

of those costs are passed to the consumer and some are absorbed. A small business is the least likely to be able to handle this. The costs passed to the consumer are on top of the gas prices they are already paying. I live in a small rural community. Because in the past so many people have done their shopping out of town, our town has less to offer which in turn makes going out of town to shop a very costly experience. The whole situation is a catch-22.

America needs to use its own resources and not let foreign companies do it (drilling for oil off the coast). We also need to be responsible for our overindulgences and use smaller more economical vehicles. We are paying for our gluttony. We do need to explore alternative energy also. We also need to curb our spending in congress. Our country is broke and nobody wants to fix it. Pork barrel spending is breaking this country. Why are we attaching appropriations to bills that have nothing to do with the original bill? Please start making upright and morally responsible decisions. I think Congress is totally out of control.

A desperate citizen,

SUE, Grangeville.

I appreciate your interest in this issue. I must say I am quite fortunate that my 94 Ford escort gets 37 MPG and suits most my needs quite adequately. In addition, I live just a few miles from work in Boise, so I usually ride my bicycle to work. I do recognize that this is not an option for many Idahoans, such as my mom who lives 10 miles outside of Blackfoot.

Frankly, as far as this last e-mail you sent me goes, it sounds like you are listening too much to lobbyists from the energy industries. More gas exploration is not a long term solution—I cannot imagine that new finds are going to even come close to offsetting increased demand from Asia. (If you have numbers that suggest otherwise, I would love to see them.) More exploration is a mere band-aid that just kicks the problem down the road to whomever gets your seat next. To me, it sounds almost as pointless as Senator Clinton's gas tax holiday she was talking about.

Instead of typical Washington [solutions], Senator, we need real leadership. We need to be pouring our resources into building alternative modes of transit that can aid this inevitable transition from cheap fossil fuels. We need to bring rail transit back to Southern Idaho. We need a rural bus system with park-and-ride spots along state highways (much like the system used for the buses that run to INL). We need higher fuel-efficiency standards from Detroit. (You may have to tell some industry folks to jump in a lake—that is what we pay you for.) As far as helping people cope with this transition, perhaps you could give tax cuts to small farmers and people who live more than 15 miles from a bus or train stop. But basically any incentives should go towards helping people use less fossil fuel, not more.

ALEX, Boise.

First off I want to state that I do not consider this fuel problem to be as big of a crisis as it was when we had the fuel shortages back a few decades. This is becoming more of an issue because the dollar is so weak right now, and it does not seem to be getting any better. With that said, my family and I have noticed the problems with fuel prices across the board. I am in the process of trying to make a choice in a new job that would put me back in the classroom doing what I really love, but with gas prices and me riding the ACHD van that is a big cost change for us. I am amazed that with all of the possibilities out there that our energy and gas prices are

going up. Why are we not building more wind power plants like California to produce endless power that is also very expandable? Why are we not taking advantage of the man who invented the super fuel efficient engine right here in Idaho who resides in Weiser? There are answers besides drilling right here and we seem to overlook them. I am not against more nuclear power, but the hazards really do not justify those means of power any more. I really hope that we can see some changes soon with the addition of a transit system from Caldwell to Boise or maybe even Weiser. I do know that something has to change or the US will have too many poor people to help. Thank you for your time.

RICHARD, Boise.

You asked for and so here goes. I am so upset with all of the members of Congress and our Government in general for not having an energy plan already in place in the United States. Not only should we not be dependent on foreign countries for our oil sources but we should most definitely have invested in other sources of energy long before now. Off-shore drilling and massacring the Alaskan Wilderness is not the answer. There is absolutely no reason for us not to have automobiles running on other sources of power other than to line the pockets of the oil industry and those "in the trough". The technology is there and I think we need government mandates and incentives in place now to force (if necessary) people to create and use these alternative sources. We should reward those companies and those people who produce and use hybrid and other alternative energy-sourced vehicles and mass transit and severely tax those people who insist on driving the big SUVs and Hummers in the U.S. as well as those who are the big wasters of energy. "Going Green" should not only be the right thing to do for us and the world (and the U.S. should be leading the world as the "example") but should be the most economical thing to do and we need to reward those who do and assess those who do not. If companies are not going to take the initiative to make this happen on their own, then the government has to give the free enterprise system and the general public incentives to make it happen.

There is no one person in the U.S. who is not feeling the effects of the high prices. Whether it be gas, food or other products we buy and use in our life activities, they are all affected by the high gas prices. Those with high incomes can most likely absorb these increased costs but those on fixed incomes and the low- and middle-income cannot sustain these high prices for long. We are in a crisis situation here and I only see it getting worse. And I blame all of you in Congress for not addressing it much sooner (like some 10-20 years ago) and I blame John Q. Public for re-electing all of you time and again. It seems to me that Congress is completely out of touch not only with John Q. Public but with reality. Let me reiterate, more drilling in our own country is not the answer. We must use other alternative energy sources be it electric, wind, nuclear, etc. What kind of country are we leaving for our grandkids? Not a very good one at this rate—if we even have one left!

MELODIE.

You write that my country is too dependent on foreign oil and we must develop alternate energy sources. You, your party, and many of the Democrats have voted consistently against all such alternatives for one reason or another. It is of no use to write about my experience with the rise in gas prices. If Congress and this Administration need stories, then it further proves that our

elected government does not give a damn about the citizens—an expansion of Katrina/New Orleans. You have held hearings with the oil representatives which resulted in the usual shameful display of sucking-up to the industry. Thank you for your inattention to this response.

HARRY.

Does anyone in Washington remember the huge deal it was when gasoline broke \$2/gallon about 4 years ago? How about when it reached \$3/gallon briefly in 2005 and caused a minor panic about skyrocketing prices? I remember newspaper articles asking "Will we ever see \$2/gallon gasoline again?" and we wondered if that time had passed. Then prices came back down and did a bit of an up-down over the next couple of years. Through all of that, combatting high oil prices was a top priority for Congress and the White House, which led to the ethanol debacle.

Now, the Democrat powers-that-be in Washington and around the country have seemingly embraced \$4/gallon gasoline as the impetus to make us explore "alternate energy sources," while completely ignoring the agonizing inflationary pressure these price increases are causing. Now we hear, "Blame Bush!" "No war for oil!" "Save the polar bears!" How in the world do we expect to be able to maintain our economic strength while we simultaneously insist on crippling the economy?

I would urge you, Senator, to work to allow us to pursue oil reserves wherever they might be found in our country. We should seek to be wise stewards of the land, but also acknowledge that if we do not do it here, it will be done elsewhere by people who do not seem to care as much about the environment. "Not in my backyard" is the most environmentally irresponsible decision we could possibly make.

DAVID, Boise.

Gas prices are outrageous. If it does cost that much for the oil, why not get out of there and drill on our own grounds, or even Canada? What is happening is someone is making a lot of money off this, and they know that they can keep raising the price and people will pay it, people have to pay it.

CJ.

We appreciate your interest in the high cost of gasoline and energy, but even if the government started drilling today, we do not have refineries up and running nor do we have enough of them to process the gas we discover. So who and where will we have to transport this "new gas" to, to make it useable for the people of the U.S.? Obama stated he wished the price would have increased a little more slowly so this sounds like it is been planned a looong time in Congress.

Who has got the truth on any of our economy and energy issues?

Thanks for your efforts.

CHUCK.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations