

and all of a sudden you have a huge dark spot for 50 million Americans. If you wonder about the importance of this, I am talking about the reliability of a system for something we take advantage of every single day.

We are drafting a bill right now in the Energy Committee, and there is a great deal of disagreement about a renewable energy standard requirement that at least 15 percent of electricity is produced from renewables. That should not be controversial at all. In fact, I think a couple dozen states have gone way beyond the Congress on this issue. That should be a slam dunk, but it is not.

Building a transmission system—we are going to have a lot of opposition. But no country gets where it wants to go unless it sets a course. There is an old saying: If you don't care where you are, you are never lost. This country has to set a course and say: Here is where America wants to head for a decade. If, at the end of that decade, we are not less dramatically dependent on foreign oil for this country's energy needs, we are going to be held hostage for a lot of interests around this country. We need to do this, we need to do it right, and we need to do it soon.

Mr. President, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate at 1:31 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 1:34 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BEGICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alaska, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that other than the pending Dodd-Shelby substitute amendment, the following be the only first-degree amendments in order to S. 896, and that they be subject to second-degree amendments which would be relevant to the amendments to which

offered, with a managers' amendment, which has been cleared by the managers and the leaders, in order, and that once it is offered, it be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table; that upon disposition of the listed amendments, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read the third time, and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill.

The list of amendments is as follows:

Vitter amendment No. 1016, pending; Vitter amendment No. 1017, pending; Corker amendment No. 1019, pending; Grassley amendment No. 1020; Grassley amendment No. 1021; Casey amendment No. 1033; Ensign amendment No. 1034; Kohl amendment No. 1037; Kerry amendment No. 1036; Thune amendment No. 1030; Boxer amendment No. 1035; DeMint amendment No. 1026; Isakson amendment 1027; Schumer amendment No. 1031; Reed amendment No. 1039; Feingold amendment 1032; Reed amendment No. 1040; Boxer amendment No. 1038.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, May 4, at 5 p.m., there be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided and controlled between the Senators DODD and VITTER, or their designees, to debate concurrently the Vitter amendments Nos. 1016 and 1017; that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendments in the order listed above; that no amendments be in order to either amendment prior to a vote in relation thereto, with 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to each vote, with the second vote 10 minutes in duration.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard.

Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

As of late, the focus of our nation has been on the economy and, more specifically, the price of oil and gasoline and the effects it is having on normal Americans. Most media sources are running stories on the terrible effects of \$4-5 a gallon of gas are having on the average American consumer and their widespread financial hardships.

My sincere belief is that \$4 or \$5 a gallon gas while putting a dent in the wallet is not causing widespread financial hardship on the overwhelming majority of U.S. citizens. The monthly increase for Joe Average is roughly in the \$25-100 range. This amount should be easily absorbed by virtually everyone across the U.S. There are some people for whom an increase this minor would cause them to fall into bankruptcy, but they are the people who would most likely end up in this same situation for one reason or another and who have habits and a severe lack of financial and budgeting skills that need changed more than just a little cheaper gas.

I have worked my entire professional life in the banking industry and have had to foreclose on people who could not afford to have increases in their needed expenses such as utilities, transportation, healthcare or food during good times, economically speaking. These are the same people who could have absorbed these needed increases if they had merely given up cable TV or their \$150 per month cell phone. This is the same issue we are facing today. Some sacrifices will need to be made by Joe Average but Joe ought to be able to cut back on non-necessities and absorb the extra costs. If Joe Average refuses to make the changes to his daily habits, then we should not bail him out of a situation that he put himself in and refuses to change his ways in order to get out of.

The belief I have is that \$4-5 gas will actually be a major savior not only to the US but to the human race as a whole. The high prices will force us to innovate and bring technologies that have been available for years into the mainstream, to decrease our overall use of non-renewable energy and decrease our pollution levels. Even if one does not buy into the notion of global warming, we all know that breathing pollution is extremely harmful and expensive in terms of healthcare costs. Many pollution problems can be solved at the same time as our energy problems.

Significantly more money, in the multiple tens or hundreds of billions of dollars, needs to be spent on emerging energy-efficient technologies in order to secure a long term solution to energy and pollution problems; not to put a temporary band-aid on gas prices to win over a few votes. The peoples of the world look to the US to be a leader and innovator of new technologies and we have been sorely lacking for many years.

Most European countries and Japan are vastly further ahead both on efficiency and pollution control standards. We have many bright scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs in this country who have the ideas, goals and desires to accomplish this task; what they lack is the financial access to get the ideas into large-scale production. The U.S. vitally needs an effort on the scale of the Manhattan Project or the Apollo Program to get technology from its infancy and