

part of rural America can appreciate how important agriculture in our rural communities is to our country. That is why I am hopeful the President's threat to veto the bill will be reconsidered.

The farm bill is not only about farms, it is about our future. It is about the entrepreneur who wants to build a biofuels plant in eastern Colorado; it is about the third grader who, for the first time, will get fresh fruits and vegetables for lunch; it is about the mother who wants us to reduce our dependence upon foreign oil so her children do not have to fight a war far away in the Middle East. It is about all of us who want to make sure we have a strong and secure America.

We have a lot at stake in the passage of this farm bill. I urge my Democratic and Republican colleagues to join us and send a strong statement about the importance of rural America, our food security, and our energy security in an overwhelming vote on the conference report tomorrow.

On my part, I will be very proud to take this farm bill back to the State of Colorado and go throughout the great State of Colorado and meet with those who care about rural America and the food security of this country, and who care so much about nutrition, and to talk to them about how it is that after 2½ years of hard labor, we have finally gotten to the end of the journey and we have a farm bill of which we can all rightfully be proud.

I thank the Presiding Officer and I thank the chairman of the Agriculture Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I believe there are no more speakers on the farm bill tonight, or I should say the food, conservation and energy bill. I will close by thanking all of the speakers tonight who spoke so eloquently and strongly for this bill. I thank them for their diligence and interest in and so many of them for their efforts in bringing us to this point. It truly is a bipartisan bill.

A lot of times while I am traveling around Iowa and other States, people will come up to me and say: Can't you people get together and quit your bickering and get something done? I am sure the Presiding Officer has heard that, too. We have all heard that. Well, this is a time when we did that. We did get together in a bipartisan fashion on our committee and we worked hard. We got it through our committee in a day and a half. In December, we had the vote here and we had 79 votes for the farm bill. You cannot get much more bipartisan than that. So we did it. We worked together.

Tomorrow, we will have another hour and a half of debate, evenly divided, on the bill. There will be at least one mo-

tion, which has already been made, on a point of order. I don't know if there will be any others tomorrow morning. Then we will proceed to final passage. I will have more to say tomorrow morning.

Again, I thank all of the members of the Agriculture Committee on both sides of the aisle. I can honestly say each member of our committee had a hand in this bill in one way or the other, or on certain parts of it—some more than others in different parts. The Presiding Officer, my good friend from Colorado, Senator SALAZAR—if he had one fingerprint on this bill, it would be the energy title and all the great work he did to help focus us on getting more in the bill for biomass energy, that is, energy from cellulose—to begin the process of moving us toward more clean, renewable energy in this country. I thank the Senator from Colorado for all of his hard work in that area. However, the Senator also had a lot to do with the nutrition title, to make sure that was a good title to help low-income Americans.

Everybody on our committee had a hand in this. I am privileged to chair a great committee.

This is a committee of caring people. I know each of them. I can say that characterization applies on both sides of the aisle. These are people who care very deeply about fighting hard to represent the minority of Americans who live on our farms and our ranches and in our small towns and communities. But for, I think, the interest and involvement of the members of this Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, the legislation that is passed here would leave a lot of our rural people on the sidelines.

Let's face it, we don't have the votes here on farm and rural issues like we used to in the old days. So it falls on the shoulders of those of us on our Agriculture Committee who represent agriculture and people who live in rural America, it falls on us to make sure their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

That is why I say I am privileged to chair a committee of caring people, who care very deeply about those minority of Americans who work out there on farms and ranches every day, get up, feed the livestock, plant the crops, harvest the crops, who never know from one day to the next what the weather is going to bring or what foreign involvement may mean to markets or what effect a crop failure or abundant crop in another country has on this country and on our markets and prices. Agriculture is different. A lot of people say: Why do we have farm programs? We don't have a program for this business or that business. It is because agriculture is so unique. It is sort of the wellspring of everything else in our society—the production of our food and fiber, for the health of our country, and for our exports.

I was listening to the President of the United States give his State of the Union Address earlier this year. I heard him say, there was one passage—I will never forget—he reminded us that last year our trade deficit had shrunk. I had hoped to hear him say in the next sentence, thanks to our nation's farmers because were it not for the exports of our agricultural commodities, our trade deficit would be much worse than it is.

Again, I thank everyone for all of their statements. I thank all the members of our committee. We will be here tomorrow morning, and we will have a final vote. I hope we will have a strong vote. I hope we can beat our 79 votes that we had in December. The House today had 318 votes. So I hope we have an equally strong vote in the Senate tomorrow.

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#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, May 15; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act, as under the previous order; I further ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII with respect to the cloture motions filed be waived.

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

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#### PROGRAM

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, under the previous order, tomorrow there will be 90 minutes for debate on the conference report prior to votes. Senators should expect at least two rollcall votes beginning as early as 11 a.m.

As a reminder, under rule XXII, there is a 1 p.m. filing deadline for first-degree amendments to H.R. 980, the collective bargaining legislation.

Tomorrow, Senators should also be prepared for votes in relation to appointing conferees to the budget resolution conference.

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#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 10:45 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.