The first chart is noninstructional spending. That is the spending that we use for the buildings, the transportation and the like. You would think that with all these reforms that we have done, that with the increase in spending, you would see an increase in performance. Well, what does the chart actually show? Well, the top chart, again, is eighth graders, and what it's showing is, as you see at the left-hand side of the chart, $3,000 per pupil; on the far side of the chart, $6,500 per pupil. But the performance of the students stays basically the same, regardless of how the dollars coming from Washington are spent.

The next color, the red dots, are fourth graders, exactly the same thing. Regardless of whether we're spending around $3,000, $4,000, $5,000 or $6,000, the instructional value of those dollars coming out of these programs, the numbers stay essentially the same.

The next chart you look at confirms the same point. This is instructional spending. These are the dollars that actually make their way into the classroom. This is for the books. This is for the teachers. This is what you really think of when you think of education. Same thing: top is eighth graders, bottom is fourth graders. It starts at $2,500 and goes up to $7,500. You would think that with these reforms of NCLB, you would think that with additional dollars going into the classrooms you would see an increase actually in the performance for these grades. But what do we actually see on the chart?

Well, for the top, the eighth graders, starting at $2,500, up to $5,000, up to $7,500, the numbers for them for the performance on these scores, under the NAEP score standards, and that's the national standards of assessments for kids, the numbers are even right across the chart. Likewise, on the bottom part of this chart, that's the fourth graders, the red little squares. Again, we're looking in the same dollar values, $2,500 up to $7,500, middle it's around $5,000. How do we look at the NAEP scores? How do they change? Basically, not at all. It's in a range here of between 420 and 480 for all those students regardless of the spending of the dollars.

So the point of these two charts, and, again, I appreciate the work of Anthony Davies for compiling this information, is to show that throughout history the Federal Government looks to say that there's a problem with Americans' education. We say we're going to be the solution for our children in this country, and the solution is going to be what? Well, last time it was NCLB, No Child Left Behind, and now it's going to potentially be a reauthorization of that. I suggest no.

And I would conclude by saying that the solution is not more work on the Federal level, but more control by the parent and the local school board for the raising of their own children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ELLISON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE ENERGY FUTURE OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that's not talked about enough in Washington, and on a warm sunny afternoon, where it's not real hot, it's not cold, not a lot of energy's being used. Not a lot of Americans are talking about energy, but it should be on the minds of Americans.

I was disappointed last night as we listened collectively to the Presidential debate. Now, the candidates don't get to talk about what they want to talk about unless they squeeze it in on the side. They get to answer the questions; and last night, not one question was asked about the energy future of America.

We've been a very successful Nation. We've been the leader of the world because we have had cheap, affordable energy. That has all changed. We now have expensive energy, and we have short supplies on every hand.

When I talk to the biggest employers in America, when I talk to the people that I know understand this country and the manufacture of goods and the process of goods and trade around the world, I say, should energy be a top issue? And they said, it is for us. To remain an employer in America, energy is our number one challenge.

Just to give you an example, Dow Chemical, the largest chemical company in the world, located in America, thousands of good jobs in America, their costs of energy went from $8 billion on natural gas alone in 5 years to $22 billion. That's almost tripling the costs of their major use of energy, natural gas.

Now, we have some energy bills moving, and we would hope that they would increase supply because when you increase supply, you decrease prices. A lot of us have struggled to understand the energy markets, but this is how I understand it in basic terms. They are not set by energy companies. They're set by Wall Street traders who look at availability of that form of energy, and they run the price up or down by the hour.

In the last few days, oil prices have been rising a dollar-something per day, and I checked about 1 o'clock and oil was approaching $77 a barrel, almost the highest price ever, and had been increasing hourly all week. So the price of energy is not set by the sellers of energy. It's set by the Wall Street traders on their view of the availability and the affordability.

Now, the bills before us, we'll look at them a little bit, I find somewhat disappointing. They cut off production from the Roan Plateau, a huge clean natural gas field in Colorado that was set aside as the Naval Oil Shale Reserve in 1976 because of its energy-rich resources. This means that nine trillion feet of natural gas, more than all the natural gas in the OCS bill that was passed last year, will be put off limits.

The Roan Plateau had already gone through all the NEPA studies. Now, those are yearlong studies that say whether it's environmentally appropriate to produce it. They passed that test.

This provision was not in the original Resources Committee bill and had been added at the request, we think, of leadership because it wasn't in the original bill. This bill will make it harder to produce energy from Alaska's natural petroleum reserve which was set aside in 1923 to help America meet our energy needs in the long term. Additions of tens of trillions of cubic feet of natural gas and millions and millions of barrels of oil in Alaska's natural petroleum reserve which would have increased the likelihood of the construction of the gas pipeline that could bring 4 to 6 billion cubic feet of clean green natural gas from Alaska every day has not yet been built.

The bill effectively repeals language that I put in the energy bill in 2005 that took out redundant NEPAs. NEPA is a comprehensive, complicated study that you have to go through to make your environmental assessments.

Now, what was happening in the West, where a lot of our energy is, NEPA studies were being used redundantly. In other words, you have a study for your original plot. You have a study for the road. Each of these studies takes a year. You have a study for each well location. You have a study for everything you were going to do. And so I had people who said they had leased land 6 and 7 years prior and still hadn't been able to drill a hole in the ground and produce the energy for America.

So we did a simple amendment that said you do a NEPA, you do it on all of those things collectively and you go ahead and proceed. Well, the bill we have moving now takes away those redundant NEPAs and allows them to go back to multiple NEPAs. The provision alone adds red tape that will stop 18 percent of the future on-shore natural gas production and oil and hurt those least able to pay their energy bill.

The bill doubles the time it takes to get government approval for offshore

energy projects at a time when China is drilling within 50 miles of our shore, along with Cuba.

Now, also, we have portfolio standards in the bill that says 15 percent of renewable energy must be a part of all electric production. Now, that's a great goal. I don't have any quarrel with the goal. But we mandated it by 2020, and some States with their natural resources can meet that, some can't.

We also, with the limit of what can be renewable energy, I know we already had the Pennsylvania law which used more items in their renewable portfolio package, and so the Federal one-size-fits-all mandate, we should have had a carrot approach, where we put a carrot out there, where we encourage, we assist, we help. But this mandate will make it very difficult for States who do not have the right sources of energy available to them because it will make it very difficult for them to produce electricity and meet that mandate.

□ 1445

We have an interesting issue in every appropriations bill this year that's a mandate that CFL light bulbs be used in every building. Now that sounds good. Those are highly energy-efficient light bulbs, the little ones my wife and I fight about because I bought them and put them in, and she takes them out because they buzz and make noise and don't give quite the quality of light we are used to with our incandescent bulbs. We have had that discussion ongoing, but we have mandated them in government buildings.

The sad part of the story is they are all made in China. We do not produce one in America.

The Senate had severe changes in CAFE standards in their bill, which I think would be part of the discussion when we have a conference committee, if we have a conference committee on energy. Many Members of the House, bipartisanly, are concerned that the mandates in the Senate bill will be harmful to the American auto industry.

That's another issue, that we need to have more fuel-efficient cars. Nobody argues, we need to. I think we may have been a little too easy on the auto industry in America, because it seems like every time we have an energy spike, they are never ready for it, and they lose a piece of the market share. Because Americans have chosen to purchase cars that were not fuel efficient, energy prices would go up, and we would buy more fuel-efficient cars, and energy prices would come down, and we would go back to buying high gas users again.

We need to have a more fuel-efficient auto available to us, and we need to use our energy as wisely and conservatively as possible. But hopefully, in the end, we will have a CAFE standard that will not disadvantage the American automakers.

Now, one that bothered me the most, I guess, was the $15 billion to $16 billion tax increase on energy production. Now, I know what that's about; it's about the hatred of the big oil companies and their big profits.

Well, someone said to me one day, well, how come they have made such profits? Big oil companies over the years purchase the ability and the rights to oil all over the world, including in our country. They purchase those rights, assuming that $25 or $30 would be the price they would receive for their oil.

Well, we don't have $25 or $30 oil anymore, and when you sell $75 oil and you were going to be profitable at $30 oil, you are going to make a lot of money. Why do we have high oil prices and energy prices in America? Because this government and this administration have not opened up energy supply.

When you don't open up energy supply and you help create a world shortage, you force prices up. It's the traders in Wall Street, again, who determine adequacy of natural gas or oil or other commodities to the marketplace.

Now, in oil, it gets quite confusing because you will have an oil price set by Wall Street and you will have a gasoline price that sometimes doesn't make any sense. This spring we had gasoline prices higher than they should have been, as a result of 60-some dollar oil, but it was because there was a shortage of gasoline in the world. Fifteen percent of our gasoline now comes from Europe, and when Europe didn't have the gasoline for us, we had a shortage on gasoline. So our gasoline market went higher than it normally would have.

So it's interesting that these Wall Street players run up the price because there is a shortage in the world.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I would be glad to yield to my clean natural gas friend from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Would the gentleman agree then that part of the issue that we have to face here then is supply?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. That's correct.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Are we going to have an adequate supply of energy so that we can come to grips with the question of price, and, in turn, the question of how much production will cost us and whether we will be able to continue as a manufacturing nation?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Yes. The issue should be, the number one issue in the Presidential debate, how do we secure adequate affordable energy for America to compete in the global economy?

See, we have never had to compete before, but we have countries like China and India that are stocking up on energy, all kinds of energy, acquiring all kinds of access to energy, building all kinds of power plants and hydrodams and acquiring oil and gas rights around the world, and we are sort of here sitting on our hands saying we can do it with renewables.

Now, I am for all the renewables, all we can get of them, but they are growing very slowly, and there has not been the willingness in this Congress and in this administration to say how do we acquire adequate energy supply.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman would further yield on that point, isn't it a fact that there is not a world price, as there ostensibly might be for gasoline, a world price, now, even though the price of a gallon of gasoline may fluctuate because of the factors that the gentleman has indicated, but, nonetheless, at least there is some benchmark against which you can measure that gasoline price.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Yes.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. But when it comes to energy like natural gas, there is, in fact, not a world price. In the context that the gentleman has just outlined, isn't it true that the rest of the world is finding a natural gas foundation as part of the alternative to a petroleum fuel and able to meet the requirements that each of these nations may have, including China, at a price commensurate with production available to them and that the United States, because it does not have that same access, is actually paying a much higher price, and that, in fact, no world price exists for natural gas?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. That's absolutely correct. We produce about 83 percent of our own natural gas. We import a lot from Canada and about 2 percent of LNG, which is liquefied natural gas, from the same area as we get our oil from.

Natural gas is not a world price, and a lot of Members of Congress and a lot of people in America don't understand that. Oil is a world price. The gasoline prices can vary. That's a portion of the oil. If you have an excess of gasoline in your country or in Europe, their price drops; if you have a shortage, their price goes up the same as ours. They operate off of the Wall Street market, and their markets.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. The gentleman has mentioned China. Is it not a fact, then, that as we confront this dilemma of a lack of energy supply at a reasonable price in America, the Chinese are presently going about the world securing oil rights, petroleum rights, natural gas rights, energy rights of one kind and another all over the world to supply the burgeoning manufacturing and development boom that they have going on there?

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. They have a partnership with Cuba 50 miles from our Florida coast, and we can't drill within 150 miles of the Florida coast. No, we can't drill off the Florida coast at all. It's all closed at the moment.

No, you are absolutely right. We as a country do not have an energy supply plan. We just are kind of riding along, I guess, hoping things will get better, but we do not have a plan. The gentleman from Hawaii is absolutely correct.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. May I conclude then that I commend him for his leadership on this issue. I am pleased to join with him and want to indicate to you and to those who may be listening to us today, and, more particularly, to the presentation that you are making, that unless and until we have a comprehensive energy independence plan in this Nation, our security, economic, social, military, in fact, our leadership in the world is at stake.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Absolutely. I have not talked to a CEO of a major corporation employer in America who either produces energy or uses a lot of energy like Dow Chemical, U.S. Steel, Pittsburgh, PPG, all the big users of energy, and I said to them, I believe that available, affordable energy equals terrorism and a challenge to America's future. They said, you are absolutely right. Every one of them.

I have never had a person in that kind of a position or people that have understood this issue and have worked on it all their life and understand it who didn't agree with that. But for some reason, they don't say it publicly. I have been one of the few, and my friend from Hawaii has been one of the few who have been willing to say, hey, clean, green, natural gas can be our renewable, our bridge to the future. We need to realize that we must produce it, more of it.

We will take a moment here and look at American energy production. We currently are 40 percent oil, 23 percent natural gas, 23 percent coal, 8 percent nuclear, 2.7 percent hydroelectric, 2.4 percent biomass, and that's woody waste materials, geothermal, wind and solar. I guess the thing that's concerning is this is where all of our emphasis is, and ethanol.

I haven't talked about ethanol, but one of the other things that's in the bills is a mandate of 35 billion barrels of ethanol, and we are currently producing 7 billion barrels, mostly from corn.

Now, corn has been controversial because corn has gotten expensive, $1.80 corn per bushel is now $3.50 a bushel, has been as high as $4 a bushel. I am not opposed to it. The manufacturing of ethanol, 95 percent of the plants that produce ethanol use a huge amount of natural gas.

In fact, ethanol is sort of a swap. Some say it's a winner by a little bit. There are those who say it actually takes more energy to make ethanol, but it's American, it has given our farmers a market for grain. But using the food supply has its long-term problems. If we would become huge ethanol producers much more than today and would have a short corn crop for a bad season, food prices have already increased measurably because hog farmers and beef farmers and poultry farmers now are paying much more for their feed to feed their animals because of corn prices, and also organizations that feed the poor around the world have always used American corn because it was so cheap and are now having to pay twice as much for it as they did before.

So using food for fuel is not, I am saying, bad, but it has its challenges. And the other problem with ethanol is that it's corrosive and cannot be put in our pipeline system. And the cheap way to move energy around the country is in pipelines. We can't use ethanol in the pipeline; we have to blend it on surface and either bring it in tankers blended or blend it at the station.

Now, ethanol has its limitations. We will kind of move into the next portion here and talk a little bit about ethanol and cellulosic ethanol. The amount of importation of oil, every year our dependence on foreign, unstable countries for petroleum increases about 2 percent. Every year, that's just constant. It just keeps going up.

The energy bill we have before us will put another spike out here because it's going to tax energy production. It's going to make major energy fields off limits, and so we will have to do more imports. So with the energy bills that are before us, we are going in the wrong direction as far as energy production.

Now, let me get the other chart there on foreign dependence, or the deficit, the trade deficit, huge percentage, $293 billion is the importation of oil.

Now, anything we can do to lessen dependence on foreign and the purchase of foreign oil helps the trade balance for America. It's a major portion. In fact, it's about a third of our trade imbalance. When the price goes up, this number expands very quickly.

We are at $76, almost $77 oil today. We have not had a major storm in the gulf. A major storm in the gulf can raise prices $10 to $20 a barrel in a day or two. Here is what happened when Katrina hit. That was Katrina. We have not had a storm in the gulf since Katrina.

When a major storm hits the gulf, why does it increase prices? It shuts down refineries, it shuts down pipelines, it shuts down the rigs. We stop producing for months because we have to go back in and repair the system that produces it, the pipeline systems, the cleaning systems, the refineries. All that has to be rebuilt because those storms are immense.

Last year was the first year in a long time we had a major storm in the gulf. This year we seem to be in a major series of storms right now. We have been lucky. The last two have been south of our gulf. There is one coming now that may hit the East Coast.

But when they hit the gulf with $75 oil, we could easily have $90 oil. That means gasoline pump prices of $3.50, $3.75. Also at the current time, here is where America is in trouble. We are dependent on no storms in the gulf for a stable price, or a high price, stable price without further spikes, and we are dependent on no country in the world that ships our oil, most of them are unstable governments, not having a governmental collapse or a takeover or a military coup where we lose millions of barrels of oil per day.

We have to pray, I guess, that we have good weather, that it doesn't interrupt the gulf and that we don't have a major country producing oil topple its local government.

Here is the problem. This is a picture of America. We produce a fair amount of energy in the middle. We could produce more, and we talked about some of that earlier, but we are the only country in the world that doesn't produce immense amounts of oil and gas offshore.

□ 1500

Every country in the world: Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia. I mean, these are all green countries. These are countries with records of being environmentally sensitive.

Offshore is from 3 miles to 200 miles. That's controlled. The States control the first 3 miles. The next 197 miles is controlled by the Federal Government. We've had it locked up for 26 years. We've said, we don't need that. I disagree with that.

Now, we will have argument that, oh, we can't have clean beaches. All those countries have clean beaches. Oil and gas production today is not the threat to the environment it was many years ago. In fact, the last major oil spill offshore was in Santa Barbara in 1966, I believe. That's a long time ago.

And everybody talks about the ship, I can't think of the name of it now, the *Valdez* up in Alaska. That was a ship. In fact, everybody who knows offshore says that we're more in danger with ships hauling oil, which they do every day, than we are from producing it.

Now, what's been interesting here is I have promoted and many of my colleagues have promoted the production of clean green natural gas. They say, well, that will pollute our beaches. Well, there has never been a gas well that's ever polluted a beach.

In fact, 11 miles is the sight line, and if you go 25 miles offshore, nobody will ever see it, even from a tall building. It's out of sight. And clean green natural gas, it's a gas, and it bubbles into the air naturally from fissures in the ocean floor every day. And even on land, natural gas finds its way out of the reserves, through pressure and works its way.

In fact, I come from the original oil patch, Titusville, Pennsylvania, first oil well drilled by Colonel Drake. It was 68 feet deep. They drilled there, actually it was a dug well because they didn't have the drilling; I guess they couldn't get a driller to come in so they actually dug the well and lined the side with stone like you do a water well, and caught oil at 68 feet. Because oil had been oozing up out of the ground and that stream called Oil Creek had oil on it before we ever drilled an oil well because it naturally oozed out of the ground because that gas sand was very close to the surface,

and so they produced it there. And so I've been around it all my life.

And it's interesting that we've also had the argument on this floor and across the country that you just can't drill for natural gas. So we've been promoting just natural gas, hoping, because natural gas is our biggest need. Natural gas is what we heat 60 percent of our homes with, 70 percent of our businesses, and is a major ingredient in the production of fertilizer. Nitrogen fertilizer, 70 percent of the cost of making it is natural gas, and we have tripled the price in a very short period of time.

Petrochemicals, every chemical you buy at the hardware store, every chemical you buy at the grocery store is made with natural gas as an ingredient, 55 percent of the cost of petrochemicals, on average. So petrochemical companies in America are in trouble because we're paying more to make them than other countries.

Polymers and plastics, 45 percent of the cost of producing polymers and plastics is natural gas because it's used to heat and it's also used as an ingredient.

We all know that making steel and bending steel is a huge cost, and most of it's done with heating by natural gas. The furnaces are run by natural gas. So our steel industry has paid a tremendous price with natural gas, and will continue to pay a tremendous price.

In fact, the president of U.S. Steel told me a year or so ago, JOHN, if you don't get a handle on natural gas prices, we won't have a steel industry in America. PPG Industries said the same: if you don't get a handle and stop this escalation of natural gas prices, we won't be in America.

And I'm sorry to say that if we don't get a handle on natural gas prices and stop the next peaks, where gas gets just unaffordable, we will be buying bricks and glass from South America, which has natural gas prices a fraction of ours, like $1.25 a thousand, when we are currently at about seven and many times on a winter's average it's about 12 to 13 when you pay retail price.

So Russia, China, India, all of our competitors have natural gas prices that are a fraction of ours. And so we believe that we need to produce clean green natural gas offshore.

And I'm pleased that a friend of mine from Virginia Beach, from Virginia, THELMA DRAKE, has come to join us on the floor; and we'd welcome her comments.

Mrs. DRAKE. Well, thank you to the gentleman from Pennsylvania inviting me to be here with you today. This is such a critical issue, and one that I truly appreciate your leadership in the time that I've served in the House of Representatives, that this has been your passion. It shows to America today, but it's something that is a critical need, for our country, for our economic and for our national security. And I really want to thank you for the explanation that you give to America.

And I heard you talk just a few minutes ago about Cuba and China, and I think that's when America is going to demand of elected leaders, why are we blocking the deep sea drilling of natural gas off America when Cuba is going to be doing it and selling it to China, right off the coast of our Nation? And I really want America to watch that and to remember that you've been talking about that for all this time.

One of the things that was painful for me that I learned in working with you on your bill this year is the story of Dow Chemical and how a company founded in Michigan in 1897 has lost 7,000 jobs since 2002. But they're now doing a $30 billion expansion, and 10,000 jobs that should be right here in America are going to countries like Saudi Arabia and Libya because of the price of natural gas. You can't pay that $14 you just showed us if you can pay 85 cents in Saudi Arabia. And that was a real driver in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia has really made a name for herself nationally on the issue of energy because of a study that was introduced by Senator Frank Wagner to look at manufacturing in Virginia. And what that study showed right away was that an absolute problem was the cost of natural gas in Virginia, and that was causing us to lose our manufacturing base. And I don't think that we've put that together into our discussions about energy.

But I certainly agree with you, there has to be a comprehensive approach to energy. I brought something today to show you that I'm very proud of, and I hope you can see it. This is the work of Old Dominion University in the Second District of Virginia in Norfolk, Virginia. And this is a sample of a biodiesel that's created from algae. They are working with our sewage treatment plants; they're using that algae. But think about it even in the terms of agriculture and the run-off that we don't want in our rivers and in our streams and in our bays, that those nutrients, those fertilizers could be used to spur the growth of algae to be used in a product like this. So there are so many exciting things there, and that's part of what we need to focus on in your bill, in the NEED Act, which does make designated revenue streams for alternative energies for those future technologies that we need as we move into the future. But we also have to think about the needs of today and the economy of today.

And sometimes I wonder, people who fight your initiatives, if they understand the impact that it has on our economy. And I just have to question that they don't understand the problem that they're creating for us in America.

But the other things, that you have fixed royalties that will go into environmental restoration projects, in addition to renewable energy, weatherization and energy assistance, gives us funding for that, and royalties back to our local governments and to our States.

In Virginia we all know our number one issue right now is transportation and how we fund that. This would give us a designated stream that wouldn't put an additional burden on our taxpayers.

And critically important to us in the Second District is that the legislation will target 5 percent, roughly $20 billion, of funds that would go towards the restoration of the great natural resource of our Chesapeake Bay. That fully funds the estimate we've had from our Chesapeake Bay Commission for what it would take to restore the bay.

And what's interesting is that this is gas only. We need to make sure that we have that discussion. You mentioned *Exxon Valdez*. My numbers are that you're 13 times more likely to have a spill moving product in by tanker.

But we're talking about natural gas. We're talking about nothing that would have an impact on our environment, but would have a huge impact on our economy and our national security.

It also puts our States in control. So thank you for that, that States would make the decision of, during that first 100 miles, of whether to be in or out of this program.

So I want to thank you for letting me join you. I want to thank you for your leadership. I want to thank you for continuing to be the voice that says this is a crisis in America. We can no longer continue to be dependent on foreign sources of energy. With the technologies that exist today, we need your legislation; and thank you for telling America about it.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Let me just ask you a question: Weren't you surprised in the debate last night that the media didn't ask one energy question, as if energy is not an issue?

Mrs. DRAKE. I am surprised. I think it is one of the top five issues in America, and that's energy, and I was very surprised by that.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. As we look at the chart that we have in front of us, it's called the NEED Act: $150 billion will go to producing States, with an incentive for them; $100 billion will go in the U.S. Treasury, $32 billion for renewable energy research. Now, that's real money for renewable energy research: $32 billion for carbon capture and sequestration research, which is the big issue of the day, unfortunately, getting more play than energy availability and affordability. And I'm going to say this: if carbon sequestration is a bigger issue in this Congress than energy availability and affordability, this country will not compete. We have to have available, affordable energy. And the advantage of clean natural gas is it has a fraction of the carbon of the other fossil fuels. It's the clean green fuel. It's about a third of the carbon of all the other fuels. So clean green natural gas. But it has to become affordable and stably priced.

For the Chesapeake Bay, $20 billion, $20 billion for the Great Lakes restoration, $12 billion for the Everglades, $12 billion for the Colorado River, $12 billion for the San Francisco Bay, and $10 billion with LIHEAP and weatherization. Weatherization of course is an important component there because it helps poor people make their homes energy efficient.

We're joined by the lady from Tennessee. We're delighted to have you with us today.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank you for the work on the House Energy Action Team and the leadership that you have provided there on this issue, and for your consistent message that I think most Americans share with us. They understand that fuel sources are abundant in this Nation. The problem is they're restricted. And there is so much regulation and so much red tape that you have to go through in order to arrive at a utilization point for those fuel sources.

Now, we've just come past the second remembrance of Katrina. And as we have done that, and as I spent some time down in the gulf coast region during August, so many people would say, you know, it's amazing to me that the Federal Government has not made significant changes in putting refineries, in opening other resources. We're still centered around here, and the hurricane season is coming. And that causes people to say, I question you for what you have not done. And we hear that from our constituents. And I question you about the price at the pump, because they now understand that a lack of refinery capacity in this country, overregulation of refineries, restricted access to fuel sources, yields a higher price at the pump for transportation fuels. It yields a higher mark on the bill when they get it for their home heating oil, for gas for their home, for electricity for their home. They understand this. And I fully believe that the liberal leadership in this House will have to answer to the American people for the high cost to consumers.

□ 1515

And that's the first point that I want to touch on today. As you look at what was passed in the energy bill they brought forward that really has no energy production in it, it just deals with all these global warming measures or conservation measures at some point but not really with energy. Just looking at the cost of government-mandated efficiency, now, if I have ever heard an oxymoron, that is probably is it. Government-mandated efficiency. It's not driven by consumers, it's not driven by innovators, but by the government saying reach this mark.

What we are seeing is that the new appliance efficiency standards have raised the cost of a good top-loading washing machine, which is the kind I still have in my house. The kind I choose to use is a top loader. They have raised that to over $900. And that is not according to you or me or the Congressional Budget Office. That is according to Consumer Reports. And we know that if the Senate had their way, then it would cost even more. So on our appliances, the mandated efficiency standards are going to end up costing our consumers more when they go to make that purchase.

So the gas to get in the car is going to cost them more. The electricity to power the computer is going to cost them more in order to get to the purchase point for that appliance that is going to cost them more.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Reclaiming my time, it's interesting. Here I have a chart in front of me that I have not seen before but I found very interesting today. Twenty percent of our electricity now is produced by natural gas, and that has been the big user of natural gas that has really forced natural gas prices up because we changed that about 12 years ago. Prior to that you were not allowed to use natural gas to make electricity, only for peak power in the morning and evening when you have this surge. A gas generator you can turn off and on, but a coal plant you can't. A nuclear plant you can't.

But here is the current cost of electricity: Nuclear electricity costs $13.54 a megawatt hour. Coal costs $20.80 a megawatt hour. Natural gas, $49.51 a megawatt hour. Nonhydro, which would be wind and solar, costs $68 a megawatt hour. And the reason for that is that we all wish that wind and solar would produce a lot more energy than they do, but the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine, and when it doesn't shine and it doesn't blow, you have to have another system that you've paid for like a gas generator that you can turn on or turn off as the wind blows or doesn't blow and the sun shines or doesn't shine, because we have not yet been able in batteries to store this energy, or in some sort of a heat tank, to where we use it later. We have researched with billions of dollars and we will continue to research, but those are very expensive forms of electricity.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. The gentleman is exactly right on that. They are expensive forms of energy and electricity. And one of the other components to that, in our Select Committee on Environment and Global Warming today, we had a hearing dealing with carbon emissions and carbon offsets and the cap and trade system that Europe is currently involved in to meet their Kyoto protocols. Well, the interesting point of this is if you were to enact some of the sequestration encaptured for CO_2 emissions, what we are seeing and what we are hearing from some research is that this could end up raising a household electric bill $40 a month.

Now, what we do know is we have a lot of Americans that would not take kindly to seeing government mandates increase their electric bill every month while we are still not sure if our CO_2 emissions are causing the Earth to warm or if it's cyclical. Is it just part of a natural scientific cycle that our wonderful world goes through? We have times of cooling and times of warming.

So there are lots of questions that are around this issue, and before we make hasty decisions, one thing we need to do is be certain that we tend to what we know is on our plate; that we tend to, first of all, address lowering the restrictions on our domestic sources of energy, making certain that we can avail ourselves of the oil, of the gas, of the coal that we have domestically, making certain that we are doing the right type of research and looking for alternative sources, making certain that nuclear is available for our power generation. As you said, the least expensive, the cleanest form of electric power generation is the new nuclear. And I will ask the gentleman to reiterate those statistics.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Yes. The cost for nuclear is $13.54, and there is a new nuclear. Coal, $20.80; natural gas, $49.51; and nonhydro, $68. Now, we need them all for the portfolio, but we have to have affordable, available energy or Americans won't have jobs. In my view, energy costs are the biggest job killer in America and have been this decade. We blame it on other things, but the cost of energy since it has spiked has stayed there, and we now are at a high plateau where future spikes are coming. We just need a storm, we just need a country to topple, and we'll have $100 oil. And we know $100 oil would be $4 or more for gasoline. We understand that.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And he is exactly right about the cost and comments about the portfolio. And I think that many of our colleagues would be interested in seeing what the balance is in our portfolio as to where we are pooling our energy sources. And you are right. A well-balanced and appropriate portfolio is going to have many different components to it. Just as with trade, we are going to see many different components in that. We are going to have an opportunity to look at how trade affects this.

And you have just put a poster up about our trade deficit, and we certainly can see where we are fitting in here with some of our natural gas and our petroleum and petroleum products and what that means to our trade balance. And at the same time as we look at trade, we look at the portfolio that we have stateside and look at what is contained in that portfolio, and you are exactly right to bring those issues forward.

I will just say I thank the gentleman again for yielding. I do think that as we look at this issue, the cost to consumers and the effect on our GDP has to be considered as well as moving forward. The gentlewoman from Virginia mentioned a biodiesel alternative,

algae, and we know that for carbon capture, sometimes that is used to help spur the growth of that algae that is then turned into biodiesel. So you are using an unwanted byproduct to create an item that can be the genesis for an alternative fuel, making certain that we open up American energy resources for American energy solutions. Our domestic energy supply is abundant. And then in order to capitalize, to be resourceful and utilize that, making certain that we are spurring American innovation to find those solutions.

And, again, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee for her comments and for coming down and sharing today.

I think the number one issue we need in America is to have a strategy to open up the Outer Continental Shelf for natural gas first, and, further on out, hopefully down the road, oil, because we need both.

Natural gas, though, is a clean, green fuel that is low in carbon emissions. It's not a nitrous oxide problem. It's not a sulfuric acid problem. It's a clean, green fuel. And why we have not utilized it as the bridge I find hard to understand. We have had a presidential moratorium and a congressional moratorium for 26 years. The only country in the world to do that.

We talk a lot about Brazil's ethanol. Ethanol is part of their portfolio, but Brazil also opened up their Outer Continental Shelf and are now producing lots of natural gas and lots of oil offshore, so they are energy self-sufficient, with ethanol being a piece of it.

Now, they make their ethanol out of sugarcane, which is far less costly because we have a two-step process. We have to change the starch in corn to a sugar and then we change it to alcohol, which is the fuel. So we have a dual process, and it takes twice as much energy to do that. The production of ethanol is a high-energy consumer, probably as much energy as we produce, but it is trading foreign imports for American made, so I support it.

Now, the push at the White House has been for cellulosic ethanol, which I am in support of too, but it is still, unfortunately, in the test tube. The President was here on the floor talking about it last February, and a few days later I was told that he asked to go see a plant and, unfortunately, there wasn't one. He had to go to two laboratories to where it is being studied. And cellulosic ethanol will be made out of any plant life that is decaying. It could be garbage from our garbage stream. It could be grass like switch grass and other kinds of grass. It could be cornstocks or peapod waste or any kind of waste stream from our food supply, or it could be cellulose from wood, any kind of woody waste. And you then make alcohol as you ferment that. Now, hopefully, that is going to be more cost-effective and will not be competing with our food supply. And I commend the President for producing that, but I think we need to do a number of things.

First, we need to expand the conservation wise use of energy. If Americans were told up front where we are with energy availability and affordability, I think each and every American will do something to conserve and more wisely use energy. But I don't think Americans have been adequately informed. I think the press have been very negligent. But, of course, Congress and the White House have been negligent about talking about this issue. The press certainly have not had it on their agenda and have not often asked it in the presidential debates, and we hope that will change. We mustn't waste energy.

Recently here in the House we had an initiative that the Capitol complex would be less heated by coal and more by gas, and that was a carbon statement. That bothered me a little because if everybody in the country, if every government does that, all Federal agencies do that, State governments do that, universities, and some universities have already done that, if they all switch from coal to gas, we are going to put more pressure on natural gas and increase the shortage of natural gas and increase the price. What disappointed me was that was the first initiative to have a wiser energy use for Congress and the complex we house, all the buildings we work in. But every window in all of these buildings is still a single-pane, leaky window. Not one energy-efficient window has been put in. It seems like we ought to keep the heat in and the cold out before we change fuels.

We need to assist companies and individuals who use a lot of energy with using energy more wisely. That is a government educational process. We need to open up the OCS. We need to open up the Outer Continental Shelf for the production of energy, specifically natural gas. We need to open up more of Alaska and more of the West for oil production.

The President has funded six pilot plants for cellulosic ethanol. I have been urging them to fund six pilot plants that take coal and make liquid fuels. That is a German process. When we blockaded Germany during World War II, they made their fuel out of coal. The fissure tropes process, several other processes that have been developed in this country, there are ways to do that. You can make natural gas out of coal. But for some reason, there has been a reluctance in this Congress and a reluctance in this administration to use coal, our most abundant fuel, for liquids and for natural gas, thus lessening our dependence on foreign, unstable countries.

We need to figure how we speed up nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is safe. France is, I think, approaching 80 percent nuclear energy for their country, the production of electricity. We had a process here that took, I think, 10 years for a permit. We downsized that in the energy bill to 4 years to permit and 4 years to build, so we now have an 8-year process to build a nuclear plant.

□ 1530

One of the problems we're having is that many of the components that are needed in the energy plant have to be bought from foreign countries because in America we don't make the castings to make a nuclear power plant any longer. We're buying those from Japan. I'm told a lot of the other portions are coming from Germany. We no longer have the technology in-house. I find that scary.

We must expand the use of clean coal technology. We have the fluidized bed process that we use in Pennsylvania to burn waste coal, the dirtiest, nastiest coal, and burns it cleanly. And if you burn good coal with the fluidized bed process, and if you incentivize the building of new plants to replace the old plants, but it's almost impossible in America to permit a new coal plant. We have put coal off limits. So we're not going to use it for liquids, we're not going to use it to make gas and we're not going to use it to make electricity. And we're not going to open up the Outer Continental Shelf for oil.

Folks, we cannot conserve our way out of the energy crisis in America. We need to conserve. We need to use energy very wisely. But if we don't have an energy plan for available, affordable energy for America, I will guarantee you that within a decade, we will not be the superpower of the world; we will not be a front-runner nation. We will be a second-rate nation.

We have huge competitors today. America has never had Chinas and Indias nipping at their heels taking away business every day. Those companies have energy plants. They're building nuclear plants. They're building hydro plants, dams. They're building coal-to-liquid plants. They're doing it all. They're acquiring rights to oil fields that have historically been ours. They have a plan for energy availability and affordability.

Yes, Americans must conserve and use energy wisely. But Congress and this White House must have an energy policy that says we're going to have available, affordable energy. And in my view, at the front of the pack should be clean green natural gas. And our bill, the NEED Act, opens up the Outer Continental Shelf after 50 miles. We give the States control of the first 50. The second 50 will be open to natural gas only. And the States will have the right, with their legislature passing a bill to say they don't want it open. The second 100 miles will be open for natural gas only. That gives the States control of the first 100 miles for clean green natural gas. We think we ought to be producing more than that, but we're struggling to get clean green natural gas.

So we say offshore should be our first initiative. We should have coal-to-liquid plants being built online so we can

refine that process. We need to be promoting more nuclear. We need to have all the renewables that we can produce; but, unfortunately, there are only a little bit over a percentage today. And many people are holding that out as the answer. I wish that was the answer; I would be all for it. But those that are telling us that we can conserve and renewables will be our energy portfolio are not being honest with the American public.

Just to show you, just a few months ago a bill was introduced in this body that said, if a bird or a bat is found at the foot of a windmill, it would be a criminal act. And that same day I think the Wind Association, and God bless them, I'm for them, but they stated that we would be at 20 percent of the energy portfolio in a very short time, I think in 10 years. I wish that was true, but it's not true. We can't get there that quick. The wind only blows a portion of the time, and we have not been able to store the energy and keep it and use it later. It only blows part of the time. We have to have a redundant source, clean green natural gas, and a complete portfolio for America so we can have jobs in America, so Americans can heat their homes, run their businesses, and compete in the world economy. We can compete with anybody if we're given a fair shake; but we must have available, affordable energy if America is going to continue to be a leader of the world.

THE TIME IS NOW TO SUPPORT HEROES OF 9/11

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the Speaker from the great State of New York for yielding me this time on this incredibly important issue.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we approach the sixth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about one of the most important issues facing my district, my hometown of New York City and our Nation.

I am so proud to be here today with my colleague and good friend from Manhattan, JERRY NADLER, who has been a tireless advocate for everyone who has become sick from the toxins of 9/11. His district includes Ground Zero, and our work together on this issue can truly move this forward.

I want to note that a number of New Yorkers will be with me today, Congressman FOSSELLA, YVETTE CLARKE, JOHN HALL, ELIOT ENGEL. AND STEVE ISRAEL, if he was not in the Chair being the Speaker, he would be down here on the floor talking about the six men and women from 9/11 who need our help, and possibly Chairman PALLONE.

Mr. Speaker, the death toll from 9/11 is still growing, and the nightmare of that day has continued for thousands of our fellow Americans who are suffering with illnesses and injuries caused by the attacks, but are not getting the help they need.

When people hear that the men and women who rushed in to save the lives of others on that terrible day, who worked to clean up the site, who worked in construction, I remember that day there were signs everywhere, ''iron workers, report for duty,'' retired workers, all workers to the site. These men and women rushed to the site thinking of others, not of themselves; and many of them are sick and they need our help now.

The collapse of the World Trade Center towers took nearly 3,000 lives in an instant and released a massive cloud of asbestos, pulverized concrete and other poisons. These toxins have sickened thousands and have killed at least eight, but likely dozens more Americans, in the years since 9/11.

On 9/11, 500 of my neighbors and constituents lost their lives. That was more than any other district. We lost up to 3,000 people, but thousands and thousands more lost their health; and we need to be there to help them now.

The gray dust that billowed through Lower Manhattan that day is said to have been as caustic as drain cleaner. It settled in the homes of Lower Manhattan, in downtown schools, playgrounds and parks, and in the lungs of tens of thousands of Americans. These forgotten victims of 9/11 either lived or worked downtown, courageously volunteered for rescue and recovery operations at Ground Zero, or merely happened to be in Lower Manhattan, a school child, a worker, on one of the worst mornings our country has ever known. And right now, more than 6,500 responders, truly the heroes and heroines of 9/11, are being treated for 9/11-related health problems through the federally funded World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program. And more than 5,000 have been referred for mental health care, often for conditions like post-traumatic stress syndrome. Every month, another 500 to 1,000 responders sign up for health monitoring, and those coming in are more sick than ever before.

In all, more than 70,000 Americans reported to the World Trade Center Health Registry, and they were near Ground Zero in the days following 9/11 and have serious concerns about their health.

As you would expect, the majority of those registered are from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. But what many people may not know is that more than 10,000 Americans from outside the tri-state area have also signed up for the registry. Amazingly, every single State and 431 of the 435 congressional districts nationwide have someone in the World Trade Center Registry in New York City. This is a health emergency on a national scale, and it requires a strong Federal response.

This Saturday at Ground Zero, many of us on the floor here this afternoon will be joining the working men and women of New York City's labor movement in a rally to send a message loud and clear that the time is now to support our heroes of 9/11. Six years is long enough.

Along with the New York State AFL–CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council and the Building and Construction Trades Council, we will be showing honor, support and respect for the contributions and sacrifices of the heroes and heroines of 9/11. And we will be rallying for action from the government to care for the thousands of people who have become sick because of the toxins of Ground Zero.

With the strong support of the AFL–CIO, Representative NADLER and I are preparing to introduce, along with Congressman FOSSELLA and many others, new comprehensive legislation to do just that. The 9/11 Health and Compensation Act will ensure that everyone exposed to the Ground Zero toxins has a right to be medically monitored, and all who are sick as a result have a right for treatment.

It will build on the expertise of the Centers for Excellence, which are currently providing high-quality care to thousands of responders and ensuring an ongoing data collection and analysis, expanding care to the entire exposed community.

The bill also includes care for area residents, workers, and school children, as well as the thousands of people that came from across the country to assist with recovery and clean-up efforts.

Finally, it provides compensation for economic damages and loss by reopening the September 11, 2001 Victims Compensation Fund. I have been working for years to make this happen, along with all of the members of the New York delegation. And I am very proud to be working with Representative NADLER, with the strong support of the New York AFL–CIO, to move this comprehensive, bipartisan bill through Congress.

We are united as a delegation; we are united with labor; we are united at the various levels of government, and we are truly committed. We will not stop, and we will continue to work every single day and hour to make sure that this happens. Six years, six long years is long enough for the men and women who are sick because they rushed into burning buildings to save the lives of others, to work on a deadly pile where the toxins infected their lungs.

Once again, the 9/11 health crisis is a national emergency that was caused by an attack on our country. Only the Federal Government has the resources and the reach to properly address the health and compensation needs of thousands of Americans from across this Nation whose health was compromised by the World Trade Center attacks.

I must say that we would not have moved forward as we have with some funding and some help without the complete support of the Democratic