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Senate

IMPROVING FUEL ECONOMY

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I am here to cheer the announcement by the Ford Motor Company that it will voluntarily improve the fuel economy of its fleet of sport utility vehicles by 25 percent over a period of 5 years. At a time when gas prices are skyrocketing and sales of SUVs are increasing, this announcement couldn't come at a better time. Ford's decision to make SUVs more fuel efficient is welcome news. I have long said that the industry has existing technology to allow cars to go farther on a gallon of gas and to save consumers money at the gas pump. Ford has set an example that other auto manufacturers should follow immediately. I am anxiously awaiting a response from the remaining two of the big three and hope they will join Ford in its pursuit of cleaner, more efficient vehicles.

I hope the manufacturers, now having pledged to improve fuel efficiency, will join me in my efforts to study an increase in corporate average fuel economy standards. As my colleagues know, I have long been an advocate of raising CAFE standards and scored a breakthrough victory earlier this year that paves the way for the Department of Transportation and the National Academy of Sciences, once again, to study fuel efficiency standards and their relationship to such issues as vehicle safety and to recommend the findings to Congress by July 1, 2001. I look forward to working with the automotive industry to ensure that this study is fair and balanced.

Many constituents and colleagues are surprised to learn of my advocacy for CAFE standards. My motivation is a simple one and is based on the success of the original CAFE standards statutes. I have never been swayed by doomsday predictions from automakers that claim they would be forced to manufacture a fleet of subcompact cars if we allowed the Department of Transportation to study and

impose an increase in CAFE standards. We have come a long way from absolute opposition to a study of the issue to today's major announcement by the Ford Motor Company that will be of tremendous benefit to consumers who want cleaner, more efficient SUVs. This announcement reaffirms my faith in the ability of American automobile manufacturers to produce fuel-efficient vehicles that are the envy of the world. The debate over raising CAFE standards has come a long way, and I look forward to continuing this debate when Congress returns from its August recess.

BREACHING COLUMBIA AND SNAKE RIVER DAMS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, on a third and separate subject, during the course of this past week, four Northwest Governors, two Republicans and two Democrats—the Governors of Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon—released a framework that shows great promise toward the recovery of endangered salmon on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. They have done so without recommending that any dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers be breached and destroyed. I agree wholeheartedly with the following statement from their plan:

The region must be prepared in the near term to recover salmon and meet its larger fish and wildlife restoration obligations by acting now in areas of agreement without resorting to breaching the four Snake River dams.

That is a reasonable statement. Unfortunately, it is not one which Vice President GORE and the Federal agencies now concerned with salmon enhancement endorse in their countervailing recommendations of today to keep moving forward with plans to destroy those dams.

I agree with the bipartisan Governors' plan in many of its elements, including the principle that perform-

ance standards must be scientifically based, subject to scientific peer review, reasonably obtainable, and measurable. I agree with the Governors that the National Marine Fisheries Service should work together with local, State, and tribal governments and private landowners on what specific improvements are needed for recovery. I agree with the Governors that we need real leadership and that the President of the United States should appoint one official in the region who will be accountable and who will efficiently oversee Federal agency fish recovery efforts.

Over the past decade, we have squandered more than a billion dollars and commissioned dozens of studies that have done little to promote a consensus on how best to save salmon. The Governors and I agree that local salmon recovery plans that avoid Federal methods of duplication and top-down planning are a much more effective method of saving salmon. I agree with the Governors that States should move ahead to designate priority watersheds for salmon and steelhead plans that are to be developed within 1 year and that the Federal agencies should have clear numerical goals so that success may be measured in those watersheds.

The appropriations subcommittee of this Congress last year directed the National Marine Fisheries Service to provide numerical goals for all of the listed fish in the Puget Sound and Columbia River regions and a schedule for all other areas and to provide this information to Congress by July 1 of this year. Instead of fulfilling this request, those agencies have said they will not have any goals until the fall of 2001 and that they have only begun the technical recovery planning for any species of fish they seek to recover. In other words, once again the administration says what we ought to do without knowing what those steps are designed to accomplish.

I agree with the Governors and their recommendation that the Army Corps

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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