Seven other amendments are currently pending on the bill.

One would think that dealing with 84 amendments on a bill would represent fairly good progress on a bill, and in many ways it does. We have taken up almost all the major issues on the bill, and they have been disposed of with very few exceptions. I appreciate the help of Senator MURKOWSKI and others who have been active in this debate, trying to move this set of issues along and to move the legislation along.

At the same time, we have had many days when Senators have not been willing to come to the Chamber and offer amendments. We have had periods when Senators have delayed votes on their amendments and been anxious to wait until conditions seemed more favorable before a vote would occur on their amendments.

If we in fact were out of amendments, obviously that would be good news. The truth is, yesterday at the time of the filing deadline that was triggered by the cloture process, there were 115 additional amendments filed. Some of those amendments are variations on earlier amendments that have been filed. Some are variations on others that we understand can be handled. Clearly, we still have a substantial number of issues that Senators believe they need to have considered.

I am also disappointed that our efforts to get unanimous consent on a finite list of amendments have been blocked. We have asked unanimous consent several times on the Senate floor to get agreement, not on time limits—we had never got to the stage where we were asking for time limits—but first, before we asked for time limits on amendments, we were trying to get a finite list of amendments. The effort to get that has been blocked. Even adoption of amendments that both managers of the bill have been willing to clear has been a problem for us.

So we have not had, in my view, the cooperation we need to bring this bill to conclusion. We need to have that change quickly if we are going to continue on the bill and conclude action on it.

I know there is great concern as we approach this cloture vote about the tax-related provisions. I strongly support those provisions, the tax incentive provisions that were voted out of the Finance Committee on February 28. I supported those. I believe they are dramatically better than the tax-related provisions that were attached to the House-passed energy bill last year.

The argument was made yesterday that the Senate should now think of this bill as some sort of omnibus tax bill. I think that would be a big mistake, for us to now look on this measure as the major tax bill of the year and see this as an opportunity for all Senators to come and offer all sorts of provisions relating to taxes, particularly those that do not relate to energy taxes. I think that would be a very major mistake.

This is not an omnibus tax bill. It is an energy bill. We need to bring debate on the bill to a close. I hope we can do so with tax provisions included. I know the Senator from Montana has tried to get unanimous consent to do that. I support us doing that, having the provisions coming out of the Finance Committee brought up, debated, and voted on. But clearly we need to keep in context that this is not the major tax bill the Senate is going to consider in this Congress, and therefore it should not be a vehicle for all sorts of non-energy-related tax proposals.

I compliment our majority leader, Senator DASCHLE, for the enormous amount of floor time he has committed to trying to pass this bill. A lot of speeches have been made over the last several months implying that our majority leader was not committed to moving an energy bill through this body.

His actions speak much louder than words and the rhetoric around here. It is clear from his actions and committing 5 weeks of the Senate's time to this important issue that he is committed to trying to get an energy bill through the Senate.

I also appreciate the strong support that Senator LOTT has been providing in trying to move to cloture and move ahead with invoking cloture and completing action on the bill. I think that is very important as well.

Energy is a central policy concern in the Senate in this session. It is appropriately so. Our President has made it an agenda item for the country. Many of us have felt strongly that there are provisions in this bill that should be enacted into law. I hope we can do so. If you exclude Mondays and Fridays from the calculation, we now have 15 working and voting days between now and the Memorial Day recess. Clearly, there is a limit as to how much of the Senate's time we can devote to this very important issue.

I hope all Senators will support the effort to invoke cloture on the substitute amendment. Even if cloture is invoked, there are several hard fought battles still to be waged on particular amendments that have been offered and that will remain germane.

I believe we have reached a point where further debate should be limited to germane amendments. For that reason, I urge Senators to support the motion to invoke cloture.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Who yields time?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the majority controls 30 minutes. I do not know if the minority wishes to use any of their time. It is my understanding that Senator BAUCUS wishes to give remarks in opposition to cloture. Is that true?

Mr. BAUCUS. At this point.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I will suspend my statement at this time if someone else wishes to speak.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senator from Nebraska wishes to speak on a subject not related to cloture. I yield 5 minutes to him.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and friend from Nevada for giving me this opportunity.

RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, as we proceed with the debate—and hopefully it will end with a cloture vote—on the renewable fuel standard in S. 517, it is important to clarify some of the main issues and to counter some of the misinformation that has been offered by opponents of ethanol and other biofuels and the RFS.

In today's New York Times, one of our colleagues is quoted as saying that the renewable fuel standard may raise the cost of gasoline by 10 cents a gallon in New York. I am not sure how that number is achieved given the fact that the wholesale price of ethanol today in New York is about 30 cents per gallon less than gasoline.

But it is frustrating. For 25 years, we have all worked to ward off the negative arguments presented by some of the opponents. The opponents are determined to maintain control over the transportation fuels market by excluding ethanol, by excluding reformulated fuels, and by excluding new opportunities for renewable resources. Yet because the ethanol industry is right for America and for our State, it has survived and expanded from essentially zero in 1977 to over 2 billion gallons a year capacity today.

It has taken sound public policy to achieve this strength and it will take sound public policy to take the next leap forward in these days of dangerous and growing foreign oil dependency and mounting concerns about the environment including climate change. The RFS is the next sound and critical policy leap forward to more than double biofuels production in the next 10 years.

In recent years, an enlightened sector of these industries ha accepted the benefits of ethanol blends. But the remaining and commanding sectors stand steadfast in their opposition. Old data, negative projections, and misinformation are their tools.

They have convinced some to actively embrace their campaign to maintain a fossil-interest stranglehold on transportation fuels. For these companies, national energy, economic and environmental security of the United States is not part of their global calculus as they pursue their determined path against ethanol and other biofuels. These biofuels are becoming an international force. If opponents

can delay the United States in its embrace of the biorefinery concept, they will succeed in sustaining the position and profitability of their industry.

I will address the opponent's arguments issue by issue. It is my hope that, ultimately, an objective and thoughtful overview will lead to acceptance of the Renewable Fuel Standard.

I would first like to stress the urgent needs for a ''Manhattan'' type project to commercialize the biorefinery industry in the United States. This industry will take agricultural and forestry crops and residues, rights-of-way, park, yard and garden trimmings as well as the clean portion of municipal wastes that are disposal problems or end up in the our land fills or sewers and convert these renewable resources into biofuels, biochemicals and bioelectricity.

Poster 1 shows existing ethanol plants in gold, plants under construction in green, and other biorefineries in the planning stage in red.

You can see that the dispersal of biorefineries will be nationwide, not limited to the Midwest, and not limited to any location or region within our country.

Moving from planning to construction is largely contingent on implementation of the RFS since capitalization will not proceed without an assured and profitable market for their outputs.

America needs a Manhattan-type project to accelerate this process and to ensure the development of smaller, fully integrated, community-based biorefineries bringing new basic industries and quality jobs to rural and urban communities with ownership/partial ownership and value-added benefits accruing to local people. The RFS is part of this approach because it expands the market for biofuels and provides a 1.5 credit for cellulosic biomass ethanol and biodiesel compared to 1 credit for corn-based ethanol; that is, each gallon of ethanol from cellulosic biomass will be worth 1.5 gallons of corn-based ethanol. This extra credit is an important driver in advancing technology so that California, New York, and other States can join the Midwest in benefiting from new industries, better jobs, and improved incomes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's 5 minutes has expired.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, we hope the cloture vote will move forward and that we will, in fact, pass the RFS.

Thank you very much.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I have been in consultation with the distinguished Republican leader and our terrific chair of the committee, as well as others, with regard to finding some procedural arrangement to accommodate Senators and continue the effort to bring this bill to a close.

I think we are making progress, but in order to accommodate further discussion, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote be postponed until 2:30.

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

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls in this period be charged equally against both sides.

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Chair.

FINANCE COMMITTEE TAX INCENTIVES

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the cloture vote has been suspended until 2:30 this afternoon. I think that is very wise. There are a few provisions that various Senators are trying to work out. I hope very much that they are worked out.

One of the big provisions is the Finance Committee-passed tax package which I believe members of the Finance Committee believe very much should be part of this bill.

The Finance Committee has worked long and hard on tax provisions to help wean America from OPEC. They are not huge incentives, but on the margin they will help a bit. They are divided roughly equally between conservation incentives on the one hand and production incentives on the other. The conservation incentives are renewable energy provisions. For example, they extend and modify what is called the section 45 credit.

In addition, the alternative fuels and alternative-fuel vehicles credit is to help America develop automobiles that are much more fuel efficient so we will consume fewer gallons of gasoline for every mile driven. There are a lot of great ideas, whether hybrids or fuel cells, but it is important to give those incentives.

There are also some conservation and energy-efficiency incentives for energy efficiency in existing homes, for new home construction, a credit for residential solar, for example, wind, fuel cell properties, a credit for more efficient air-conditioners, water heaters, heat pumps, and the list goes on. That is the conservation side. As I said, it is about half of the total package.

The tax incentives for 1 year total about $8 billion and over the life of the bill—that is 10 years—$14 billion. Half of that, as I mentioned, is renewables and conservation. The other half is production incentives. The production incentives are for clean coal technologies. We know we can utilize coal significantly in the future. It makes sense that we use cleaner technologies so that there is less pollution. There are oil and gas conventional incentives as well as some electric industry restructuring incentives.

I might say, for our Native Americans on Indian reservations, we have provided accelerated depreciation and wage credit benefits for businesses that are on Indian reservations. This provision was thrashed out in committee. It passed out of the committee unanimously, albeit on a voice vote.

I believe that, by and large, most Members of the Senate support—and support strongly—these provisions. They do help, on the margin, wean us a bit from our dependency on OPEC because they provide a little more self-sufficiency and have actual, honest to goodness provisions; that is, the myriad of conservation measures I mentioned.

I take my hat off to our leader Senator DASCHLE, to Senator REID, and to Senator LOTT for trying to figure out ways to put this together so we can finally pass the energy bill. It is an almost impossible situation. You have 100 Senators, each with a different point of view. But as to the Finance Committee provisions, by and large, the President proposed many of them in his proposed energy tax package. Senator BINGAMAN, chairman of the Energy Committee, has proposed energy tax incentives. Senator MURKOWSKI has proposed energy tax incentives. That is some indication why we in the Finance Committee passed this measure out unanimously.

It is bipartisan by definition. It is broad based, but it is not germane, obviously. That is why I hope we can get the agreement in some responsible fashion to take up and pass the Finance Committee package in a posture so it will be included in the bill, that it is not excluded perhaps because cloture is invoked, therefore making the provision not germane.

It is a good provision, the Finance Committee package. I think it is also important we pass it because there may be scoping issues in conference. I