

	Budget authority	Outlays	Revenues
Revised Budget Resolution	2,531,668	2,566,868	2,029,644

⁵ S. Con. Res. 70 assumed \$70,000 million in budget authority and \$74,809 million in outlays for overseas deployment and related activities. Additionally, S. Con. Res. 70 assumed \$5,761 million in budget authority and \$1,152 million in outlays for the Corps of Engineers. P.L. 110-252, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, designated funding for these activities as an emergency requirement, pursuant to section 204(a) of S. Con. Res. 21. Such emergency amounts are exempt from the enforcement of S. Con. Res. 70. Since current level totals exclude the emergency requirements enacted in P.L. 110-252 (see footnote 2), budget authority and outlay totals specified in S. Con. Res. 70 have also been reduced for purposes of comparison.

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office.

Note: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.

REMEMBERING SENATOR JESSE HELMS

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to our friend and former colleague, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. When Senator Helms passed away on the Fourth of July, our country lost a patriot and a strong conservative voice.

Senator Helms' life was about public service. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy, where he first developed his commitment to a strong U.S. military and America's security at home and abroad. He served in a number of public roles in Washington, DC, and in his home State of North Carolina, and in 1972 was elected to the U.S. Senate—a position he held for five consecutive terms.

Senator Helms was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when I came to the Senate in 1996, where I have served for 12 years. As chairman, he consistently maintained a powerful and determined voice in his efforts to strengthen America. I will always be grateful for his many personal courtesies and his constant encouragement and assistance over the 6 years that we worked together.

Senator Helms was outspoken, strong-minded, and unwavering in his beliefs. He was a leader who will be missed. Lilibet and I extend our thoughts and prayers to Jesse's widow and our friend Dot and his wonderful family.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES UPDATE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to update the Senate on the deteriorating situation in California.

Simply put, the situation is untenable.

In the past 2 weeks, 1,781 wildfires have burned roughly 688,000 acres—an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. Today, 323 fires continue to burn including the Camp Fire, in Butte County. As a result of that fire, 14,000 residents have had to evacuate their homes and nearly 50 homes have been destroyed in the past 48 hours.

It is likely to get worse—with a heat wave and more lightning strikes forecast—just as State and Federal resources are being depleted.

Governor Schwarzenegger has told the Federal Government that California cannot continue to fight these fires—that with current resources the State cannot protect lives and property.

California needs the following: Personnel: The Governor needs 302 more hand crews to put on the front lines and 773 support personnel. The State

has tapped out its resources; it is time for the Federal Government to step up to the plate.

And the Forest Service is also short on staff. Key supervisors and firefighters are missing from our national parks, hampering firefighting and brush clearing efforts. Last month the agency reported 380 vacancies in California—roughly 8.5 percent out of a total force of 4,432. These positions must be filled. Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey promised me these vacancies would be filled by July 8. But as of today only 289 positions have been filled. We need to do more.

A Full Emergency Declaration: Governor Schwarzenegger has declared emergencies in 11 counties: Butte, Trinity, Shasta, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Monterey, Mendocino, Santa Cruz, Plumas, Kern, and Mariposa. But President Bush has issued only a limited emergency declaration. California is asking the President for a full disaster declaration, which will open the State to broader assistance under the Stafford Act. I fully endorse this request.

Funding: California's fire emergency is burning up Federal firefighting dollars at an alarming rate. The Forest Service has already expended \$704 million—more than half the \$1.2 billion in available funds—and fire season has just begun. Therefore, I am asking for \$910 million in emergency appropriations for the Forest Service and Interior Department.

This emergency funding, to be used throughout the United States as needed this year, includes: \$610 million for wildfire suppression; \$125 million for fuels reduction on State and private lands; \$100 million for rehabilitation; \$50 million for fuels reduction on Federal lands; and \$25 million for firefighter recruitment and retention in high risk areas.

Air assets: The Governor has told President Bush that we need an additional 41 helicopters in California. I am committed to working with the President to make these aircraft available from other States, the military, or foreign nations. Whatever it takes, we need these resources.

We also need to permanently station military firefighting aircraft in California. It is increasingly clear to me that the key to these wildfires in remote geographic areas is immediate aerial assault on the fires. You cannot get firefighters into these areas fast enough. Earlier this year I asked the President and Defense Secretary Robert Gates to permanently station two C-130 tankers at Point Mugu. This is vital; several C-130s are working these fires today, but they had to travel

great distances to get to California. This is unacceptable.

I am writing to the President again to renew this critical request.

Let me share with you a letter written by Henry Renteria, Director of Governor Schwarzenegger's Office of Emergency Services, to R. David Paulison, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

It says in part:

We are in an unprecedented draw-down in the state's emergency resources. Many fire departments are barely able to maintain sufficient resources for initial attack on new structure fires, while still participating in the statewide mutual aid effort to address these wildfires.

Even with the assistance of more than 24,000 firefighters from 40 States, "California has outstanding orders for fire resources that it is unable to fill," the letter states.

Yesterday there were requests for 230 engines that went unfilled, and at one point last week there were requests for 400 crews of 15-20 firefighters that were not met.

The Governor's letter continues:

California is in the untenable position of having orders for firefighting resources remaining unfilled for multiple days. The Governor has taken the extraordinary action this week to direct the training of 400 California National Guard soldiers in basic firefighting. These soldiers will be assigned to the firefight as quickly as they can be trained and equipped.

Mr. Renteria—again, the Governor's authorized representative—concludes by warning that "the cumulative impact of these disasters has exhausted state and local resources to the point in which California cannot avert threat to live and improved property adequately."

This is without question a clear and present threat to the largest State in the Nation.

California is on the precipice of a major catastrophe. California has spent more than \$300 million fighting these fires—that is more than it spent on last year's firestorms. And this is only the second week of July.

Let me remind you of what the fall brings to southern California. It brings strong Santa Ana winds, which fuel massive and deadly firestorms: In 2003 in California, huge wildfires burned roughly 1 million acres; killed 21; and destroyed more than 5,000 homes. And last year in California, wildfires blackened 1,087,110 acres; killed 10; and destroyed 3,079 structures.

We are in a new and dangerous time.

The great bulk of the fires that have burned since last month—more than 1,000—were sparked by more than 8,000 dry lightning strikes.

California is now faced with dry lightning strikes at a level that I cannot remember in my lifetime. And more are forecast this week.

The State is also facing extreme heat. Across the State, nearly in every county, there are excessive heat warnings.

And the State is in the midst of a serious drought—Governor Schwarzenegger has declared a drought emergency.

The State's reservoirs are below normal, and drought has produced record amounts of dry brush. In many areas, there is more dry brush than at any point in the 27-year recorded history of the data.

This dry brush is like an unexploded bomb.

Last month—the halfway point of the year—more than 272,969 acres in California had burned. That's up from 42,214 acres burned at the same point last year. And up from the 5-year average of 30,938 acres burned on State land at that time of year.

The facts are clear and cannot be ignored. California is in great peril. And California's peril is the Nation's peril, for the costs of fighting these fires is fast draining our Federal firefighting resources.

Bottom line: California and the Nation need help now. A potentially record-breaking fire season is upon us. We need to do more. We need to prepare. And we need to do it now.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

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

To whom it concerns:

Here's how rising gas and diesel prices are affecting this Idahoan and her family:

We are a one-income (plus overtime) middle-income family living in Boise. The huge increase in fuel prices has caused subsequent increases in the price of consumer goods (due to price increases for fuel to manufacture, transport, and deliver consumer goods). Thus, our entire cost of living has increased at a rate higher than that of my husband's annual raise. Our standard of living is dropping,

regardless of his continued raises, and we are having to cut corners from our budget, in every direction.

Due to our sons' disabilities, it has been imprudent for me to work full time. However, in light of the growing costs of living due to fuel costs skyrocketing, I will most likely need to return to work this year, NOT to purchase hobby equipment or upgrade our vehicle, but to continue to make our mortgage payment and to EAT PROPERLY.

To our Congress: PLEASE STOP OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN FUELS. We're lining the pockets of oil-rich nations while stealing the quality of life from our own citizens.

Nuclear energy is NOT the way to go, in my opinion. The dangerous waste by-products of nuclear-generated power are not worth the savings in costs of energy to our citizens. There are many other methods to generate energy for homes and businesses (and vehicles) that are cleaner, renewable, and completely non-polluting, such as solar energy; wind energy; hydro-electric energy (why not let all the dams in our state run at full capacity rather than leave one or two turbines unused most of the time, and STORE the excess energy we generate to keep our costs down, or sell it to profit our state's economy); and the transformation of our society's garbage into usable, non-polluting hydrogen fuel for vehicles that run on hydrogen.

There are always local (American) solutions to local (American) problems.

TERESA, Boise.

I should think it would be obvious to all sentient beings by now that we are on the wrong trajectory. The notion that we can consume more and more each year without some FUNDAMENTAL changes is wrong. I search your words in vain for ideas about something new. No luck. Same old mindset. What about conservation of finite resources? What about alternative energy resource development? The large and very profitable oil companies benefit enormously from tax breaks. Where is the policy incentive for non-polluting alternate forms of energy? Where are the incentives to promote more efficient use of the old sources? Pull your head from the sand. It is high time you realized a new era is upon us.

CRISTINA.

To Whom It May Concern,

Fuel costs are killing the average citizen in Idaho. It is bad enough that the price of getting to work is costing more than many can afford, but the prices in the grocery stores are also rising exponentially as the cost of shipping skyrockets and the cost of running farm equipment to produce the food skyrockets. To make things worse, Congress, once again with good intentions but not a clue of the damage they would do, are adding to the situation with the ridiculous bio-fuels subsidies. Bio-fuels are horribly inefficient, but the cost of corn to feed dairy cattle and fatten beef cattle is becoming unaffordable. To make things worse, these terrible incentives to plow up hay fields and raise corn is leaving livestock owners unable to buy hay. Horses are being turned loose or shot by owners who cannot get or afford hay to feed them. Once again the bloated farm bill is putting billions of dollars into the hands of a few farming corporations while small farmers and livestock owners are left to struggle against high fuel and feed costs created by Congress. PLEASE repeal these stupid restrictions on oil exploration and refining, as well as that awful subsidy on bio-fuels. They are counterproductive and just plain stupid.

PAT, Priest River.

Dear Senator Crapo,

High gas and energy prices are affecting everyone negatively but I would rather respond to the second part of your email.

Americans are not "too dependent on petroleum," as you said; we are just too dependent on *foreign* petroleum. We can thank Mr. Clinton and subsequent leaders and legislators for the predicament we find ourselves in today. They have caved in to the "environmentalists", a very small percentage of Americans, and not allowed us to provide for our own oil needs. These foolish politicians have put us and our economy in a very precarious position.

We need to pursue nuclear power and domestic drilling and refining of petroleum and take control of providing for our needs instead of relying on foreign volatile suppliers. If Congress would pass just one piece of legislation to allow us to drill and supply our own oil, our foreign suppliers would drop prices immediately in fear that we will completely cut them out of the loop someday. We do not need to continue any "food for fuel" programs as you can see what that has done to our economy and the food shortage in other parts of the world.

Finally, please inform others in Congress that our country is a capitalistic society and that oil companies deserve to profit for the risks they take and the product they supply to Americans. If anybody has received a "windfall" it is the federal, and to a lesser degree state, government which receives undeserved profits. They receive much more money from the sale of gas in our country than the oil companies and they have not done one thing for the money they get for each gallon sold. The latest figures I have read were that oil companies average 4 percent of profit from each gallon sold while taxes account for 16 percent of each gallon sold.

Please understand that I am angered by this situation but that anger is in no way directed at you. You have done a fine job representing the views of us conservative Republicans in Idaho. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

ROBYN.

Dear Senator,

I'm a fan of yours, as is my wife. We both have been registered Democrats all our lives, but in the mid-term election of 2006, we both re-registered as Independents so as to distance ourselves from our party, as they seem to have gone off the deep end. I remember when Democrats were proud Americans. And though there are a few of us left, most of the party of Rosie O'Donnell, Michael Moore, Al Franken, and certain Senators and Congressmen (and women) are little more than Socialists. And that is giving them the benefit of the doubt. My wife and I both voted for Reagan, by the way, and we will vote Republican till we see a difference in the far left that has taken over our party. Who knows? We may be registered Republicans before too long.

Enough about our distaste for the Democrat Party of today, except to say that it seems voting on issues such as this go down party lines, with even a few Republicans taking the wrong side on issues such as energy, illegal immigration, and homeland security which I consider to be one and the same.

We know there are many billions of barrels of crude off our shores, but the Democrats keep us from drilling. There is even more possibly in the Dakotas and Montana, not to mention the shale oil out here in the West and the coal-to-oil or coal-to-gas technology. All we have to do is start drilling and build more refineries and the price of oil from OPEC will drop drastically! I dropped out of college, but I know this, so Washington should too. I do not know what is up with