treatments serving economic, social and environmental objectives having no relationship to national security.

Throughout the petroleum industry, among larger companies as well as the smaller independent producers, there now exists a lack of confidence that the important program—oriented more and more to serving special purposes unrelated to our security—can effectively serve its national security objective on a long-term basis. This concern is reflected in the Congress, where some 46 House members and 29 senators have sponsored legislation to provide specific guidelines for limiting imports in the future.

Because I share this concern, Mr. Chairman, I urge this committee to give serious consideration to H.R. 10701 by Rep. Edwin Willis of Louisiana and a companion measure by Rep. Joe Waggoner of Louisiana. Similar proposals, I might point out, are sponsored in the Senate by both of the members from Louisiana.

This legislation is not in any sense radical protectionism. It would not roll back the clock in our trade in petroleum. It would simply put into law the existing import ratio which applies under the present Adminstrative program. It would reaffirm the Congressional policy of maintaining a fair but firm relationship between imports and domestic production. It would permit imports to grow as domestic oil production grows. It simply would prohibit actions, in the future, which would result in disproportionate increases in imports which would unnecessarly extend our dependence on foreign oil, with the result of further depressing our already severely depressed rate of oil exploration, drilling and development.

This reaffirmation by the Congress of an essential national energy policy would eliminate the uncertainty which now characterizes the administration of the import program. It would provide a dependable guideline as to imports upon which the domestic industry could plan its future activities. It would retain flexibility permitting continued special treatments within the overall limitations.

Such action would in no way compromise existing policy; rather, it would only foreclose administrative actions which have tended to undermine and weaken that policy. We still would import oil in the range of 2,500,000 barrels daily; oil, in fact, would continue to be our largest single export, dollar-wise. Oil imports, even under this proposal, would continue in such volume as to be the largest single deficit item in our unfavorable balance of payments deficit, causing a net dollar outflow of about $2 billion annually.

It is doubtful that any other nation in the world having an adequate supply of such a critical defense material as petroleum would permit displacement of its home industry to the extent which we have, particularly when its domestic industry was reporting consistent declines in exploration, drilling, and in finding and developing new petroleum resources. It is my conviction that if we are to have adequate petroleum supplies for the next emergency, then it behooves us now to eliminate existing doubts as to our oil import policy by enacting firm guidelines for the future.

We have had a new demonstration in the past year of the necessity to maintain a healthy, vigorous oil producing industry able to meet the needs of our country in any situation. In the Middle East crisis, the flow of oil moving from the Arab nations was disrupted. To help fill the resulting supply gaps, the domestic industry in the United States—but primarily in Louisiana and Texas—was able to increase production by 1,000,000 barrels daily. So far as the American oil consumer was concerned, there was no oil supply crisis. Had we been dependent upon Middle East oil, however, we would have been confronted with an internal crisis of monumental proportions.

In the situations which exist throughout the world today, it is clearer than ever that we would be courting disaster to extend our dependency on foreign oil further. The vital necessity of adequate domestic oil to our security is so obvious that I will not comment further upon it, except to point out that the domestic industry in the United States is not now healthy and growing. It is exploring less, drilling less, and finding less oil. The lack of confidence which results from the lack of a firm oil import policy is not the only factor; but it is one contributing factor.

Writing the import standards which already have acceptance into law would, therefore, seem but a small price to pay to help assure the adequacy of our petroleum supplies in the next worldwide oil emergency.