

change our behaviors, then it is wrong to say prices are too high. Maybe we do not like it, but we all like to sell our product for as much as we can get for it. And that is how the market actually works and sometimes it becomes very painful.

No, it is not good. It is not good for my agriculture because that affects the price you are going to pay for food in the grocery store. There is no part of our economy that is not affected by what we are experiencing in this country right now.

But Americans have imagination. They have great ingenuity. And I am satisfied we will take this little spike in the market and make good use of it and start using our brains to power America.

If anybody thinks if you beat up on the companies—beat up all you want to—but part of the problem lies within this body because we have said “no”—resoundingly no—to a multitude of programs and projects that could have partly prevented this.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, what is the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1 minute remaining in morning business, at which time it will end and we will proceed under the regular order.

Mr. COCHRAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

MAKING EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4939, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4939) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune amendment No. 3704, to provide, with an offset, \$20,000,000 for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Medical Facilities.

Vitter/Landrieu modified amendment No. 3728, to provide for flood prevention in the State of Louisiana, with an offset.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENSIGN). Under the previous order, the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN, and the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, will be recognized for up to 10 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

I thank the distinguished and very able chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mr. COCHRAN, for all of his hard work on this bill. He has worked hard. He has again proved himself to be a very able chairman, very knowledgeable of the contents of the bill.

The President has asked the Congress to approve over \$92 billion of emergency spending—man, that is a lot of money; \$92 billion of emergency spending—including \$72.5 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and \$19.8 billion for the Federal response to the terrible hurricanes that struck the Gulf States in August and September of 2005.

The Appropriations Committee held several hearings on the request, and we have now debated the bill for nearly 2 weeks. It is a good bill. It is a good bill. I am proud to recommend it to the Senate.

But, regrettably, the President has threatened to veto the bill based on his assertion that it is too expensive. In a Statement of Administration Policy that has been made a part of the RECORD, the administration threatens that the President will veto the bill if it exceeds \$94.5 billion. OK. Have at it. Have at it, Mr. President. Currently, the bill totals \$108.9 billion. The President complains that the Senate has added funding for purposes other than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and for assisting the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Nowhere—nowhere—is it written in stone, nowhere is it etched in brass, on golden pillars, that this supplemental—which is likely to be the only supplemental considered for this fiscal year—has to be limited to the costs of the war and Hurricane Katrina. Nor is it etched in stone that the Congress must approve a bill that is below \$94.5 billion.

The Senate has added funding for a number of critical programs. Despite the administration's rhetoric about securing our borders and providing a layered defense of our ports, the President did not request a dime—not one thin dime—for border security or port security. He did not request a dime for making the coal mines safer for our coal miners. He did not request a dime for our farmers who have been hit with drought and hurricanes, despite the

fact that 78 percent of all U.S. counties were designated as primary or contiguous disaster areas by the Secretary of Agriculture or the President in 2005. He did not request a dime for compensating potential victims of pandemic influenza vaccines. The President's request for Katrina victims is inadequate and leaves critical gaps in housing and education.

The Senate recognized the weaknesses of the President's request in these areas and judiciously added funds. When the bill is in conference, I will urge the conferees to approve these items. You bet.

The conferees should send to the President a bill that meets the needs of this country. That is our duty. If the President wants to veto a bill that funds the troops, if he wants to veto a bill that funds victims of Hurricane Katrina, if he wants to veto a bill that provides critical resources for combating a potential avian flu, if he wants to veto a bill that secures our borders and our ports and helps our farmers to recover from disaster and makes our coal mines safer, have at it, have at it. That is his right under the Constitution. But the Congress should not be bullied by the President into neglecting its responsibility, our responsibility, to provide required funds to meet priority national needs.

Because my State of West Virginia is often hit by floods and other damaging disasters, such as the recent accidents in our coal mines, I am quite sensitive to the ability of our Federal Government to prepare for—and respond to—disasters promptly and with competence, which is what our citizens need and what our citizens deserve. Sadly, many of our Federal agencies are no longer up to these fundamental tasks. But this bill includes resources to help Federal agencies restore their capabilities.

I am especially grateful to and I especially thank the chairman for including, at my request and the request of others, an amount of \$35.6 million for improved mine safety and health programs. In the wake of 18 coal-mining deaths in the State of West Virginia this year—18 coal-mining deaths in the State of West Virginia this year—and another 16 mining deaths in other States, it is imperative that the Congress act immediately to ensure that an adequate number of safety inspectors will be provided for our Nation's mines and to expedite the introduction of critical safety equipment.

This week, we have heard testimony from the families of those killed in the Sago explosion in January. We have heard from the coal operators. We have heard from experts. In all of this testimony, one truth is clear: Lives can be saved when the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration places miners' safety and health at the very top of its priority list. We must have more inspectors on the job, yes. We must have better rescue teams trained and