

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

## ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, let me take a few moments this morning to discuss the merits of the energy bill which was introduced earlier this week by a number of our colleagues. It is a bipartisan introduction by myself, Senator BREAUX, Senator LOTT, and a number of other Senators who are on the bill.

I think it is appropriate to kind of focus in on reality. We have an energy crisis in this country. It has been developing for a long time. It does not solve anything to point fingers at where the responsibility is. The bottom line is how to address it, how to resolve it, and how to get this country moving again. We are looking at the stock market, shaking our heads. We are listening to Alan Greenspan. The predictions for the economy are gloomy, and one of the causes, a significant cause, obviously, is the price of energy.

The price of energy has hit everyone in this body. If you live in Washington, DC, and you use gas, you know your gas bills have doubled. That means you have had to take a greater percentage of your disposable income to pay your gas bill. I will not go into gasoline prices which have escalated over an extended period of time. But the American public and Members of this body have an opportunity, and I think have an obligation, to come up with some positive solutions.

We would like to think that energy is bipartisan. We all have the same responsibility. We have different views on how to achieve a balance. But I think there is a basic philosophical opportunity for some self-examination because some folks suggest we can simply conserve our way out of this crisis. Factually, we cannot conserve our way out of this crisis. It is understandable as we reflect on where we have come in the last 10 years. We are dependent on computers, air-conditioning. With a larger more affluent population, it simply uses more energy.

We can be more energy efficient, but the reality is, as the CSIS study showed, we are going to be dependent on fossil fuels for the next two decades at an increasing percentage—somewhere from 86 to close to 90 percent. We forget we are not the whole world. We kind of look at ourselves and say, well, we set the pattern. But given the growth of Third World countries such as China, their consumption of energy suggests that, as we look at the future, there is going to be more pressure on conventional hydrocarbons. We have to look to alternatives. We have to examine ways not to throw the baby out with the bath water, which is what some have suggested in criticism of this bill.

We have to recognize that for a long time we are going to be dependent on our conventional sources of energy, even though we have an abundance of coal and we have the technology to clean up our coal. Still, as we look for power generation relief, we don't look to coal anymore. There are a number of reasons for it. Obviously some coal has problems. It has problems associated with Btu's; it has problems associated with ash; it has problems associated with the chemical makeup of the coal that requires removal of impurities. But the technology is there although the cost increases. We work in this competitive area on the cost of energy per Btu.

Sulfur in coal can be removed. We can have scrubbers on our stacks. But we have to have a plan and an encouragement and in some cases assistance in developing this technology. We have this in this legislation.

Mr. President, 20 percent of our power—and I know my friend from Nevada occasionally rises to the occasion concerning nuclear power—20 percent of the power in this country is generated by nuclear energy. Yet we have not built a new plant in almost 20 years. You cannot build a plant. It is not economic. We cannot address what to do with the nuclear waste. I am not here to promote nuclear energy, solely. I am simply saying nuclear energy has a place in the mix of our energy production, just as coal does.

We have tremendous capacity and capability for hydro, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, but the prospects for building new hydro plants are very remote. We are talking about taking dams down, but we don't honestly evaluate what the tradeoff is. If we take down dams on the Columbia River, what is the result? We will lose the capability of barge traffic moving huge tonnages on that river. What will we do with them? We will put them on the highway; that is the tradeoff—oil.

Obviously, we are becoming more dependent on imported oil, 56 percent dependent. At what point do we sacrifice our national security effort by becoming increasingly dependent, and at what percentage does that occur? It is pretty hard to say. We are 56 percent dependent now. We were 37 percent in 1973 when we had the Arab oil embargo. The Department of Energy says it is going to be somewhere in the area of 63 or 64 or 65 percent.

I was asked that question the other day by a reporter: You talk about our dependence. We have become used to it. At what point do we really compromise our national security?

I thought for a moment. I said that in 1991-1992 we fought a war. We lost 147 lives. Is that sufficient? I think it is.

As we look to the future, we are going to continue to have a problem unless we relieve our dependence on imported energy sources, and particularly oil.

How do we do that? We do it through a combination of ways, developing

other known sources of energy, such as I outlined, and opening up new sources of domestic energy.

One of the interesting things about this bill is it focuses. It is 300 pages, but it focuses like a lightning rod on one issue: opening ANWR. Do we do it safely? Can we do it safely? Do we have the technology? Clearly we do. There is absolutely no question about that.

On the other hand, America's environmental community has rallied to the cause to save ANWR, saying that we cannot do it safely. Somebody is wrong. But I can tell you what it has done. It has given the environmental community a cause. They need a national cause where people cannot evaluate the issue for themselves because they will not go up there. It increases membership and dollars.

Look at some of the colleges in the East: Save ANWR. There is no question of technology capability.

What we are facing here is very little focus on the energy bill in itself but great rhetoric. For example, the Sierra Club—may I ask what the time agreement is?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator had until 10:15. It is now 10:15, I say to the Senator.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I will not object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. That being the case, I ask everyone's time be advanced accordingly so no one loses any time because under the time agreement everyone has allocated time by the minute. I ask as part of that that everyone be advanced 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank my colleague.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska has an additional 10 minutes, and all other Senators' times will be moved back 10 minutes from that previously agreed to.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Nevada.

Let me spend a few minutes countering the allegations against this legislation. The Sierra Club came out with a report saying the bill was a giveaway for fossil fuel producers.

There is absolutely no incentive in this legislation for big oil. We focus on maintaining a viable domestic industry, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and ensuring our national security. The Sierra Club release also calls for increased efficiency, renewable energy, and more efficient, less-polluting powerplants. I wonder if they have read the bill. We provided incentives for alternatives: fuels, renewable