program?" Well, once the government mandates that businesses cap their emissions, and purchase credits if they go over their cap, then the costs of this program will inevitably be passed onto consumers in the form of higher prices.

Peter Orszag, director of the Obama administration's Office of Management and Budget, stated that, "Those price increases are essential to the success of a cap and trade program."

So if you consume electricity, put gas in your car, heat or air-condition your home or office, you will be paying for this program. Additionally, everyday products we buy will increase in price due to higher manufacturing costs.

The cap and trade legislation completely and totally ignores the nuclear industry. Currently, our nation generates about 20 percent of its electricity from nuclear plants. Ironically, France currently gets approximately 75 percent of its electricity from nuclear plants. When it comes to energy production, France understands that nuclear energy does not generate any carbon dioxide, yet the proposal before Congress completely ignores it. I believe we need to remove barriers to clean, safe and affordable nuclear energy.

While it is laudable for Congress to address climate change, the current proposal being circulated amongst my Democratic colleagues in Congress would dramatically raise energy costs on consumers and producers, further stalling the economy. In our current uncertain economic climate, this could be a recipe for economic disaster.