

# On the Hill

By Kevin Bliss

The energy crisis is apparently over, despite relatively high gasoline prices, and the focus of the new leadership on Capital Hill on the energy front appears to be global climate change.

What efforts are under way in the oil and gas area seem to be focused, at least in the House, on how to roll back provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that benefit the industry. Three provisions in the sights (for roll back) pertain to categorical exclusions, oil shale and the time deadline for APDs. The House held a series of hearings with more scheduled. The House Resources Committee is expected to hold a markup of a bill on May 23. Anything you can do to let your congressmen, particularly the House Resources Committee, know how important oil and gas development is to your state's economy, including oil and natural gas produced from public lands, would be extremely helpful.

House and Senate committees have been holding hearings on global climate change and legislation is being prepared. The assumption is that some type of cap and trade system will be proposed. It makes it all the more important and prescient that the IOGCC has been working on this issue since the summer of 2002 when we gathered a group in Alta, Utah, and asked participants whether carbon sequestration was of interest to the states. The answer was a resounding yes and an IOGCC task force was created. The task force produced a very well-regarded report in 2005 and is nearing completion of a guidance document for the use of states contemplating a regulatory framework for carbon sequestration in geological formations. The work of the task force will hopefully ensure that states will play a key role in regulating development of such projects within their borders.

Finally, the Senate is debating, and may have passed by the time this is published, the America COMPETES Act (S. 761). The act incorporates many provisions of a bill that was approved last year by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee but not passed by the full Senate – the Protecting America's Competitive Edge Through Energy Act. The America COMPETES Act also implements recommendations contained in a report by the National Academy of Sciences entitled "Rising Above the Gathering Storm". The bill has three main elements: 1) increasing research investment; 2) strengthening educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, from elementary through graduate school; and 3) developing an innovation infrastructure.