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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, Your promises are sure. Bless our lawmakers in all their undertakings. In their friendships, keep them faithful and true. In their emotions, keep them calm and serene. Free them from anxiety and care. In their material things, give them contentment and generosity. In their spiritual lives, deliver them from doubts and distrust. In their work, give them guidance and success. And if misfortune comes, use the trials to bring them closer to each other and to You. Let nothing shake their certainty that You alone are sovereign over their lives.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 60 minutes. The Republicans will control the first half, the Democrats the second half. Following this period of morning business, the Senate will resume postcloture debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 6, the Energy bill.

We have consent to move to the bill itself after the caucuses end at 2:15 today. The motion to proceed will be agreed to, and the Senate will begin consideration of the energy legislation. Senators BINGAMAN, DOMENICI, we understand BOXER and INHOFE and INOUE, or his designee, and STEVENS, will come and talk about this bill. Hopefully, they will do it this morning to lay the groundwork for this very important piece of legislation.

As with the competitiveness bill, this is a bipartisan bill. I remind everyone, matters that the Energy Committee reports out of their committee on a bipartisan basis are part of this bill. The same applied to Commerce; the same applied to the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Those matters the chairmen wanted out of those committees that were not bipartisan are not part of this bill. This is truly a bipartisan bill. There will be amendments offered to weaken the bill, to strengthen the bill—of course, the

understanding of those words is in the eyes of the beholder.

I hope this will be a good, strong debate. I hope people will offer amendments. We have a limited amount of time to complete a lot of work. If there are long delays, people not offering amendments, I know the managers will be saying we have to end this some way, and the "some way" that we are always forced to look at is whether we want to have a bipartisan cloture vote on ending debate.

Let's have people who want to offer amendments do it as quickly as possible. I have asked the managers of the bill, rather than wait around for people who say: I don't know if I want a vote on this, we need more time—after there has been a reasonable amount of time discussing one of these amendments, the managers should move to table the amendment. If it is not tabled, nothing is lost. We need to move along and get this legislation completed as quickly as possible.

Gas prices are going down. They have dropped a few cents the last week or two, which is good. The cost of oil coming into this country has gone up. It is now at \$67 and people are saying it is going up higher, which will mean there will be an increase at the gas pumps a month or so after the cost of oil importation increases.

Remember, we have an obligation with this legislation. This legislation, which some people say is not strong enough, if it passes, will cut the amount of oil we use per day in this country by 4 million barrels. Think about that, 4 million barrels a day. This is a step in the right direction. I hope we can do this.

The setting for this is, among other things, we use 21 million barrels of oil every day. We import 65 percent of that. As I said yesterday in illustration of how much this is, it is a ditch 150 feet deep and 11 miles long filled with oil. That is how much we use every day.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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We have an obligation to the American people to lessen our dependence, to make that ditch shorter and not nearly as deep.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, with regard to the Energy bill the majority leader was speaking to, we have a pretty good sense on this side what important amendments will need to be disposed of. We hope to move forward on those amendments early in the process. Provided we are given fair treatment on getting up our amendments and voted on, I certainly agree with the majority leader this is an important issue, an issue that needs to be disposed of in the very near future. We will be working with him to get that bill to conclusion at the earliest possible time.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to exceed 60 minutes, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the first half of the time under the control of the Republicans, the second half of the time under the control of the majority, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, a story in today's Los Angeles Times states that the approval rating of Congress is the lowest in a decade. The poll reported in today's Los Angeles Times says 27 percent of Americans approve of how Congress is doing its job, and most see business as usual. After Congress has diverted its attention from what I consider to be the most important domestic issue confronting the Nation today; that is, fixing our broken borders and actually enforcing our immigration laws, in order to have a vote of no confidence on the Attorney General in what is clearly a political exercise rather than anything that would produce a meaningful result, we now turn our attention to an important issue and one I hope Congress will

embrace in order to address energy concerns in this country.

Of course, we all know—all we have to do is to drive up to fill up our gas tank—the price of gasoline has gone through the roof. While it is true that Congress can pass laws and Congress can even repeal laws that have been passed by previous Congresses, what Congress cannot do is repeal the laws of supply and demand.

It is important as we look at this legislation before us that we look at whether this legislation is, in fact, designed to fix problems. One of the questions I suggest we need to look to is, Does this bill increase supply? In a global economy we know there is going to be more and more competition for oil and gasoline. We know we are competing, not only in the United States, but literally with China and India, each of which have 1 billion people. Their economies are growing, and the number of people driving and their economic activity is directly related to access to a reasonably priced energy supply. We need to look to see what we are doing at home to try to increase supply.

We all know we are dangerously reliant on imported oil from dangerous parts of the world or from places such as Venezuela, governed by the likes of Hugo Chavez. Current energy policy in this country does nothing but make our enemies richer. It does nothing but line the pockets of people like Hugo Chavez or somebody like President Ahmadinejad in Iran—countries pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

We have to eliminate the schizophrenia that has characterized our energy policy in the past and look at what commonsense steps Congress can take in order to improve the supply of oil and gas, preferably from our own domestic sources at home, so we are less reliant on these dangerous rulers in other parts of the world for the very lifeblood of our economy.

By any measure, the bill that is now before us is an incomplete bill. It deals nearly exclusively with the demand side of the energy equation. While it is worthwhile to aggressively pursue better efficiencies and alternative sources of energy to meet our future energy needs, the provisions in this bill fail to address much of our current energy needs. It is a matter of simple economics. This bill will do nothing to deal with our current energy needs without addressing supply.

I fear this bill will also end up being even more expensive for consumers. Both the provisions in the bill and some of the expected amendments from the majority set up unreasonable mandates for renewable and alternative energy sources, which are more expensive. I do not question our need to produce more of our energy from clean and renewable sources, but I believe the winners and losers should be determined by the market, not by the Government. Indeed, this bill determines for Americans which fuels we will use,

how much, and at what time. That is the last thing we need the Federal Government to dictate—to determine which fuels we will use, how much, and at what time—when public confidence in Congress under this new majority is at a 10-year low. The last thing we need to do is say: Give us the power to determine what fuels you will use, how much, and at what time.

I do believe there is great promise in renewable energy. I am proud that my State, Texas, continues its energy leadership. As a traditional oil and gas State, it now is the largest producer of wind energy in the country—2,749 megawatts as of last year. We are also the largest producer of biodiesel, an industry that has grown rapidly in just the last few years.

It is also unwise to turn away from proven and developing technologies to meet our Nation's clean air goals. For example, nuclear energy has the lowest impact on the environment, including land, air, water, and wildlife, of any energy source because it does not emit harmful gasses. It isolates its waste from the environment and requires less area to produce the same amount of electricity as other sources.

I wouldn't necessarily hold out other countries as a model for America when it comes to their energy policies, but I must say a country such as France that generates 80 percent of its electricity by nuclear power does represent a goal that I think the United States ought to strive for, particularly when nuclear power is cheap. It is conducive of a good environment, and it requires a lot less for us to produce in terms of cost and other collateral issues. I think this is one area where we clearly ought to be encouraging greater use of nuclear power, particularly when it comes to our electricity supply.

I want to say a word about coal. Coal should also continue to play an important role in our energy future. There are clean coal technologies being developed that could enable us to continue utilizing this abundant domestic resource and—this is important—improve air quality. Coal is also expected to remain one of the lowest cost fuels available.

I do believe with Federal investment in programs such as FutureGen, which is a \$1 billion investment in clean coal-burning technology, we can use this 300-year supply of coal in our country in a way that is compatible with a good environment and allows us to maintain the diversity of our energy sources which are essential to the growth of our economy, as well as our national security, from the standpoint of depending less and less on people who are trying to do us harm for the very energy we need.

It is ironic at a time that we are engaged in the global war on terror that many of the state sponsors of terrorism, many of those areas that are in unstable regions of the world, from the standpoint of the global war on terror, are the very ones being enriched by our