

RURAL AMERICA SOLUTIONS GROUP



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Rural America Solutions Group Co-Chairs Call on Obama Officials to Deliver Economic Relief to Bethel, Alaska *Residents Need Real Solutions, Not More Rhetoric on National Energy Tax, Government-Run Health Care*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tomorrow, Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will travel to Bethel, AK as part of the White House’s rural America listening tour. Co-Chairs of the Rural America Solutions Group Frank Lucas (R-OK), Sam Graves (R-MO), and Doc Hastings (R-WA), released the following statement regarding tomorrow’s event:

“Unemployment is on the rise in Alaska—and rural residents of the State of Alaska need real help—not more rhetoric. Unfortunately, when Obama Administration officials visit Bethel tomorrow, they probably won’t explain the facts surrounding the President’s National Energy Tax and government-run healthcare plan. The reality is that during the worst recession in a generation the Administration wants a National Energy Tax that will devastate rural America by spiking energy bills, increasing unemployment and shutting down small businesses. Finally, the White House’s government-run health care plan will only lead to fewer jobs, higher taxes, and less health coverage for Alaskans. The American people want real solutions to get our economy back on track, not another excuse to raise taxes on small businesses, rural farmers and working families.”

“During the campaign, President Obama pledged to hold a bipartisan rural summit and take action on a rural agenda in his first 100 days. But unfortunately, his promise turned out to just be empty campaign rhetoric. Republicans on the Rural America Solutions Group will continue to call upon the Administration and Democrats in Congress to take action to help rural Americans in Bethel, and all across the country, who are struggling during these difficult economic times.”

By the Numbers – What The Democrats’ National Energy Tax Means to Alaska:

8.4 %

Alaska currently faces an **8.4%** unemployment rate, up 2% from the unemployment rate at the start of the recession in December 2007. (Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)) Alaskan residents cannot afford

to see their electricity and gas prices spike as a result of the Democrats' National Energy Tax.

- 239.1 million** The mining industry generated a payroll of **\$239.1 million** in Alaska ([National Mining Association](#)).
- 4,445** Alaska is home to 141 mining operations that provide employment to **4,445** people ([National Mining Association](#)). Increasing energy taxes will only lead to higher business costs and result in job loss.
- 223,622** Alaska has a rural population of **223,622** ([United States Department of Agriculture](#)).
- 25%** Americans in rural areas, like Bethel, travel **25%** more than residents in urban areas (Source: U.S. Federal Highway data), meaning rural residents would disproportionately suffer from the Democrats' National Energy Tax.
- 66,854** Alaska has over **66,854** small businesses that would suffer as a result of increased electricity costs due to the Democrats' National Energy Tax. (Source: [Small Business Administration 2008 Alaska Profile](#))
- \$511 million** Alaska in 2012 will face a **\$511 million** Gross State Product loss as a result of the Democrats' National Energy Tax. (Source: [Heritage Foundation](#))
- \$513 million** In 2012 Alaska will face a **\$513 million** Personal Income Loss as a result of the Democrats' National Energy Tax. (Source: [Heritage Foundation](#))

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