

That is why I wish to speak to two amendments to the Energy bill aimed at making renewable fuels available across the country. Senator BOND and I have introduced an amendment that would provide grants to promote the installation of E85 biodiesel pumps at gas stations nationwide. I would also like to thank Senator VOINOVICH, Senator HAGEL, and Senator KERRY for their support of this amendment.

In past years, Congress has only provided a small amount of money each year for E85 infrastructure, and last year, even that small amount of funding was cut. As a Nation, we are stuck in a rut. Less than 1 percent of the gas stations sell E85. It is time for the country to make a serious investment in renewable fuels. That is going to mean, as I said, more flex-fuel vehicles. It is also going to mean investment in cellulosic ethanol, acknowledging we are not going to have all this ethanol based on corn and we are not going to have just soybean-based biodiesel; that there are all kinds of possibilities, as we move forward, for how we are going to get our ethanol. We need to be creative about that and we need to put the investments in place and put the standards in place.

But what we need, if we are going to do this, is the pumps on the ground. That is why Senator BOND and I have an amendment to give grants for ethanol and biodiesel pumps. It would be enough for 1,000 to 2,000 new pumps, which would nearly double or triple what we have now.

I am also introducing an amendment that would block oil company tactics to keep renewable fuels out of gas stations. I have heard from gas stations in Minnesota that their franchise contracts make it difficult to sell ethanol and biodiesel, so many of them can't even do it. Here are some examples. Remember, these are just dealing with gas stations in which they have franchise contracts involving the oil companies: They are not allowed to sell renewable fuels under the main canopy that bears the oil company name. They are not allowed to convert the pumps they already have to sell E85 or B20. They can't put up signs to let customers know they have renewable fuel or how much it costs.

That is why I call it the "Right to Retail Renewable Fuel." Look what we have on the other side. We have these oil companies. Last year, Exxon made \$29 billion in profit—a record—and the big five oil companies made \$120 billion. Now they are blaming ethanol, the small amount—these 1,200 pumps across the country at 170 gas stations—they are blaming that for the reason they can't do anything about their refineries. It is outrageous.

We need to encourage competition. That is what I am trying to do with the right to retail renewable fuel amendment. This amendment would prohibit oil companies from placing restrictions on where and how renewable fuels can be sold to gas stations. This will ensure

that franchise owners across the country have the ability to make ethanol and biodiesel available to their customers.

In conclusion, I believe that ethanol and biodiesel have tremendous potential to meet the energy needs of our country. Again, I think of the ethanol industry akin to the beginning of the computer industry when we had the big computers in the room. That is where we are. It is going to become more efficient, it is going to become better for the environment, and it is going to become less costly as we move forward. That is why we are moving into things such as cellulosic ethanol that can be grown on marginal farmland that is carbon neutral and that takes less energy to produce.

I believe these alternative fuels will move us toward energy independence in the immediate term—not decades from now. I believe we ought to use the Energy bill before us as an opportunity to invest in renewable fuels and to make them available to every American driver. I believe we should be investing in the farmers and the workers of middle America and not the Middle East.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that going forward, the time be equally divided between Republicans and Democrats.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority time has expired.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). The senior Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I understand Senator BINGAMAN and I are going to each call up an amendment, and I think it is in order that we have agreed that I would go first and he second, and then we will arrange everything with unanimous consent.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

CREATING LONG-TERM ENERGY ALTERNATIVES FOR THE NATION ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 6, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6) to reduce our Nation's dependency on foreign oil by investing in clean, renewable, and alternative energy resources, promoting new emerging energy technologies, developing greater efficiency, and creating a Strategic Energy Efficiency and Renewables Reserve to invest in alternative energy, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 1502, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Bingaman) amendment No. 1537 (to amendment No. 1502), to provide for a renewable portfolio standard.

Klobuchar (for Bingaman) amendment No. 1573 (to amendment No. 1537), to provide for a renewable portfolio standard.

Bingaman (for Klobuchar) amendment No. 1557 (to amendment No. 1502), to establish a national greenhouse gas registry.

Kohl amendment No. 1519 (to amendment No. 1502), to amend the Sherman Act to make oil-producing and exporting cartels illegal.

Kohl (for DeMint) amendment No. 1546 (to amendment No. 1502), to provide that legislation that would increase the national average fuel prices for automobiles is subject to a point of order in the Senate.

Corker amendment No. 1608 (to amendment No. 1502), to allow clean fuels to meet the renewable fuel standard.

Cardin amendment No. 1520 (to amendment No. 1502), to promote the energy independence of the United States.

Domenici (for Thune) amendment No. 1609 (to amendment No. 1502), to provide requirements for the designation of national interest electric transmission corridors.

Cardin amendment No. 1610 (to amendment No. 1502), to provide for the siting, construction, expansion, and operation of liquefied natural gas terminals.

Collins amendment No. 1615 (to amendment No. 1502), to provide for the development and coordination of a comprehensive and integrated U.S. research program that assists the people of the United States and the world to understand, assess, and predict human-induced and natural processes of abrupt climate change.

AMENDMENT NO. 1628 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1502

(Purpose: To provide standards for clean coal-derived fuels)

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside so I can propose an amendment numbered 1628.

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

The clerk will report the amendment. The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. DOMENICI], for Mr. BUNNING, for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. CRAIG, proposes an amendment numbered 1628 to amendment numbered 1502.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. DOMENICI, Madam President, as we resume consideration of the Energy bill, I would note to my colleagues that we have about 120 amendments filed, and we have 10 amendments pending. Additionally, I understand we have a number of Members who wish to offer other amendments. I encourage people to come forward and file amendments if they wish to do so.

I understand the Finance Committee is working on a major energy package over the next couple of days. I have some concerns about what is rumored to be in that package, but I will reserve my comments and judgment until the Senate sees the full product. Additionally, we have a number of large items that I am sure Senator BINGAMAN concurs that we have to resolve over the next few days, including the Bingaman RPS amendment, a potential CAFE amendment to the fuel economy language currently in the base text, as well as the debate on the issue of coal-to-liquids, which received a great deal of attention and debate in the Energy Committee and I am sure will receive the same here.

This bill does some great things in the area of biofuels, and it is important to the Senate that we take action on improving the fuel efficiency of our vehicles. This is a win for the diversification of fuels we use, and it is a win for saving energy, but we must act to increase our domestic energy supply at the same time, especially if we can and especially if we have energy. That is one of the reasons I worked so hard to pass the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, and that is one reason I support the Bunning amendment which I have introduced which will be before the Senate on coal-to-liquids. While Senator BUNNING could not be here this afternoon, we all know of his advocacy on this issue. It is important that the topic of coal-to-liquids be addressed before the Senate. I understand that, provided there is time—and I think there certainly should be—Senator BUNNING will speak on this amendment tomorrow, as I indicated, if at all possible.

We have developed this legislation. This is not the first time the issue of coal-to-liquids has come up. On May 2, we considered an amendment in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to provide identical treatment of coal-to-liquids as that provided for cellulosic ethanol. Senator Thomas, from Wyoming, and Senator BUNNING offered an amendment to mandate 21 billion gallons of coal-to-liquids by the year 2022. I supported them. But the amendment failed by the slimmest of margins—a 12-to-11 vote in the committee. Since that markup, for over a month there has been an effort to reach out and negotiate a middle ground on the issue of coal-to-liquids. I regret that those discussions ended without agreement.

Let me be clear: I do not support the Tester amendment that may come up

before the Senate shortly. I oppose the amendment for a number of reasons we will discuss when these proposals are more fully debated.

The Bunning-Domenici amendment draws wide support from those in the field who will be doing the work necessary to bring those domestic fuels to market. This Bunning-Domenici amendment will establish and mandate for just 6 billion gallons of coal-to-liquid fuel by 2022, a very large difference in terms of the mandated amount, much smaller—22 before and 6 now in the amendment before us. That is a reduction of 15 billion gallons from what we offered in the committee.

This mandate starts in 2016, which is the same year the cellulosic energy mandate begins in the base bill. Importantly, this mandate requires that greenhouse gas emissions from coal-to-liquid fuels be 20 percent better than gasoline—20 percent better than gasoline. Again, that is the same standard as appears in the base bill for cellulosic ethanol. In other words, you can't make the claim that this 6 billion which will be there, this 6 billion gallons, will harm the atmosphere or greenhouse gases any more than cellulosic ethanol, which we are all advocating, and there is so much pressure to get it done and so much almost awe that it is going to get done and how great it will be. It will have the same effect as this is going to have on the air.

There are many ways to provide the incentives for these alternative fuels. One that has been proven to work is to provide a reliable market for the products. We have experience with this approach on ethanol, and I have not been presented with a reason to believe it will not work for other fuels.

In terms of the merits of coal-to-liquid fuels, there are many. Unlike cellulosic ethanol, this has been commercially demonstrated in other countries; now we need to do it here in the United States. Unlike cellulosic ethanol, it can be moved in existing pipes and used in existing vehicles. Coal-to-liquid fuel will reduce the emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxide, particulate matter, and other pollutants when compared to conventional fuels, and coal-to-liquid fuel will create an investment in rural communities, good-paying jobs for Americans, and cheaper energy for American consumers.

As we move forward with the consideration of coal-to-liquid amendments, there are some points about this particular one I would like to point out.

First, the program is entirely separate and will not compete with the biofuels program.

Second, the mandate is only one-sixth the size of the renewable fuel mandate.

Third, only coal-to-liquid fuel that can meet the same life cycle greenhouse standard as biofuels will be eligible for the program.

There will be much we disagree on as we consider the issue more fully. Many

will say: We cannot do coal-to-liquids unless we require carbon sequestration. We should remember that we do not require carbon sequestration for ethanol in this bill. For carbon sequestration, I am concerned about efforts to require it and, after all, we have concluded in the base text of the bill before us that carbon sequestration requires more research and development. That is true.

I will agree that requiring the same greenhouse gas standards for all fuels is a reasonable approach. That is why we have included the same language in our amendment.

The amendment is quite different from the one that was received in the Energy Committee on May 2. It has been written to address the concerns that arose then and have arisen since. This amendment represents an effort to ensure that we provide a stable market for the first coal-to-liquids plants, and if that happens, there is no question that coal, one of America's most abundant fuels, will be on its way to being a first-rate source of fuel for the automobile and related kinds of activities.

There is broad and growing support for reducing our reliance on foreign sources of energy in affordable and environmentally sound ways. Coal is our most abundant and affordable fossil resource. I do believe that technology will continue to make coal cleaner and that this amendment further establishes the path forward.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MARTINEZ be added as a cosponsor of the Bunning amendment.

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

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment Senator DOMENICI just called up be set aside at this point.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1614 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1502
(Purpose: To establish a program to provide loans for projects to produce syngas from coal and other feedstocks while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reliance of the United States on petroleum and natural gas)

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I call up amendment 1614 on behalf of Senator TESTER, Senator BYRD, Senator SALAZAR, Senator ROCKEFELLER, Senator BINGAMAN, Senator LANDRIEU, and Senator WEBB.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BYRD, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. LANDRIEU and Mr. WEBB, proposes an amendment numbered 1614 to amendment numbered 1502.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of Friday, June 15, 2007, under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I am not going to speak about the amendment at this point or about the Bunning amendment Senator DOMENICI described in general terms. But this is a very important issue. It is one we spent time on in our Energy Committee markup. It is one we clearly need to resolve here on the Senate floor and allow Senators to express their views on the issue.

I know Senator TESTER was hoping to be here to speak on the amendment possibly later today but, if not, then tomorrow. I know he will want to speak both about his amendment and about the Bunning amendment, and I will plan to do the same.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I had hoped to call up an amendment that Senator CLINTON filed this afternoon on behalf of herself, myself, Senator LEAHY, and Senator CANTWELL, but I understand that laying aside the pending amendment may not be an option. As such, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized to speak about the amendment we filed.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as we continue to work our way through the Energy bill, I ask my colleagues for their support in doing everything we possibly can to remove the ridiculous barriers people face when they try to install renewable electricity generation on their homes and businesses. As we all know, there are disagreements about some aspects of our energy policy, but it only seems to make sense to me that we should all rally around giving individuals an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution toward solving our energy challenges. This is exactly what the Clinton-Sanders net metering amendment does. It empowers citizens of our country to help provide for the energy our country needs.

Unfortunately, today, many millions of people want the opportunity to do their part, but they are blocked by unneeded barriers. The language we have authored, which is supported by a wide range of groups, including the Solar Energy Industries Association, Alaska Wilderness League, U.S. PIRG, Greenpeace, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, Union of Concerned Scientists, the League of Conservation Voters, and the Center for American Progress Action Fund, would amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies

Act to require utilities to offer net metering to their customers and to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to establish interconnection standards for small electricity generators to connect to the grid.

The amendment would accomplish many of our shared goals all at once. It would help people to lower their electric bills, it would help to stabilize the electricity grid by ensuring less reliance on central generating plants, it would help to address environmental concerns, and it would even be good for the utilities by cutting down on their load during hot summer days—a load that is usually met with increasingly expensive natural gas.

I want to quickly talk about what net metering is before I go any further, and for the sake of my colleagues who would prefer to hear it directly from the Department of Energy's mouth as opposed to mine, I will quote directly from the DOE's Web site:

Net metering programs serve as an important incentive in consumer investment in renewable energy generation. Net metering enables customers to use their own generation to offset their consumption over a billing period by allowing their electric meters to turn backwards when they generate electricity in excess of their demand.

That is, again, from the DOE's Web site. The Department of Energy goes on to note:

Net metering is a low-cost, easily administered method of encouraging customer investment in renewable energy technologies. It increases the value of the electricity produced by renewable generation and allows customers to bank their energy and use it in a different time than it is produced, giving customers more flexibility and allowing them to maximize the value of their production. Providers, i.e. utilities, may also benefit from net metering because when customers are producing electricity during peak periods, the system load factor is improved.

Again, that is a quote from the Department of Energy. To summarize net metering, let me make the following points: Net metering allows an electricity customer to send electricity back to the grid when generating more than she or he is utilizing. So if you are producing more than you need, it goes back into the grid.

Net metering promotes wider use of renewables, especially at the residential level because credit is given for energy produced. In other words, every homeowner in America can become a producer and earn credit for what they produce.

Net metering advances energy security by helping to stabilize the grid.

Net metering empowers Americans to help meet the Nation's energy needs.

Perhaps an example would make it clearer. Imagine a sunny day and a homeowner's solar photovoltaic panels on the roof are generating more electricity than the homeowner needs to power all of her appliances. Where does the excess electricity go? It flows back through the electric meter, spinning it backwards, and out to the wires on the street and down the street to other

homes where it is needed to help run the neighbors' air conditioners and other appliances. This provides more power to the grid just when the grid needs it—on sunny days.

The Clinton-Sanders amendment would provide for a very conservative Federal minimum standard for net metering to encourage more electricity generation from renewables, such as solar panels and other distributed generation technologies. More specifically, the amendment specifies, among other things, that customers shall be credited for excess electricity generation from solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, anaerobic digesters, landfill gas, and fuel cells, up to 2 megawatts. Net metering must be offered to customers until the distributed generation capacity is at least 4 percent of a utility's peak load, and States may adopt more aggressive net metering provisions.

As my colleagues know, many States have moved forward on net metering, and as I have mentioned, our amendment would in no way hamper a State's ability to move forward even more aggressively. Today, 41 States have some sort of net metering standards or programs, but a modest national net metering standard would create a level playing field, encourage greater competition, and accelerate the deployment of solar and other distributed generation technologies.

Vermont passed a net metering law in 1998, and as of July 2006, over 200 Vermont solar projects, wind projects, and methane digesters were feeding electricity into the grid. New Mexico has an aggressive net metering standard in place, as does Colorado, New Jersey, and California.

In closing, as we work to wrap things up this week, I hope we can send a clear message that every single household and business across this country should be given the opportunity to be part of solving our energy challenges. Adoption of the Clinton-Sanders net metering amendment will send such a signal.

Mr. President, I ask that the Clinton amendment be set aside, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, June 19, when the Senate resumes H.R. 6 following morning business, there be up to 2½ hours of debate prior to a vote in relation to Bunning amendment No. 1628 and Tester amendment No. 1614, to run concurrently, with the time equally divided and controlled between Senators Bunning and Tester or their designees; that the Senate recess from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m. for the respective party conferences; that upon reconvening at 2:15

p.m., the Senate resume debate on the above-mentioned amendments; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to Bunning amendment No. 1628; that upon disposition of that amendment, there be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to Tester amendment No. 1614, with no amendment in order to either of the above amendments prior to the vote; that upon disposition of the Tester amendment, the Senate then debate consecutively the following amendments listed below and that the debate time on each be limited to 30 minutes equally divided and controlled in the usual form with no amendment in order to any of the amendments enumerated below; that upon the use or yielding back of all time with respect to the amendments listed below, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed; that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled prior to each vote; and that after the first vote in this sequence, the remaining votes be 10 minutes in duration: The listed amendments are Kohl amendment No. 1519, Thune amendment No. 1609, and Cardin amendment No. 1610.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NOMINATION HOLD

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, more than 30 months ago, prior to his confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff told me in my office that if confirmed he would move expeditiously to implement the National Emergency Technology Guard—NET Guard—Program. Unfortunately, Secretary Chertoff has failed to honor this pledge.

The idea of NET Guard was born in the aftermath of 9/11, when a number of communications and technology companies told me they wanted to help New York City when it was attacked—and there was no system for using their volunteers. Then-Senator George Allen and I moved on a bipartisan basis to support a program, called NET Guard, that would ensure that volunteers with technology expertise could be fully utilized in future crises. These teams of local volunteers with science and technology expertise would be vital in assisting our communities in responding to attacks on communications networks or recovering from natural disasters. Congress authorized the establishment of NET Guard 5 years ago, in the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

However, DHS has utterly failed to make any visible progress in implementing this critical program. DHS's failure to act in this critical area is inexcusable.

Had the Department followed through and created NET Guard, I believe it could have played a significant role in alleviating the chaos, confusion, and suffering after Hurricane Katrina. Had NET Guard been properly implemented, there would have been teams of volunteers with expertise ready to mobilize instantly to tackle technical challenges in the wake of the storm. Indeed, on an ad hoc basis, companies and individuals with technology expertise did come forward to assist the suffering. I can only imagine how effective these efforts might have been had NET Guard been in place.

Since my meeting with Secretary Chertoff in 2005, my staff and I have been given one excuse after another for delaying implementation of NET Guard. I have been promised briefings that never happen and reports that never materialize. At the outset, I was willing to accept some delay, but that time has passed.

We know that it is only a matter of time before there is another crisis that will put American communities and their critical communication networks at risk. Further delay is unacceptable.

Out of options, I reluctantly feel that I must put a hold on the nomination of Dennis Schrader who has been nominated by President Bush to serve as Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness, until the NET Guard Program is up and running nationwide.

It gives me no pleasure to place this hold and I do so grudgingly.

I recognize the importance of the position of Deputy Administrator for National Preparedness, but the position didn't even exist for the first 4 years after the Department of Homeland Security was created; it was just created in March. Since then, Mr. Corey Grouber has served as Acting Deputy Administrator, so delaying Mr. Schrader's confirmation while the long-overdue Net Guard Program is put in place will not leave the office leaderless. Mr. Corey Grouber has extensive experience at FEMA, so he can manage for a little longer while the NET Guard Program is established. Unfortunately, I see no evidence that the Secretary intends to uphold his pledge to me, and until he does, I will keep my hold on Mr. Schrader's nomination.

I hope DHS will quickly begin to take action so I can remove this hold and Mr. Schrader's nomination can move through the Senate.

DRIVE ACT

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of amendment No. 1572, the DRIVE Electric amendment. Senator SALAZAR is the sponsor. Senators BAYH, BROWNBACK, COLEMAN, KLOBUCHAR, SMITH, CLINTON, ALEXANDER, BIDEN, and I are cosponsors.

I know I speak for my fellow DRIVE Act cosponsors when I thank the members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, led by Chairman BINGAMAN and Ranking Member DOMENICI, for reporting versions of DRIVE Act provisions out of that committee in May. And I know my fellow DRIVE Act cosponsors are as gratified as I am that Chairman BINGAMAN and 62 other Senators voted Tuesday to adopt the DRIVE Act's original oil savings requirement as part of this Energy bill.

During the debate preceding Tuesday's vote, Senator DOMENICI said that Congress should not abdicate its responsibility to spell out the policies that the Federal Government will use to achieve the oil savings targets that now are part of this Energy bill. I could not agree more. That is why my DRIVE Act cosponsors are back here today to boost the Energy bill's transportation electrification provisions up to their original DRIVE Act strength.

Once restored to its original strength, the DRIVE Act's electrification program will give the Federal Government a vital tool that will take this Nation a considerable distance toward the oil savings targets that the Senate adopted on Tuesday.

Currently, our transportation sector runs on oil. That is the problem the Senate is trying to solve with this Energy bill. We are passing a law in order to move our transportation sector off of oil, in part by moving it onto alternative fuels. In expanding the use of various alternative fuels, we should not overlook our own existing electrical grid.

Most electricity generation in this country is fueled by domestically mined coal. A substantial amount of electricity generation in this country is fueled by uranium mined in the United States or Canada. While only a small amount of electricity is generated in the U.S. using renewable sources such as solar and geothermal energy, we know we can increase that amount substantially. Only 2 percent of the electricity generated in this country is generated using oil.

So the more that we use electricity to power our cars, trucks, trains, and ships, the more we will be using domestic energy sources, and the less dependent we will be on oil. Fortunately, the technology is now available to allow us to plug in our cars at night, when existing powerplants are underused and electricity is especially cheap, so that during the day, the cars run largely on battery power. And the technology is now available to allow trucks to plug in at truck stops—and ships to plug in at ports—so that they don't use oil to run their on-board systems when they're stationary.

The founder of a U.S. company called A123 testified before my global warming subcommittee in May about durable, safe, light-weight, high-capacity batteries his company has developed for vehicle use. He is using that technology to convert hybrid vehicles into