

about 22 trillion cubic feet per year to more than 30 trillion cubic feet per year over the next 10 to 12 years.

The Clinton-Gore administration has shown little interest in solving our domestic energy problems until now as foreign oil producers have forced crude oil prices to over \$30 per barrel and gasoline prices to almost \$2 per gallon—double prices of only little more than a year ago.

I would argue that the Clinton-Gore administration has acted in other ways designed to force us away from the use of readily available, relatively inexpensive fossil fuels. It has chosen especially to vilify and deny the use of our most abundant national energy resource—coal. My distinguished friend from West Virginia, Senator ROBERT BYRD spoke eloquently yesterday on this subject and I want to add a few thoughts to his.

The U.S. has the world's largest demonstrated coal reserve base and accounts for more than 90 percent of our total fossil energy reserves.

At present rates of recovery and use, U.S. reserves will last more than 270 years.

Coal is used to generate over 56 percent of our electricity supply—and about 88 percent of the Midwest's electricity needs.

Coal use for electric power has risen more than 250 percent since 1970 while sulfur dioxide emissions have decreased to 21 percent below 1970 levels and introduction of new cleaner coal combustion technologies will continue to push emissions of all types down.

Electricity from hydro represents about 10 to 12 percent of our electricity needs.

Nuclear powerplants meet about 20 percent of our total electricity demand.

Yet the Clinton-Gore administration takes a dim view of these sources and has taken steps to reduce their use.

In November 1999 the Environmental Protection Agency sued several coal burning utilities claiming they made major modifications to their facilities without applying for New Source Review permits. Utilities maintain that the modifications fall within the "routine maintenance" exception to the new source rule, and that EPA had routinely approved such actions in the past.

EPA is discussing the notion that new source review should include "voluntary" regulation of CO₂—which is not a poisonous gas and which is not regulated by any part of the Clean Air Act.

EPA recently changed the toxics release inventory to require electric utilities to report chemical release data. The level at which reporting is required for Mercury was lowered by an order of magnitude. In making these changes EPA presented no studies or supporting rationale for why nearby communities should suddenly be concerned about such releases. Nevertheless, the reports will be widely pub-

lished thereby placing utilities at the top of the list of "dirty" facilities.

In 1993, EPA concluded that coal combustion wastes (fly ash, bottom ash, slag waste, and other combustion products) from electric utility generation do not warrant hazardous waste regulation. EPA appears now to be prepared to reverse an EPA staff decision that coal combustion wastes do not warrant regulation as "hazardous."

In 1998, EPA issued revised Nitrogen Oxides New Source Performance Standards for all new and existing utility and industrial boilers. It based its standard on a single, very expensive control system regardless of boiler and fuel type.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has talked openly about "tearing down dams" in the West to restore habitat for fish, ignoring the power and transportation benefits they provide. And, the administration is imposing new, often impossible criteria that must be met before federal licenses can be re-issued. Many existing hydro projects will seek relicensing over the next several decades.

Finally, the Clinton-Gore administration continues to threaten veto of legislation designed to create a permanent nuclear waste storage facility and which fulfills a longstanding promise by the federal government to create such a facility. Without a federal storage facility, U.S. nuclear generating stations, which are running out of on-site storage capacity may be forced to shut down their operations.

There are too many more examples of the Clinton-Gore administration's failure to produce a coherent, balanced national energy plan. It almost seems they are trying to create crisis after crisis in the hope that a magical solution will rise from the chaos—fat chance. Solving these problems requires tough choices and I suggest that we begin now by pursuing a number of short to long term objectives.

We should work with our Western Hemisphere neighbors to help them increase their crude oil production.

We should provide relief to consumers by cutting taxes on fuels derived from crude oil, such as the 4.3-cents a gallon tax and the 24-cent a gallon tax on highway diesel fuel and taxes on fuels for air, rail and barge transportation.

We need to step away from punitive, command and control environmental regulations and move toward performance based regulatory concepts that offer the regulated community opportunities to find flexible approaches to reducing emissions of legally regulated contaminants.

Finally, we need to face up to the fact that we are part of the problem. Our unwillingness to develop our own abundant oil, gas and coal resources dooms us to greater dependence on foreign sources, especially for crude oil. We must make the conscious choice to carefully find and develop our resources while protecting our environment.

CROP INSURANCE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 2251, the Risk Management for the 21st Century Act regarding crop insurance reform. I am an original co-sponsor of this important legislation and I thank my colleagues Senators BOB KERREY and PAT ROBERTS for their leadership on this issue.

Crop insurance reform has been a major, bipartisan legislative effort for farm state Senators. Reforming crop insurance is vital to America's agricultural producers and to the rural economies in all of our ag-producing states. We need to pass this legislation today.

The need for crop insurance reform has been a common denominator in my conversations with all of Nebraska's agricultural producers and agribusinesses, as I am sure it has for my colleagues as they have spoken with ag-producers across the country.

Every commodity organization and farm group that I've spoken with has urged Congress to reform and improve America's crop insurance programs.

Why is crop insurance important? By increasing and expanding private crop insurance coverage, ag producers can make long-term market decisions without being devastated by short-term economic downturns.

If we can assist in making crop insurance—an important risk management tool—more affordable and expansive, we will help producers weather the bad times.

S. 2251 makes a number of important changes to the crop insurance system that will benefit America's ag producers.

This bill establishes a new premium assistance formula to encourage producers to increase their crop insurance coverage by making higher levels of coverage more affordable, and increases the level of coverage farmers can purchase.

It will ease actual "production history" rules so that farmer's insurance coverage is less likely to be artificially depressed by successive years of bad weather.

This legislation will reduce the potential for insurance fraud and abuse with strong program compliance provisions.

It includes new pilot projects for livestock insurance, specialty crops, and coverage reinsured through futures markets.

By passing the Risk Management for the 21st Century Act we can help eliminate some of the uncertainty and instability in farm operations, thus allowing farmers to plan for the long-term.

Additionally, this legislation should help Congress and the American taxpayers reduce the need for disaster-assistance packages for our ag producers, and the costs associated with him.

If we can help provide farmers with the management tools they need to plan for their future, there will be less of a need to rely on future emergency supplemental appropriations bills when bad times strike.

I again thank Senators ROBERTS and KERREY and their staffs for their diligence in spearheading crop insurance reform, and acknowledge Senate Agriculture Chairman LUGAR for his leadership in getting this bill out of the Agriculture Committee and onto the floor of the Senate for a vote.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. 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.

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

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

Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois controls the time until 11 a.m., of which the Senator from Montana, Mr. BAUCUS, shall have 10 minutes.

The Senator from Washington.

WHAT REALLY MATTERS IN EDUCATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I sat through several days of discussion on education policy as we marked up the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Just last week, I went home and visited schools across Washington State and met with administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

The discussions we had here in Congress and the discussions I had in those classrooms could not have been more different. No wonder so many educators and parents are frustrated with Congress. Too often, what they hear from Congress has nothing to do with the real challenges they are facing.

While some of my colleagues were pushing their agenda of block grants and vouchers here in Washington, DC, the teachers I met with in Washington State were concerned about their ability to teach the basics and maintain discipline in their classrooms.

While these same colleagues of mine sought to diminish accountability, the parents I met with want us to insist that we have the highest possible academic standards in safe and modern classrooms.

While these same colleagues of mine were figuring out ways to shift resources away from meeting specific needs, the students I met with were wondering when there would be enough fully qualified teachers in their classrooms to help them get the individual attention they need to succeed.

Those parents, teachers, and students were shocked when I told them that my amendment to guarantee money for smaller class sizes was rejected by members of the Education Committee. It just does not make sense to them.

I wish that when we discussed ESEA, we had a few of those teachers sitting

in the room with us. And whenever the discussion drifted to things that are far from the realities in today's classrooms, I wish those teachers were here to stand up and bring the discussion back to the real challenges our students face, day-in and day-out.

Today, too many teachers see overcrowded classrooms, children who arrive with basic needs unmet, jammed hallways, and tougher curriculum requirements.

Today, too many parents see teachers who are overworked—teachers who spend so much time on discipline it is hard for them to give every child the time and attention they need.

Today, too many students feel their needs are lost and their education is not a priority. All of us want to make sure that schools are safe centers of learning.

To reach their potential, our kids need real help now. They need the common sense solutions that we know can help them succeed.

It is simple. We know what works in education. We know what it takes to help children reach their potential. It is not a great mystery. These are the things that years of research have shown us are effective. They are the things that parents, teachers, and community leaders know make a difference. To show how simple this is, I have listed those ingredients we know work.

I am proud that Democrats are focusing on results with a commonsense agenda. We know that if we want children to succeed in school, they need a highly-motivated, fully-qualified teacher. We know they need a safe and modern classroom. We know they need a small, uncrowded class in which to learn. We know they need a focus on the basics. We know they need high standards and discipline. We know they need support from family and adults. We know they need resources for the classroom.

These are the commonsense policies that serve America's children—the policies that improve education and get results.

But unfortunately, this Congress is ignoring these proven approaches. They are ignoring what works. They do not want money to be targeted to these essential ingredients. They do not want us to focus on making sure that every school has guaranteed resources in each of these areas.

Many of us want to use these key ingredients to make the best schools possible. We want to guarantee that every school has the resources it needs. We want to change our schools—for the better—so we can get the results parents, students, and teachers are demanding.

Some have proposed block grants as the cure-all for education. Today, our nation's education policy guarantees that specific resources will be targeted to meeting specific needs. That is how responsible budgeting is done. That is how we ensure accountability.

But this Congress is working toward eliminating those guarantees. They do not want money to be guaranteed for reducing class sizes or for technology training for teachers or for modernizing schools. They want to eliminate all of those guarantees, create a pot of money, and give it to the States.

One teacher asked me: "Are there any studies that show that giving all the money to States in block grants actually improves education?"

Of course not. In fact, 35 years ago the American people made the national Government a partner in education because they realized that State and local governments cannot do it all on their own.

Public schools are one of the foundations upon which our democracy is built, and we need to do a better job of helping them perform at the highest levels.

Most disconcerting about these proposals for block grants is they are simply a blank check policy that will diminish the guarantee that education resources go to the students who need them most. Money that currently goes to hiring and training teachers and helping students with special needs—under these proposals could be used "for any education purposes"—anything from building a new lockerroom to redecorating office space.

In response to many who want a better education, some have proposed vouchers. What will that do? Without a doubt, it will drain scarce dollars away from public schools where 90 percent of America's children are trying to learn. Vouchers plans shift taxpayer dollars away from public schools to private and religious schools.

One parent in Washington told me last week: "I don't want you to give me a few hundred dollars to send my kid to another school. I want you to make my school work better."

The real question, and the one we are failing to answer, is: How can we work in partnership with states, educators, and parents to make sure that every student gets the things they need to reach their potential?

Many of my colleagues are asking the wrong question. They ask: How can the Federal Government's role in education be eliminated? They are talking about process, when we should be focusing on results.

This Congress should be asking: How can the Federal Government support local schools? How can we meet our national education priorities, like making sure every child can read, write, and use a computer?

And how can we help school districts do the things that are hardest for them to do, like hiring new teachers and building new schools?

I am afraid some of my colleagues aren't looking for ways to answer these questions. I am afraid they just want to gut our national education partnership.

In this country, we already have local control over education. State and