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Chandler vote a tax on Kentucky

By Bill Caylor

At issue | June 30 column by U.S. Rep. Ben Chandler: "New energy bill aims to save environment and push economy; includes \$60 million for clean-coal technology."

Rep. Ben Chandler claims to have helped the environment by voting for the recent cap and trade tax, but in reality his vote does little other than cost the citizens of Kentucky.

The bill works to cut emissions and reduce energy consumption in the United States by raising the cost of fossil fuels, such as coal, and making energy more expensive. While increasing the cost of coal does not hurt states that use little coal, such as California and Massachusetts (home to the bill's sponsors), it will have a crushing impact on Kentucky, which relies on coal to generate 92 percent of its electricity and directly employs more than 17,000 Kentucky citizens. Economists estimate the \$9 trillion tax will cost an average Kentucky household \$3,600 each year and force Kentucky to buy over \$385 million in offsets from foreign countries each year. We disagree that a tax which severely impacts Kentucky but not California or Massachusetts is a good way to "transform the economy," as Chandler suggests.

Further, while Chandler alleges that the bill subsidizes clean jobs, he conveniently ignores that the tax will destroy many more jobs than it creates. This is particularly true in Kentucky where the coal industry serves as a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's economy and where so many industrial jobs depend on Kentucky having the fourth lowest cost of electricity in the United States.

In voting to levy the largest energy tax in our nation's history, one would hope Chandler had something of consequence to show for it. In reality, the bill will have minimal impact on global emissions based on the projected growth of developing nations such as China and India. Further, the bill ignores the growing number of scientists challenging Chandler's assumed theory of human-caused global warming.

It is not difficult to see why so many Republican and Democratic House members from energy producing states like Kentucky voted against the bill or why Senators, including those representing Kentucky, are disinclined to follow the costly and misguided path taken by Chandler and his colleagues from California and Massachusetts.

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