

□ 2100

BLUE DOGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of talk, a lot of rhetoric about energy. We have heard a lot of partisan talk about energy.

You know, Congress has never been in session in August, in recent memory. It is a traditional district work period. And all the Republicans that complained about Congress adjourning for August, as it does each August, if the truth be known, if you were to look at their schedule, they had public events scheduled throughout their district in August. Why? Because they knew that Congress is traditionally not in session in August.

And, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if we had stayed on the floor the whole month of August, we would be hearing a lot of the stuff we are hearing tonight. We would be hearing all this partisan bickering about energy. But instead, all 435 Members of Congress went back home to their respective districts during the month of August. And if you listen to the national press, it sounds like we were all laid up on the beach somewhere for 5 weeks.

The fact is, most Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle did what I did; I began the break by making a trip to Iraq to visit the 3,000 members of the Arkansas National Guard. Regardless of how we feel about what is going on in Iraq and what we should or should not be doing, it is important, not as Democrats and Republicans, but as Americans, that we remain united in support of our men and women in uniform.

So I made the trip to Iraq to visit the 3,000 members of the Arkansas National Guard. It is their second deployment in 33 months. They have gone above and beyond what has been asked of them. When that National Guard recruiter showed up, they said, "Sign here, son, and the most you will be out of the country is once every 5 years." This is the Arkansas National Guard 39th Brigade's second deployment in 33 months. And I felt like the least I could do is make the trip to Iraq, let them know we support them, thank them for their service, and to make sure that some of the \$16 million an hour of your tax money that is going to Iraq is being spent on the equipment and supplies that they need.

Then I came home to Arkansas, and during the month of August I visited something like 40 towns across my district. Most Members of Congress did the same thing during August; they were visiting their constituents. And if they did, I am sure, like me, they got an earful about the high price of gasoline. And I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress going home to

their districts and getting an earful on high gasoline prices will go a lot further toward getting a commonsense energy bill passed on the floor of the United States House of Representatives than having all of us sit here and fight and bicker and act like a bunch of school-aged kids for a month.

And because we were home in our districts in August and because we did get an earful, I predict that we will see a commonsense energy bill passed on the floor of the House this month. The question is whether the Republicans really want to pass an energy bill, or whether they just want to try and blame the Democrats. The irony of this is they have been in control of this for the last 6 years of the White House, House, and Senate. And during that time, of course, I don't have to tell anyone what has happened with the price of gasoline.

So this month, I predict, on the floor of the House the Republican Members of this body will have an opportunity to help pass a bipartisan, commonsense energy bill. The question is, will they do that, or will they not do it and try to continue to use this issue and the American people as a political football?

I can tell you that people in my district, they work hard, they get up, they go to work, they work hard for a living, and many of them live in rural areas and they travel great distances to and from work and they are sick and tired of being a political football. They don't see this as a Democrat or a Republican energy crisis. They see it, as I do, as an American energy crisis.

Here is what I do know. When I was born in 1961, our Nation was 19 percent dependent on foreign oil. By the time I graduated from high school in 1979, we were 45 percent dependent on foreign oil. We are now approaching 70 percent dependency on foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, when we go to the gas pump and when we tank up, we are indirectly putting money in the hands of the terrorists who want to harm us. That does not make any sense at all.

Here is what else I know. There is going to be 100 million new cars on the road in the next 8 years. 100 million new cars on the road in the next 8 years; not here; in China and India. And I don't care who tells you what, no President, no Member of Congress can change the expansion of the middle class in China and India or anywhere else in the world.

The second thing that I want to point out is 3 weeks ago Kurdish rebels went into Turkey and blew up an oil pipeline, halfway around the world, and yet the next day in South Arkansas we were paying more per gallon of gasoline. No President, no Member of Congress can do anything about that.

We can't change world demand and world circumstances, but I will tell you what we can change. We can change our domestic supply here at home. And that is why a number of us that are Democrats believe that we have got to drill here at home.

The Republicans say, drill and your problems are solved. Not so. The fact is, that because demand is going to continue to increase, if we do all the alternatives and renewables that are in the science lab today and bring them to the marketplace, our oil needs will still be just as great in 20 years as they are today because the demand is going to continue to increase.

So some say drill and your problems are solved. They are not leveling with you. Others say do alternative renewable fuels and your problems are solved. They are not leveling with you, either, Mr. Speaker. I contend it is going to take all of these things. And I have a plan to accomplish that. It is called the American-Made Energy Act, and here is how it works.

Number one, to get us the oil we need short term we drill here at home in ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It is real controversial with some, and I understand that. The truth is, there is 19 million acres in ANWR, and using new technology we only need 2,000 acres out of the 19 million to recover the oil we need. 19 million acres in ANWR at issue; the land area we need in order to drill and recover the oil that is there is 2,000 acres. Put it another way, one-sixth the size of the airport near Washington, D.C.

We need to drill off the coast. We need to drill where it makes sense, in the 48 continental United States, not using 1940 or 1950 technology, not even 1990 technology. My bill says that we will do it utilizing 21st century technology that can allow us to recover the oil we need and be good stewards of the environment all at the same time.

Here is what else it does. It generates \$80 billion in lease and royalty payments to our government. \$80 billion. When President Kennedy set out to put a man on the moon, in today's dollars it was a \$90 billion investment, and we did a lot more than put a man on the moon. We grew a new generation of innovators in this country that went on to create many of the jobs and technologies that we enjoy today.

You contrast that with energy. Everybody is talking about alternative and renewable fuels, but the truth is we will spend more money in Iraq in the next 10 days than we will spend this year on research and development of new and exciting alternative and renewable forms of energy, and that is wrong.

I want to take the revenue from the lease and royalty payments, \$80 billion, and I want to put every dime of it into making a President Kennedy "let's go to the moon" size investment in alternative and renewable fuels.

We can take automobiles that run on gas and run them on natural gas. We have a lot of natural gas in America. We have a plentiful supply of natural gas, and new areas are being found all the time. In Arkansas now we have got something called the Fayetteville Shale, and a lot of people who used to not have very much are now finding

themselves in the middle-class or even better. A lot of poor farmers, a lot of poor working families are now discovering some wealth because of the Fayetteville Shale, which is where they are recovering natural gas.

Now, not too long ago, they didn't know it existed. And then they knew it existed, but they didn't have the technology to recover it. And then they had the technology to recover it, but it was too costly. And then the price of natural gas went up, and, guess what. Now we are seeing this great explosion of this natural gas find in Arkansas known as the Fayetteville Shale. There is another one in Louisiana. They are both going to rival what is known as the Barnett Shale in Texas.

New and exciting technologies are allowing us to possibly move to natural gas powered cars. Biofuels, ethanol, cellulosic ethanol where we take the treetops and the tree limbs, add value to the land owner, and we can turn them into ethanol. The first ever cellulosic ethanol plant is being built right now in Georgia. The people building it I recently had on the panel when I hosted the first ever Arkansas Biofuels Conference at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, a forestry school located within my district.

Batteries, a lot of promise with batteries. Now, battery powered cars, plug-in electric cars probably won't make a lot of sense for those of us in rural areas. Last Thursday, I traveled 450 miles in my district. I represent about half of Arkansas. That is a lot of miles. Obviously, plug-in and battery powered doesn't make sense for a lot of folks that live in rural areas and drive 20 or even 50 miles each way to and from work. But you know what? For those folks in the urban areas, for those folks where we have a lot of people living, if we can transition them into battery and plug-in electric cars where they spend an hour getting 6 miles to work each day, that will reduce our Nation's need for oil and, therefore, it will reduce the price that we pay at the pump in areas where we will continue to have automobiles that run on gasoline, which comes from oil.

There is a lot of promise. Hydrogen fuel cell. I have test driven a hydrogen fuel cell car. It sounds like an electric golf cart, it runs like a regular car, and no pollution. And when you stop, if you take an empty cup and run to the tailpipe in time, it will pour you a half a cup of water that you can drink. This is not Star Wars stuff. This is not stuff that is even in the science lab anymore. These are ideas that are out of the science lab and ready for the marketplace. The problem is, we do not have an energy policy in this country that embraces them.

So that is what my plan does; it drills, it gives us the oil we need short term; it reduces the price we pay at the pump; it makes a President Kennedy "let's go to the moon" size investment in alternative and renewable fuels that can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs here at home.

Ironically, high gas prices helped get us in this economic recession, and having a President Kennedy "let's go to the moon" size investment in alternative and renewable energy, growing a new generation of energy innovators in this country can also help get us out of this recession. I call it my Common Sense Energy Plan for America's Future. And I am going to talk more about it a little bit later this evening, because we don't just address the high price of gasoline, we also address electricity. Because I can tell you, we have a gasoline and diesel crisis today, but we are going to have an electricity crisis as early as 2030, and it is going to be far greater and much worse than the gasoline crisis we have today, and my bill speaks to that. It is H.R. 5437, the American-Made Energy Act, and we are going to talk about it in more detail a little bit later this evening.

But at this time, I have got a number of Democrats that have joined me that are for new energy, they are for drilling, they are for alternatives, they are for renewables. They are for American-made energy. Again, this is not a Republican or a Democratic energy crisis, it is an American energy crisis, and we are here to say that we want to make a difference.

I am pleased at this time to introduce my good friend, my colleague from California, the Honorable JIM COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. I thank my dear friend, Congressman MIKE ROSS from Arkansas, for his leadership not only in the Congress but among our fellow Blue Dogs.

I rise this evening to speak on behalf of a comprehensive effort to really address America's energy needs.

We have certainly heard a lot of political posturing that has taken place over the last year about various types of energy proposals, and I think the sad fact is that the American public is not looking for a Democratic nor are they looking for a Republican-Democratic energy package; they are looking for an American energy package, one that addresses our near-term needs with the energy crisis that we are experiencing today, one that focuses on our interim challenges that we face, and one that focuses on the long term, over the next 20 years, because Americans realize that it has taken a number of decades to put us in the hole that we are in today, and that certainly overnight we can't a la Harry Potter wave a magic wand hoping that our energy challenges will simply be wished away. It simply is not possible, and the American public knows that.

□ 2115

What they do expect is their elected representatives, Democrats and Republicans, to come together, put partisan differences aside, and sit down and try to figure out how we reduce our dependency on foreign sources of energy, as Congressman ROSS mentioned a moment ago, reaching almost 70 percent

now of the energy that we consume in America each year; almost 70 percent imported from foreign sources.

To put it another way, this year, Americans will transfer in excess of \$750 billion. Let me repeat that. We will transfer in excess of \$750 billion of American wealth to purchase our energy needs. Talk about digging a hole.

And where does that wealth go? It goes, in the form of petro dollars, in some cases, to sometimes friends of us, and then sometimes into the pockets of petro dictatorships which certainly wish us no good in the world of the geopolitics that we live in today.

We have certain countries in the Middle East that are playing both sides of the terrorist aisle. So, in that sense, we are really financing both sides of the war on terror. We're trying to, obviously, eliminate terror in our world, but yet we have countries in which we are purchasing our energy from who play both sides of the fence and use that, almost like the Mafia did in terms of protection money.

So, Americans want us to put together the kind of comprehensive energy policy that I think our Nation deserves, an Apollo-like program that really sets goals over the course of the next 10 years, short-term goals, interim goals, and long-term goals that will not just reduce our dependency on foreign sources of energy, but on fossil fuels, using all the new technologies that are out there that, in fact, will create more American jobs; that will create cleaner air, that can also be exported in terms of technologies around the world.

So is there such an effort going on? I'm pleased to tell you, tonight, yes, there is. There is such a bipartisan effort. It began back in early June with a group of Republicans and Democrats sitting together, one night a week, for 6 weeks, talking about what we thought was the art of the possible, the common sense that Americans expect us to use when we're here on the floor of the House and we're in committee. And as a result of that, we produced the National Conservation, Environmental and Energy Independence Act, introduced with 28 Democratic cosponsors and 28 Republican cosponsors on the day that we left session in July. Today we have over 120 cosponsors.

Now, this isn't a Blue Dog proposal. This isn't a Democratic proposal. This is not a Republican proposal. This is a bipartisan work product of like Members doing what Americans expect us to do, and that is, sit down and figure out solutions and compromises to some of the most difficult challenges we face as a Nation.

Now, what's this bill do? It's a simple bill. It's 34 pages long. It's three titles. The first title is offshore and onshore leasing and other energy provisions. It basically opens up the Outer Continental Shelf within 25 to 50 miles, giving States an opt-in provision, that could be modified in other ways, that we believe, over a course of the next 20

years, will develop \$2.6 trillion. Conservative estimates. These are based upon what the Mineral and Management Services estimated the last time they surveyed Federal lands, both on and offshore. When they last surveyed lands on and offshore in the 1980s, using old technology, not the new technology that has 3-D seismology that we use today to determine carbon footprints of oil and natural gas, in those days, what they determined existed in the Gulf of Mexico today, as a result of literally hundreds of leases that have been let in the gulf, we have developed, in that time period of over 20 years, 3½ times more energy resources than was estimated to be there by Mineral and Management Services in the 1980s. Using those same conservative estimates we base this \$2.6 trillion that would be realized as a result of opening up these Federal lands, both on the Outer Continental Shelf and on land.

Now, what would we do with this money? Well, we have the same royalty program that exists today, in which energy companies bid for leases that come up on a regular basis, and then, of course, these energy companies pay a lease, if they successfully bid on a parcel of leases; and then after they do their due diligence and determine if it's worth, in fact, drilling and utilizing the oil and the natural gas, then they pay a royalty. So we get monies three ways. We get monies when the energy companies first bid on the leases, then we get money when they lease the land that they have successfully bid on, and then, if they decide to determine to drill for oil or natural gas, we get the royalties. \$2.6 trillion, we think, is the conservative estimate.

Where would we spend that money. We'd put 30 percent of it in the general fund. That would, over the time period, amount to \$780 billion. For States that decided to participate they would receive an equal 30 percent or \$780 billion. How many of our States could use that money to invest in the infrastructure? That \$780 billion could be so helpful in dealing with our national debt.

We would also put 8 percent for the conservation reserve. We'd also put 10 percent for an environmental restoration reserve account. We'd put 15 percent for renewable energy reserves.

We all want to get off of our addiction to fossil fuel. Even the President here said that in his State of the Union speech. But we can't wish our way from fossil fuel. We have to be able to finance the renewable fuels. This would do that.

It also would provide 5 percent for carbon capture sequestration and to regenerate nuclear waste. We shouldn't be storing it at Yucca Mountain. We ought to be regenerating it like other countries do. There is energy in that waste, and it could be utilized on those plants.

And, also, we need to look at conservation. We need to apply energy standards in residential and commercial buildings that is low-hanging fruit,

and provide also support for low income home energy assistance programs for those people who are on fixed incomes, those who are working poor, those who most need the support for to conservation. That's the first title.

The second title would provide funding for cleaner energy production and energy conservation incentives. In other words, we would provide continuation of tax credits for existing renewables, for solar, for wind, for the cellulosic fuels, for the new technologies, like, that we think will be so important in creating the new American industries of jobs and energy; and to include bio diesel and other renewable fuels that include the hybrid vehicles that our colleague, Congressman ROSS, spoke of that he and I and others have actually had the opportunity to drive.

This is what we ought to do. This is taking existing innovative efforts in renewables and funding them, financing them, because that's how you get there from here. This is the interim strategy.

The third title of the bill is a portion of the bill that I am going to let my colleague and good friend, Congressman NICK LAMPSON discuss, because it's an important part that deals with the near-term issues. It involves the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and it dedicates some of those revenues and the conservation to energy research programs. This will have an immediate effect in lowering the prices of the existing gasoline, diesel and other fuel oils that we are, currently Americans are hard hit with.

Let me close by saying that this measure has the support of 18 Blue Dogs as cosponsors. Certainly, a large percentage of my Blue Dogs colleagues are supporting this, or they are supporting Congressman GREEN's proposal or Congressman MIKE ROSS' proposal. But the Blue Dogs share a common desire to put the partisan politics behind us and really do America's business in addressing our long-term, interim and short-term energy needs.

Be sure of one thing. This energy crisis that we are in today will be with us for the foreseeable future. We are just one international crisis away from rationing fuel in America. We saw what happened in Russia's invasion of Georgia just a week ago and the implications on that for energy policy.

Nigeria provides 10 percent of some of the sweetest, cleanest crude that we import in America. You would think, well, maybe 10 percent's not too much; we could live without Nigeria's oil.

Well, let me tell you something. That 10 percent of the oil we receive from Nigeria provides 36 percent of all the gasoline consumed on the East Coast. We know the problems that we have in Nigeria today and the Delta and the instability there, as in other parts of the world. So, Americans expect us to look at a short-term, interim and long-term energy policy.

Ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues, my Blue Dog friends under-

stand that we must use all the energy tools in our energy tool box, and that's what these series of proposals attempt to do, to use, as my parents taught me, a long time ago, JIM, use just some good common sense. You know, JIM, if you use good common sense you can get a lot done and you work with people and you don't care who gets credit. Well, that's what these proposals are all about, to use all the energy tools in our energy tool box for the near-term, the interim and the long-term energy needs of our country.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time to my colleague, MIKE ROSS and my fellow Blue Dogs. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California for his insight, his commitment to finding a common sense to this energy crisis facing America today. And the Member from California, Mr. COSTA, talked about the Blue Dogs.

The Blue Dog Coalition is a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that come from all over this country. There's 49 of us. And we're about trying to restore fiscal discipline, common sense and accountability to our government.

We're sick and tired of all the partisan bickering that goes on up in Washington. We don't care if it's a Democrat or a Republican idea. We want to know is it a common sense idea. Does it make sense for the people that send us here to be their voice at our Nation's Capital.

Tonight you're hearing from various members of the Blue Dog Coalition. It's not necessarily a Blue Dog position. It's Democratic positions. It's individual positions from individual Members within the Blue Dogs.

But you know, to listen to the Republicans tell it, you'd think Democrats aren't for drilling. We're for drilling, we're just not for giving the big oil companies a free ride to go along with it.

And tonight, I have got a number of my colleagues, Democratic Members of Congress, that, like me, believe that we need to drill, and we need to drill now, here at home in America to reduce the price we pay at the pump.

But we're not so short sighted that we stop there. We also say, take the revenue from the lease and royalty payments, and let's make the single largest investment in the history of America in alternative and renewable fuels.

At this time I'm pleased to yield to my colleague from Ohio, CHARLIE WILSON, for as much time as he desires. Not to be confused with the other Charlie Wilson. CHARLIE WILSON from Ohio.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the Congress' efforts to construct a new energy policy that will increase our renewable energy, our portfolio and the resources that we already have

here at home. And that's one of the things that I'm really proud to be here this evening to speak with my fellow Blue Dogs and, certainly Congressmen COSTA and ROSS both who have gone before me. And the thing they stress that is so important, Mr. Speaker, they keep saying that we are so concerned that we use common sense in what we're doing. And I know myself, I have been supportive of drilling all along. I believe it's the right thing to do. We need to have our resources to help people who are feeling severe pain in our country right now.

I'm concerned, though, that the oil that we drill here be oil that we keep here. And so I believe it's American oil, and we should use it for America's needs. I feel the same way about natural gas. I believe it's one of the other issues that we're going to have to deal with in a very near time frame.

It concerns me that I can see buses running around Washington, D.C. right now, and they are run on gas. Why can't we do more of that? Why can't we use that natural resource that we have to lessen our dependence on foreign oil?

□ 2130

I believe that's one of the significant efforts that we need to make.

Mr. Speaker, I represent a part of Ohio that has had a long proud period of steel and coal. We use coal in our area in many ways. And as a matter of fact, if we're fortunate enough, very soon to get our coal-to-liquid plan in my district in Columbiana County, Ohio. I will be very, very proud because we will be able to introduce a process that is safe, that we can sequester the carbon, we can grind the coal, we can use it to make fuel oil for airplanes. It's a new type of diesel project that can be done that actually burns cleaner than what our Air Force and what our airplanes are using now. So it's a great opportunity for us to find an alternative way to develop our own fuel.

And the amount of fuel that our airplanes use, people don't realize, but it's huge. And so this plant of ours in Ohio will produce 50,000 barrels a day. And that's just a small dent, but I think it could be a prototype for the kinds of thing that can happen with our natural resources of coal and being able to use it clean to produce the kind of fuel that will help us with alternative fuel.

As you drive up and down the Ohio River, you can see along my district of southeastern Ohio what amount of energy plants we have that use coal to produce electricity and also now to be using diesel fuel. You can see that this liquid fuel will help us more and more to reduce our dependency. And as someone said earlier, I believe it was Congressman ROSS, that we are going to have a shortage of electricity now in the not-too-distant future.

This shortage of electricity, it is very important that we understand that we start gearing up for it now. We have the technology to burn coal clean to produce electricity. We can provide the

coal with safe mining techniques that we have today, the technology that will make a difference in how we can get our coal out.

I believe that coal is another part of our energy plan that we need to look at, and especially from my area where we have an abundance of it, some say 200 to 300 years. So we can mine this coal and use it for an opportunity to help our workforce.

So I think as we drill and we have in mind that we're going to create a campus, or as Congressman COSTA said, a toolbox, if you will, of different kinds of alternative energy. And I believe if we could start doing that, we will be in better shape.

I yield back to our leader, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I appreciate the gentleman from Ohio for joining us. And if you are able to stick around, we'd love to visit more about coal with you.

We've got at least a 225-year supply of coal here in America. Instead of saying it's bad and turning our back on it, doesn't it make sense to invest some of this \$80 billion from the lease and royalty payments from drilling here at home and trying to find ways to clean it up? Coal-to-liquid.

We're so close to getting coal-to-liquid figured out that if we could, we wouldn't need to import another barrel of oil for 300 years in this country. I look forward to visiting more with the gentleman from Ohio about coal. In fact, I've got a coal plant being built in my district right now. Coal is not the cleanest form of energy. We all recognize that. But I can tell you this: with new technologies when this plant comes on line, it will be the cleanest new coal plant in America today. It will be plumbed, outfitted for carbon capture and sequestration, another promising technology that's currently in the science lab but getting close to being ready for the marketplace.

At this time, I would like to yield to my dear friend, a real leader in the United States House of Representatives from the State of Texas, and that's NICK LAMPSON.

Mr. LAMPSON. Thank you, Mr. ROSS. I appreciate the gentleman from Arkansas sharing some of his time and all of the good work that you're doing, and particularly promoting the work of the Blue Dog Democrats, the coalition of the fiscal conservatives in the House of Representatives. It's a real pleasure to be a part of an organization like this that will concentrate on in part of the issues and look for common ground.

I think what we too often, unfortunately, we in the House have been best at producing is division, and it's time for that division to come to an end. It's time for us to start working for America. That's what I think this Blue Dog Coalition has stood for and so do many others.

It was out of a sense of, I guess, frustration of several weeks back when—Mr. COSTA was talking about it a few minutes ago—when Members were

watching what was happening on the floor of this body when there was an awful lot of finger pointing about who was to blame for the energy situation that we were in. But out of that frustration came a plan for many of us to go into a room and see what we could do to come up with a real solution.

And that real solution became H.R. 6709, about which Mr. COSTA was speaking a little while ago. It's unfortunate that too often good things come out of a crisis. And we're in crisis. But what we've got to do is learn to work together in solving it.

What the public hears too often, Mr. Speaker and Members, is how divided we are. And we don't hear so much about how much effort is being made to pull us together, where there are good, reasonable commonsense solutions to the problems.

We know that only drilling is not a solution to our problem, and we know that only alternative energy is not a solution to our problem, but it's going to take a combination of them all. And that's what this bill 6709 sets out to accomplish.

And Mr. COSTA talked about the first two sections. He talked about the offshore and onshore leasing and other energy provisions. He also talked about the title II, which was cleaner energy production and energy conservation incentives.

And what he left off at the title number III was the Strategic Petroleum Reserve modification and dedication of revenues to existing conservation and energy research programs.

The whole effort that we made in this bill was to find ways that we could get the resources necessary to pay for the research, development, and implementation of alternative energy. There is no question but that we have to grow our supply of energy if we're going to meet the continuing growing demand of this world for energy.

And you can't do that, typically right now, with what we have traditionally known. And certainly we don't want to continue to be dependent on other places in the world and ship our wealth off to other countries.

So what we knew that we could do is to develop something that would give us some short-term benefit to consumers by decreasing the price of gasoline at the pump, decreasing the cost of oil, and in the long term, give us continued independence and a long-term energy policy that would allow us to do the research to grow wind, and water, and solar, and other forms of energy so that we would have not only a growing supply of energy but one that would be cleaner made available to us in a different way. We can grow it rather than always pulling it out of the ground.

Well, our section number 3 of this bill had the plan of modernizing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Right now we have about 700 million barrels of oil, like sweet crude oil, in storage in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and we wanted to propose that 10 percent of

that be taken and turn it into or replace it with a heavy crude which was of a lesser price. And the difference there would generate a profit, if you will, for the people of the United States.

And that money would be dedicated to the research, development, and implementation of a number of different areas of energy sources including advanced research projects, wind energy research, solar energy research, low-income weatherization, low-income home energy assistance program, marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy, advanced research vehicles development, industrial energy efficiency research and development, building/lighting energy efficiency research and development, geothermal energy development, smart grid technology development, nonconventional natural gas production and environmental research, hydrogen research and development, energy storage for transportation and electric power.

And those are the things that we know are some of what we have to do in order to expand our sources of energy.

We have great knowledge. We are a long way on our way toward having the knowledge to be able to implement so many of these different sources of energy and grow our ability to take care of ourselves, be dependent on us, us as America and the United States of America instead of other places in the world.

So it's wonderful when we have the opportunity to come together as colleagues and when we respectfully have discussions, as the one that we're having tonight, to be able to put the ideas that we can discuss, maybe compromise on because there's not everything in this bill that I like. I know there's not everything in this bill that other of my colleagues like.

But I believe it was our Founding Fathers who wanted us not to have polarization and partisanship but to have compromise through debate. That's why this Congress has been the strong body that it has been for so very long.

And to hear such finger pointing that we are not able to get the solutions that we need and want to make America great again, that's what has to end. That's what this coalition is about. That's what this bill is largely about.

I'm proud to be a part of the National Conservation Environment and Energy Independence Act, H.R. 6709. I hope many people will look at it and encourage Members of Congress from all over the country to sign on as cosponsors.

So I thank you, Mr. ROSS, for the work that you're doing with our Blue Dog Coalition, for promoting these energy matters that are so critically important to the people of the United States. And I'm proud to be able to join my colleagues tonight.

I yield back my time.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

And Mr. Speaker, when I committed to doing this hour this evening on our

need for energy, including drilling here at home as well as investing in alternative renewable fuels, I wasn't sure if I would be spending an hour here by myself or not. The reality is that we've got Democrats that keep filing on to the floor of the United States House of Representatives, so many so that we may not be able to get to them all in this hour.

These are Democrats that are demanding a new energy policy for this country, and we can only hope the Republicans will join us in passing one in a bipartisan way. We're here to reach out to the Republicans and say, This is not a Democrat or Republican energy crisis, it's an American energy crisis. Let's solve it together.

I'm pleased now to yield to a brand new Member of Congress, all the way from Mississippi, who's brought a good dose of commonsense and fresh air to Washington with him, and that's my friend TRAVIS CHILDERS.

Mr. CHILDERS. Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

I am pleased to join my fellow Blue Dogs together in a discussion about this energy crisis that America finds itself in.

For far too long, the United States has not had any tangible national energy policy to address our continued dependence on foreign energy sources. As a matter of fact, it was a Democrat in the White House the last time that this country even had an energy policy. His name is Jimmy Carter, and he's still alive and well in the State of Georgia tonight.

It is my belief that we need both immediate and long-term solutions to ease the burden on the citizens of the First Congressional District of Mississippi, the citizens of Mississippi as a whole, and, yes, the people all across this great Nation tonight in the United States, all of us who make up the United States of America, who, on a daily basis, face increasing costs at the gas pump and in their households.

This is a reason that I was proud to be an original cosponsor with my fellow Blue Dog Congressman MIKE ROSS on the American-Made Energy Act of 2008.

And incidentally, I had introduced a six-point energy plan just prior to this, and I realize that many people share my ideas. Many people share my ideas of drilling. Many people share my ideas on America's renewable resources, just as Congressman ROSS did. And in order to move a large portion of my energy plan into law, I was pleased to sign on as a cosponsor to then-recently introduced legislation, the American-Made Energy Act of 2008, H.R. 5437. It has won considerable bipartisan support.

And so much has been said, as has even been said in this hour prior tonight, that just because we're Democrats, we're opposed to drilling. Let me just say this for the record: I'm very much in favor of drilling, and I join many of these fine Blue Dogs tonight who join me in that. And we're pleased

to be a part of that, even though, as the infamous or famous T. Boone Pickens just said, "We can't drill ourselves out of this mess that we've gotten ourselves in, and we didn't get into it overnight."

□ 2145

Across America tonight—please hear me on this—we got into it because we don't have an energy policy. We haven't had an energy policy since the 1980s, really the late 1970s.

As a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, I have been committed to working toward immediate relief to American consumers by supporting legislation in this wonderful body, the United States House of Representatives, that responsibly increases domestic drilling capacity, while holding the oil industry accountable to the enormous profits being collected on a quarterly basis.

I have continually advocated for open drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf of the eastern Gulf of Mexico, along with the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. When I am back home in north Mississippi visiting these small counties and small towns, I routinely tell those crowds that if they find oil in my backyard, they are welcome to put an oil derrick down right behind my house in Booneville, Prentiss County, Mississippi. And if the noise is too much, I will move, but I'm for drilling.

I mentioned above that our energy crisis is not all about short-term or immediate quick fixes. Personal accountability is a huge step toward getting Americans to purchase vehicles that are capable of traveling at ranges that exceed the current CAFE standard which is presently 27.5 miles per gallon.

I introduced legislation before the August break, H.R. 6773, which provides a \$100 tax credit for every mile per gallon a vehicle goes over the nationally mandated fuel economy standard to a family and/or individual who purchases an automobile that qualifies under H.R. 6773.

Let me use, for example, the Prius, Toyota Prius, which I am so pleased to say will be made in a very short time in northeast Mississippi at the intersection of three great counties: Pontotoc, Union and Lee counties. I passed by during the break, and I saw the steel going up. Within a couple of years, Toyota and north Mississippians will be manufacturing a hybrid automobile that presently gets 46 miles per gallon.

Using my numbers and the legislation that I introduced, 46 miles per gallon minus 27.5, which is the present CAFE standard, that's 19.5 miles per gallon that automobile will get over the present CAFE standard. Using my numbers of \$100 per mile per gallon, if you bought an automobile, a Toyota Prius, you will be entitled to a \$1,950 tax credit. I think this is an appropriate step to incentivize Americans to start buying automobiles that are less dependent on foreign oil.

But let me say, it's not just about the Toyota Prius. I'm very pleased and

very proud to say that we're going to be making those Toyotas in north Mississippi, but I want Ford Motor Company to take advantage of that. I want General Motors to take advantage of that. I want Chrysler and Nissan and so forth, I want all of these. It's not just a Toyota thing.

Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I appreciate the opportunity. I am pleased to be a part of this great body. I am further pleased to be part of the Blue Dog Democrats, Democrats who are about the business of fixing the mess that we have gotten ourselves in over a period of almost 30 years. I'm proud to be a member of a body that is willing to take a stand, try to develop an energy policy for this country, one we've not had since the days of Jimmy Carter.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi, and at this time, I will yield to the gentleman from Georgia, DAVID SCOTT, my friend.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you very much, Mr. Ross. Good to be with you again.

I thought I would just start for a few moments on the fact that we are going to vote on a ban to lift the ban on offshore drilling. Democrats are taking the lead and Democrats are moving forward in a very responsible way to take the ban off offshore drilling and drill.

What is important here are two points. One is that we need to make sure—and I understand that we are making sure—that whatever oil we are able to get from offshore drilling stays in America. This is a very tricky maneuver. Right now, as I understand it, all oil goes on the world market, but I do understand that we have the Continental Lands Act, and in that Act of 1953, as amended, it states that all oil that is discovered or pulled out of waters in the United States coastal areas will be American and will stay in America. That's very important.

That's the question that a lot of my constituents want to know, if we go, we get this oil, are we going to be able to keep this oil in America, because fundamentally, that's what's at issue. This is more than just a just basic energy crisis as we've had before. This is a national security issue of the highest regard.

I spent this afternoon for about 3 hours in our Foreign Affairs Committee talking with the Under Secretary of the Secretary of State and discussing the ramifications of Russia invading Georgia and what that was all about, and I hasten to add that this was all about, in many respects, energy and about Russia's position in that.

Europe gets 31 percent of its oil—I mean, we get a lot of ours from foreign sources, but right now, Europe gets 31 percent of its oil and gas from one Nation, Russia. There is a lot at stake that is going on in that part of the world, and underneath it all is oil and gas and energy and who's going to remain in control.

We need to understand that our basic charge is to get American dependent.

So that part of the question has to be answered, and I think we've done that.

The other part is, and I think and I hope in this legislation, as we have worked and crafted—I might add that this legislation that's being crafted that we will vote on before we go back home on many, many sources. We're pulling in many ideas because no one has a monopoly on these ideas. Some of these ideas that we'll be voting on are contained in what the Senate calls the "Gang of 10." That is very important.

But I think one aspect of that—and I've been very supportive of that—is that we will allow four to five States on the eastern seaboard, Georgia being one of them, to decide and opt in to whether they want to drill. We are going to have to come up with what the mileage is offshore, whether it's 3, 5, 10, 50 or 100 miles offshore. But I think we ought to entertain the possibility of allowing it open to every State, that every State may make that choice so that you're not deciding one or the other. Perhaps we will go in that direction, to allow the entirety of America, the United States of America, wherever we can get oil that we can keep, that is American dependent oil, we must do so, and wherever that drilling needs to take place, we must do so. And hopefully, that will be incorporated into the bill.

But we must not stop there. What we have more than any other country, we have the greatest amount of technology. Nobody's smarter than we are. We've got to unleash our technology, our scientists, our chemists, our engineers to go and hurry up and get alternative sources of fuel away from fossil fuels. We can't drill our way out, no matter what it is. There's just so much oil there. We've got to grow our way out of it.

And that's why we hope that this bill will be multifaceted, but drilling will be an important component on it, and we're excited for the future. I think the American people can be proud of what the Congress is about to do.

Mr. ROSS. I appreciate my colleague from Georgia, my dear friend, for working late on a Tuesday night here to help us address this energy crisis facing this country.

And at this time, I'm pleased to yield to another leader of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, my good friend from the State of Tennessee, LINCOLN DAVIS.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Ross.

Certainly, it's always a pleasure to be here to speak when the Blue Dogs have a special session and an opportunity to come and speak before the Members of Congress, as well as the American people. There are some facts that I believe all of us need to know. I think the American people need to know this.

When you look at the oil reserves, the proved oil reserves, that we have in the world, America has about 3 percent. When you look at the actual pro-

duction of the consumption of oil in the world, we produce about 10 percent of the world's consumption. Unfortunately, we consume almost 25 percent of all the production in the world, and in doing that, it makes us almost be a hostage to oil-producing countries.

Now, let's talk a little bit about how much oil that we use. We use over 7.5, almost 8 billion barrels of crude oil a year. We produce about 2.5 billion of that, and the rest we import, mainly from our hemisphere, some small amount from the Middle East, but mostly, from our hemisphere, whether it's Canada, Mexico, Venezuela. Different parts of our hemisphere comes to America.

Now, what does that tell me? If we have got 3 percent of the oil reserves, then we're always going to be held hostage. But where are those reserves located?

They tell us that we've got roughly 150 billion barrels of crude oil in the Outer Continental Shelf. That's the max. Good estimates say we probably have no more than 85 billion barrels of crude oil in the Outer Continental Shelf, add about 10 billion max up in ANWR or about 7.5 billion that we could actually take out of ANWR for a profitable margin for our oil companies.

That being the case, we have a 1-year supply in ANWR. We're hearing from folks who are making this a political issue that we just drill and drill our way out of it.

We import 5 billion barrels of crude oil a year, 5 billion barrels. If we, in fact, have 100 billion barrels of crude oil, which is the estimate that we would have probably in both ANWR, in the Outer Continental Shelf in Alaska, in the Outer Continental Shelf in the Pacific—about 24 billion in the Outer Continental Shelf in Alaska; 20 billion barrels in the Outer Continental Shelf in the Pacific; in the gulf about 44 billion; very little on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf, about 3 to 4 billion barrels; little over 100 billion barrels total. That's a 20-year supply of what we're importing today.

And we will use all that up, and if we have another war, by the time we have to defend ourselves and have the abundance of oil, are we going to go to Saudi Arabia or Iraq or Iran and ask them for oil so we can fight them with it?

I think we have got to look at alternatives more than we have ever looked. Ten years ago, in 1998, the average price of a barrel of oil was \$14 a barrel. Let me rephrase that. Just 10 years ago, \$14 a barrel. Volatile conditions in the world, over-consumption, and in many cases, an unplanned energy policy that will make us totally self-sustainable has not occurred.

I did some research on windmills. From 1850 to 1900 over 6 million windmills were sold in this country. They ground our corn with it to make cornmeal. They ground our wheat to make flour. In some cases, they even used it

for electricity. In 1880, this country had 50 million people in it: 9.5 million families, 8.5 million households. In that 50-year period of time, 6 million windmills. They were smarter than us because we've become dependent on the combustion engine. We've become dependent on foreign sources for our crude oil.

It is time that we take a serious look at all the alternatives, including wind and solar, including nuclear. I'm not sure I'd like to say this. T. Boone Pickens is one of those guys, Mr. Speaker, that helped fund Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. When that guy comes to the Democrat Caucus and says you are on the right track, a staunch Republican, it tells me we are doing something right.

I would love to spend about 20 minutes here.

□ 2200

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for coming out and joining us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, you've heard from Democrats from Texas, Ohio, Mississippi, California, Tennessee, Georgia, and yes, Arkansas. They are Democrats who share a common vision, a common plan to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, to create new jobs here at home, to drill here at home, to take the lease and royalty payments to invest in alternative and renewable fuels which will create new jobs here at home, all of which, of course, will lower the price we pay at the pump.

We invite Republicans to join us. It's H.R. 5437, the American-Made Energy Act. It's a bipartisan bill. I hope Republicans will support it as well as they will support these other bills mentioned this evening.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSS. I would yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. One last word.

This issue demands and requires leadership probably more than any other issue that we've addressed in this Congress, leadership on doing what's right, not fabricating an issue that we can solve it by just drilling our way out of it. It's going to take leadership to give us an energy policy that will sustain America's future.

Mr. ROSS. The gentleman from Tennessee is absolutely correct.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a Democratic energy crisis. We don't have a Republican energy crisis. We've got an American energy crisis, and we're here asking Republicans to join us, the Democrats, in passing a bill that includes drilling here at home and in investing in alternative and renewable fuels. If the Republicans will do that, if they will come to the table and will sit down and will talk to us and with us instead of at us, I promise you, Mr. Speaker, we will pass a commonsense energy plan for America, a plan that will reduce the price we pay at the pump.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of his primary election.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SKELTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SPRATT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFazio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HIGGINS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KAGEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. POE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, September 16.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes, September 16.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, for 5 minutes, September 15.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, today and September 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. BACHUS, for 5 minutes, today and September 10, 11 and 12.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today and September 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today and September 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. WOLF, for 5 minutes, September 10.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, September 10.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.) the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, September 10, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8142. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting draft legislation, "To amend the Packers and Stock-

yards Act, 1921, to provide authority to collect license fees from persons participating in the Packers and Stockyards Programs, and for other purposes"; to the Committee on Agriculture.

8143. A letter from the Under Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Army, Case Number 07-01, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

8144. A letter from the Under Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of the Navy, Case Number 08-01, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

8145. A letter from the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on the amount of purchases from foreign entities for Fiscal Year 2007, pursuant to Public Law 104-201, section 827 (110 Stat. 2611); to the Committee on Armed Services.

8146. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting a report entitled, "OJJDP Annual Report 2005," pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5617; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

8147. A letter from the Assistant Secretary Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, Department of Energy, transmitting a report entitled, "A Preliminary Report on the Potential Impacts of Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles on the U.S. Electric System"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8148. A letter from the Assistant Secretary Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's semi-annual implementation report on energy conservation standards activities, pursuant to Section 141 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8149. A letter from the Chief Operating Officer, Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative and Redefining Progress, transmitting a report entitled, "A Climate of Change: African Americans, Global Warming, and a Just Climate Policy for the U.S."; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8150. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a proposed removal from the United States Munitions list of cancer drugs containing nitrogen mustards, pursuant to section 38(f) of the Arms Control Export Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

8151. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-496, "Health-Care Decisions for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8152. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-494, "Tenant-Owner Voting in Conversion Election Clarification Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8153. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-495, "Department of Transportation Establishment Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8154. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-493, "Animal Protection Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C.