

From February to March 2004, crude oil prices rose from \$28 to \$38 per barrel. In April, OPEC announced its commitment to further cut oil production by 1,000,000 barrels a day, and crude oil prices now exceed \$40 per barrel. We cannot allow this foreign oil cartel to wreak havoc on our economy. The administration must use its diplomatic pressure to persuade OPEC to increase production. The actions of this cartel have real consequences for Americans.

Second, the resolution states that the administration should direct the Federal Trade Commission and the Attorney General to exercise vigorous oversight over the oil markets to protect the American people from price gouging. Mega-mergers throughout the oil industry have resulted in consolidation in the market, and we have, in essence, rebuilt the Rockefeller trust through these mergers. The gasoline market in Wisconsin and at least 27 other States are now considered to be "tight oligopolies" with 4 companies controlling more than 60 percent of the gasoline supplies. In tightly concentrated markets, numerous studies have found oil company practices are driving independent wholesalers and dealers out of the market.

Investigations have also found large consolidated oil companies control not just the buying choices of local gas stations, but also the selling prices of gasoline distributors. As a result, independent stations must buy their gasoline directly from the oil company, usually at a higher price than the company's own brand-name stations pay. With these higher costs, the independent stations cannot compete. The company bases prices not on the cost of producing gasoline, but on the maximum a neighborhood will pay. The FTC and the Attorney General must keep a watchful eye on these anti-competitive practices and use all the tools available to them to protect consumers from price fixing and other practices that result in escalating gas prices.

Finally, the resolution calls upon the administration to suspend deliveries of the oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and release 1,000,000 million barrels of oil a day for 30 days. History indicates that releasing oil from the SPR provides consumers with relief from high gas prices. Within hours of the first air strike against Iraq in January 1991, the first President Bush authorized a drawdown of the SPR. The day after the plan was approved, crude prices dropped by nearly \$10 a barrel. During the fall of 2000, the Clinton administration decided to release oil from the SPR. The day after the oil was released from the SPR, crude oil prices fell from \$37 a barrel to less than \$31 a barrel. In addition, releasing the oil will not affect our security interests because the SPR is almost full. It currently holds 659 million barrels, and its capacity of the is 700 million barrels. The resolution only calls for releasing 30 million barrels.

American consumers need relief from high gas prices now. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

CONFIRMATION OF DEBBIE HERSMAN

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, the Senate recently confirmed Debbie Hersman to become a member of the National Transportation Safety Board. She has served the Commerce Committee for 5 years, and all of us will miss her presence. We all wish her the best in her new position and know that she will serve with honor and integrity.

I ask unanimous consent that the following statements that are part of the hearing record on her nomination be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ERNEST HOLLINGS ON THE NOMINATION OF DEBBIE HERSMAN

Mr. Chairman, I know Senator Hutchison would agree that the most important character a member of the National Transportation Safety Board can have is independent thinking. I don't want someone going to an accident, mind already made up, sharp elbows telling everybody what they are supposed to find, and everything like that.

What I want is someone who can look at all sides of the issue. Someone who can challenge people to make the right decisions. Someone who can manage the non-partisan professionals doing the work. And someone, who at the end of the day, will give a fair and unvarnished response on what happened.

I pick NTSB members like George Bush picks vice presidents. You can search the country, far and wide, but the best of the best in transportation safety, is right here in the room, everyday with us, Debbie Hersman.

She has worked for the committee for almost 5 years. I've had her focus on rail, because of the tremendous needs we have to modernize Amtrak and improve passenger and safety issues.

But she also has taken on oversight of truck and bus safety, pipeline safety, hazardous materials transportation safety. And post 9-11, I've asked her to oversee transportation security issues, insofar as air, rail, ports, and trucking. In other words, she is well-rounded in all aspects of transportation. Her experience belies her youthful appearance.

Prior to joining our staff, Debbie was the staff director for Congressman Bob Wise of West Virginia, who served on key transportation and infrastructure committees. She holds a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and a master's degree from George Mason.

We still have much work to do on this committee on transportation issues, and I hate to lose my right arm. She is as hard a worker, as smart as any, as competent a professional as any Senator could ask for. But I know the country is better off, if Debbie is at NTSB, and I proudly endorse her nomination.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, we hold many nomination hearings in this committee, and we say many things about the nominees, usually in praise of them, but at times questioning them. This nomination is a personal one for many of us, as we have all watched Debbie work tirelessly on behalf of us and our constituents.

Before I discuss all of the reasons that Debbie is absolutely the right person for this position, I want to proudly state she is a West Virginian. Both of her parents were raised in Roane County, WV. In addition, she has many proud relatives in Spencer and Charleston, WV. I know that the people of West Virginia share my pride in all of Debbie's accomplishments.

Before coming to the Senate Commerce Committee, Debbie worked for then Congressman Wise of West Virginia in many capacities, including chief of staff. Governor Wise called me to support her nomination, and we wholeheartedly agreed that there was no better person for the job. Debbie has spent a career for the people of West Virginia, and I know the entire country will benefit from her presence on the National Transportation Safety Board.

Each of us has had to call on the National Transportation Safety Board, or watched on CNN, the work that they do in sifting through a disaster site and in dealing with family members following an aviation tragedy. We rely on their independence to provide Congress and the transportation regulatory agencies recommendations to improve safety. It is a critical role that they play, and one divorced from politics and partisanship. The National Transportation Safety Board deals with situations where tragedies affect many people and that makes it all the more important that we select someone with both the technical knowledge to contribute to the board's work and the human compassion needed in the context of these tragedies. Debbie melds these two important requirements in a particularly special manner.

Each Board member is an independent source of knowledge and information. While the Board votes on matters, and we hope that all agree on the safety recommendations, each is charged with independently making a decision based on the facts and analysis of its expert staff. A small agency, with some 429 employees, its expertise and knowledge is recognized around the world.

Debbie, who has worked on this committee for 5 years, has worked with all of us on transportation safety and regulatory issues, using her expertise and talents to push for improvements. Her primary focus has been surface transportation, but I know that she has spent a considerable amount of time on aviation safety issues, and helped with aviation security matters following 9/11. I know she worked on the highway bill while a House staff member, and that knowledge will help her in her new position.

Her talents, wit, charm and expertise will be sorely missed. I wish her the best of luck in her new position, and while none of us hope to see her about a tragedy in our states, we know that whatever the situation, the NTSB will be in good hands with Debbie there.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, today we are honored by the nomination of

Debbie Hersman to serve as a member of the National Transportation Safety Board. Along with Senator HOLLINGS, I have spent a great deal of time over the last 5 years working with Debbie. She has always provided me with excellent counsel and I can count on her to know the facts and understand the points of view of all sides.

Debbie's experience in all modes of transportation qualifies her well for this position. In 1999 she spent countless hours drafting legislation that ultimately resulted in the creation of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at the Department of Transportation, with the primary purposes of reducing large truck fatalities on our nation's highways. In 2001 Debbie and I worked through many legislative issues on the floor along with Senator MCCAIN and his staff to pass a pipeline safety bill. The pipeline safety legislation was prompted by several fatal accidents that were also investigated by the NTSB. We rely on the Board to provide us with independent and honest answers about accidents and what needs to be done to prevent them in the future. I know that we can count on Debbie to understand the import of the Board's work and the interplay between the Board's recommendations and the legislative and regulatory processes.

While it is hard for us to let one of our own go, I have every confidence that she possesses the professionalism, credibility, and with the necessary insight to do the job well. Debbie always sees the big picture yet she pays attention to the details. Her tenacity and ability to hold people's feet to the fire will serve her well in her new position as she sifts through the facts at accident scenes and works through staff recommendations.

It has been a pleasure to work with Debbie on a multitude of transportation issues. I have always been impressed with her diligence and professional demeanor. While I will miss her, on both a professional and personal level, I know that Debbie will serve on the NTSB with distinction. It is my hope that we can move her nomination and get her over to the NTSB quickly.

U.S. INVESTMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I address the Senate on the matter of the need for continued U.S. investment in energy efficiency projects in other countries, as well as our own. I recently submitted my view on this matter to a publication of the Alliance to Save Energy, but I feel now, particularly in these times of high gasoline prices, that I should make a few remarks to the full Senate on this issue.

Fluctuating energy prices and instability in the Middle East once again are prompting calls for energy independence for the United States. In our efforts to meet that goal, we cannot forget that the energy use of other

countries directly effects both the supply and price of our energy resources here at home.

Federal efforts to ensure freedom from fluctuations in energy prices have been advocated by every President, both Republican and Democrat, since 1973 and the infamous oil boycott. As Americans we count on energy to protect our security, to fuel our cars, to provide heat, air conditioning and light for our homes, to manufacture goods, and to transport supplies. In all of these needs, we, as consumers, pay the price for fluctuations in the global energy market.

Our efforts to guarantee adequate energy supplies in the U.S. should prompt us to again take a hard look at energy efficiency not only here, but abroad. We are reminded that the international energy efficiency programs and projects run by our Federal Government protect and enhance the economies and standard of living of developing nations around the world. Given that we have a single integrated global petroleum market these efficiency programs directly benefit American consumers: by lessening demand for oil abroad, we are helping to loosen supply and hold down price pressures domestically. Quite simply, lowered oil demand in Madras helps truckers in Montpelier. Lowered oil use in Sao Paolo helps drivers in Santa Fe.

A visitor to the capital of almost any developing country, be it Bangkok, Cairo, Manila, or Mexico City, will have a common experience. These places have already seen extraordinary increases in energy use. People who last saw these places 10 or 15 years ago are struck by the massive increase in air pollution from automobiles, trucks, and factories. As development takes hold and growth accelerates, energy use increases dramatically. But in many cases developing countries do not use energy efficiently. They often require two to four times more energy than industrial countries to produce the same output. This fuel consumption speeds up the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. In addition, fuel combustion is often dirty and incomplete, generating local pollution.

U.S. Government-funded efforts energy-efficient programs that provide equipment and improved energy management practices can greatly reduce energy consumption. Over the last 10 to 15 years, the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. AID, launched a number of energy conservation projects aimed at energy use. These projects helped create an interest in energy efficiency, trained local engineers in energy management, and sponsored energy audits and demonstration investments. The projects were technically successful and had good economic rates of return, and the Alliance to Save Energy has been involved in several of these projects. In most cases, fuel savings paid for the cost of investments in a year to two.

By reducing energy consumption, the measures also reduced pollution.

One of the most successful examples of a national energy conservation program has been Brazil's National Electricity Conservation Program PROCEL. With support from U.S. AID, PROCEL has developed demonstration and education programs to foster energy efficiency savings and reduce the need for new construction of costly power plants. The country has developed energy efficiency standards, regulatory measures, and joint-venture projects that have become a model for the rest of Latin America. PROCEL's energy efficiency measures have resulted in direct savings of over 1200 gigawatt-hours per year.

The need for programs such as these are overwhelming. According to the Energy Information Administration's most recent International Energy Outlook world energy consumption will rise by 54 percent from 2001 to 2025, driven by rising demand for power in China, India and other parts of the developing world.

The report, issued on April 15, 2004, says oil will remain the dominant energy source worldwide through 2025, in Asian markets as well as in the United States. Combined, Asian and U.S. consumers will account for nearly 60 percent of the increase in world oil demand, which is projected to rise from 77 million barrels per day in 2001 to 121 million barrels per day in 2025. To meet that rising demand, the world's producers would have to increase daily production by more than 44 million barrels.

And for electric power generation, coal dominates energy markets in China, India, and other developing Asian countries. EIA projects extensive increases in coal use in China and India. EIA also projects a near doubling of worldwide net electricity consumption by 2025, from 13,290 billion kilowatt hours to 23,072 billion kilowatt hours—again propelled by rising demand for electricity in the developing world.

Unfortunately, despite these successes there is an alarming and decreasing trend in funding for energy efficiency programs at U.S. AID. During the past few years these programs have received a cut in funding—with the fiscal year 2004 request (\$8 million) cut to 50 percent of the fiscal year 2001, \$16 million funding. And the current proposal will not reverse this trend.

In a century likely to contain many surprises and new challenges, the importance of U.S. energy security can only increase. In achieving energy security we must be mindful of a few things. We must assist developing countries in cultivating a responsible energy policy which supports sound economic and social development for the betterment of their population and the global environment. This mutually beneficial partnership will enhance our energy security while providing sorely needed revenues for health care, education, and infrastructure abroad. We