

In addition to the bill, myself and a group of Senators—and House Members as well—have also sent letters to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, calling on the agency and the Department of Energy to complete the fuel harmonization study which Congress requested more than 5 years ago. That report was due in 2008. This report would examine the effects of the Nation's varying boutique fuels on retail prices and also assess the feasibility of developing national or regional standards to reduce the multiple varieties required today by the EPA.

Having fewer types of fuel would make more fuel available during shortages, thereby putting downward pressure on prices at the pump. It would give refineries more options to meet demand and help stabilize and reduce the retail price of gasoline.

We expect EPA and the Department of Energy to follow through on the congressional intent that was outlined in the 2005 law and conduct and complete that study as soon as possible, which correlates closely with the legislation we are sponsoring.

Bear in mind, the measures I just discussed do not cost anything. They take no funding to work. Yet they can help us reduce fuel prices for the American consumer, for our American families. They can make doing business in America more affordable, reduce our trade deficit, and help get Americans back to work again.

We need to increase domestic fuel production, and we need to provide regulatory relief in order to do it because high energy prices, whether it is fuel for our cars or electricity for our homes and businesses, impact virtually every sector of American life. That includes jobs, that includes economic growth, that includes the purchasing power of the American family, and ultimately includes our standard of living and our quality of life.

Our future is fueled by energy and that future depends on the decisions and the choices we make right now. We need to get them right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). The Senator from Missouri.

#### THANKING THE MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I rise to make some brief comments about people at home I am so proud of. Over the past 3 weeks, my home State has been the site of heartbreaking destruction that resulted from a series of severe weather incidents throughout the State. We have also had the privilege of witnessing great acts of bravery, compassion, and neighbors being neighbors in response to these incidents. I wish to take just a moment to recognize the incredible character of Missourians and particularly to recognize the contributions made by the citizen-soldiers and airmen of the Missouri National Guard.

Today, weeks after historic flooding began, we continue to see its life-altering effects, in my State and others all along the Mississippi River. My prayers, and those of my colleagues, go out to all those who have and will continue to have their lives altered by this tragedy.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Missouri delegation to make sure that the Federal Government provides the assistance necessary to help Missourians affected by tragedy to get back on their feet. Already, the President has granted the first Federal disaster assistance to individuals and households across the State. More announcements will come as damage assessments are completed. USDA is also poised to assist and will start holding public meetings in the affected areas to inform farmers and landowners of the help that they can receive.

One thing that has struck me about the response to the storms has been the dignity and class with which Missourians have carried themselves. In my State, families have been driven from their homes, pushed away from their jobs, lost everything. Whether it is a family in North St. Louis whose home was destroyed by a tornado, or a producer whose family farm was submerged when the levee protecting it was intentionally breached, Missourians have drawn on their faith, their families, and their neighbors to pull through. I had the opportunity to spend time with some of these families during my trip to view flooding in southeast Missouri. Their courage is inspiring, and is an example of the American spirit that we all hold dear.

We have had a rough year. The last 3 weeks have been particularly destructive, starting with the tornado and strong winds that ripped through the St. Louis area on Good Friday, April 22. This tornado, rated an EF-4, was estimated to be the strongest to hit the area in nearly four decades.

As the tornado and storms battered the St. Louis area, rain continued to fall on southeast and southern Missouri. When Governor Jay Nixon made the decision to deploy the Missouri National Guard to assist local emergency responders in their efforts, it marked the 20th time in the past 6 years that the Missouri National Guard has provided such assistance, including the last time that catastrophic flooding struck the State, in 2008.

Since their deployment to respond to this latest disaster, the Missouri National Guard, under the strong leadership of their adjutant general MG Stephen Danner, has provided invaluable support to the Governor, the Army Corps of Engineers, local responders and citizens across the scores of communities that have suffered damage. Two events from recent days provide a perfect summary of the service that these brave men and women continue to perform for the people of my State.

Last week, the citizen-soldiers and airmen of the Missouri National Guard

joined the people of Caruthersville, in Pemiscot County, to rapidly erect a secondary flood wall to support the existing wall. This wall, made of 60,000 sandbags stretched across over 3,000 feet, helped to provide safety and peace of mind for a community that feared the worst.

A couple of counties away, Missouri National Guard members helped to save a 93-year-old trapped in her car as she tried to cross a flooded Black River. One of the guardsmen on the scene, seeing his first emergency duty, remarked "we weren't there to be heroes, we were just doing our jobs."

The citizen-soldiers and airmen of the Missouri National Guard, while "just doing their jobs," have played an important role in supporting the flood response efforts of their neighbors.

A member of the 1138th Military Police Company said it best when he said "nothing makes you feel as good as being able to help your neighbors in Missouri." The Missouri National Guard, and the people they valiantly serve, are and will continue to be the embodiment of those words and the spirit that we all strive to personify. I thank them for their bravery, for their selflessness and for being great neighbors.

We will all stand by to be of assistance as everyone recovers from the natural disasters that have brought such destruction to the State I love.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. WHITEHOUSE pertaining to the introduction of S. 973 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business for debate only be extended until 6 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

#### FINANCIAL HEALTH

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I want to share a few thoughts on a very important matter, the financial health of the United States. We had a nice meeting with the President earlier today. The Republican Senators virtually all were there, shared their thoughts, and the President responded. All in all it was a good exchange. Those are the kinds of meetings where I do not talk about what is said in detail and quote anyone.

I was asked by a number of reporters what happened and what did you say about it. I guess my conclusion is that not much happened. No commitments were made that I could see, that indicated the President had made any