

pay another \$105 for gasoline—and, in fact, according to the Cato Institute, electric bills have doubled in 5 years because of primarily increased energy costs—is that not a factor why a lot of people are not able to pay their mortgages? Well, I think it is. However, there are some who are so determined to fight fossil fuels that even though they are not able to stop the importing of oil into America that we burn in our automobiles, they have been successful in blocking America from producing its own. We do it cleaner and safer and protect the environment to a far greater degree than I would think any country in the world, except maybe the people in Europe who are doing it in the North Sea, which is a rougher, more dangerous area to produce oil than off our gulf.

I ask: How have we gotten ourselves in this predicament? When the great party—the great Democratic Party which has the majority in the Senate and a majority in the House of Representatives—is called upon to respond to a national crisis where the price of oil is surging and American pocketbooks are being drained every month, they propose the only bill we have now on the floor, which is a bill that is going to deal with speculation. I don't think that is good enough. I think it is not the fundamental values of most of our colleagues—Democratic or Republican.

I am prepared to look very hard with all of my colleagues in a bipartisan way to consider how we can produce more than just fossil fuels, more than oil and gas and coal and those things. Let's look at the biofuels. Let's look at solar. Let's look at wind. Wind is coming around. Wind is becoming more feasible today than we have seen it. The Government has a big subsidy in wind and that has encouraged the wind people to produce lots and lots of energy, but it is not the most reliable source of energy. Electricity, that is what it produces—electricity, not oil for our gasoline, for our car engines. I am prepared to consider other things.

Why have we created a system in America in which 97 percent of our automobiles burn gasoline, whereas in Europe 50 percent of the cars are diesel? We have new clean diesel technology today. Diesel engines get 35 to 40 percent better gas mileage than our gasoline engines. Can you imagine that, 35 to 40 percent better gas mileage. It is actually better. According to Popular Mechanics, it gets better gas mileage than a hybrid engine. Why don't we go back to more diesel energy and work in that way? I am seeing in my home State several facilities that are coming on line that I believe will soon prove we can take waste wood product and convert it to a liquid fuel that we can burn in our automobiles. Ethanol—or biodiesel, which is even better fuel than ethanol—and we can do it well below the world price of gasoline. I have my fingers crossed. I believe that is going to happen. I have

been looking at that closely and I have supported the efforts that will promote that.

About 5 percent of the fuel we utilize in automobiles is ethanol, which comes primarily from corn. The next step is to use wood, particularly waste wood products that are left in the woods after sawn logs are cut. Wood is taken out of cities that you have to pay to landfill and it becomes a waste product. Paper, automobile tires, all of this can be converted to fuel and maybe we can get that up to 10, 12, 15 percent of our supply on biofuels.

We are also excited about the possibility of plug-in hybrid automobiles. These are automobiles that have a hybrid engine, but you plug them in at night, you charge your battery from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. when the grid has a low demand on it, charge your battery, and be able to drive back and forth to work. The goal is 40 miles without ever using a drop of gasoline, all electricity coming out of the grid. It is clean, more cleanly produced, more friendly to the environment, and reduces our dependence on foreign oil because our electricity is all American produced.

Finally, let me not ignore what I believe has perhaps the greatest potential for America and the world environmentally and economically, and that is nuclear power. We have 104 nuclear powerplants in America today. They produce about 20 percent of all electricity. Not a single American in the 40 years we have been producing electric power has died as a result of a nuclear accident—not one. It has continued to be more and more efficient. In fact, right now the cost is as low as any source of energy we have.

I say to my colleagues, we are getting to a point now where the lines between electricity and automobile transportation are being blurred. Energy is energy. We will be able to transform electricity into a power source to turn the wheels of our vehicles and that will be a tremendous advance. If that electricity is produced at a very cost-effective rate by nuclear power that emits not one bit of CO₂ into the atmosphere, that emits no pollutants into the atmosphere—you only have this small amount of nuclear waste that I believe should be reprocessed.

Senator DOMENICI and I have offered legislation to do that, but the amount of waste that is now being produced is still very small in size. Every bit of it in the United States can be placed on one football field and not too many feet deep. It is not a problem that can't be solved, and it doesn't blow up. You have to reprocess it or put it away from people so it doesn't damage anyone or the environment.

I think we are heading in the right direction. I believe our Nation is getting its feet on the ground. I think the American people know—they know, they are not going to be fooled; they have no misconceptions—the way to contain the growth in the price of en-

ergy is to reduce our demand by conservation and increase our supply, and it will help our economy dramatically if the increase in supply is American energy, not imported energy. Those ought to be our goals. We can do that. We can reduce CO₂. We can use more biofuels. We can use more clean nuclear power. As a result, this economy can continue to function and be the envy of the world.

I note it should never, ever be a policy of our country to drive up the price of energy. Low-cost energy is a wonderful event for the world. It is one of the great things about this Nation. We have had relatively low-cost energy for many years. I was flabbergasted when one of the Presidential candidates, Senator OBAMA, said he wasn't worried so much that the price was going up, it just went up faster than people liked. That is not what I think is good policy. Our policy should be to take the steps now. Even if they take 5, 10, or 20 years to come to a reality, that will help ensure this surge in price does not continue; that we can maintain our American independence so we are not held hostage by foreign powers, this unprecedented transfer of wealth will end, and we can fight pollution and continue to clean up our environment.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

GAS PRICES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, America faces a great many challenges today, particularly with regard to our economy, but none greater than our dangerous dependence upon foreign oil.

I have come to the floor several times in the past few months to talk about what I call the "terrorism tax." The terrorism tax is the transfer of wealth outside of this country to import billions of barrels of foreign oil. A substantial portion of American dollars spent on foreign oil goes to countries that wish to do us harm.

This year, with regard to oil prices, the terrorism tax will total \$700 billion. That \$700 billion could have been used to pay for health care, groceries, or alternative forms of domestic energy. That \$700 billion terrorism tax is more than the annual budget of the Department of Defense and is four times the annual cost of the war in Iraq.

The record high price of gas has been hurting American families and benefitting foreign adversaries for way too long. It is now the No. 1 issue on consumers' minds, and the Senate has been debating this issue for months. However, the Senate has failed to act on reasonable provisions to address historically high energy prices.

Variable and oftentimes unpredictable forces impact cyclical gas prices. However, over the long run, increasing supply while decreasing demand will moderate, if not lower, gas prices for American consumers. The very simple equation is to produce more and to use less.

A comprehensive national energy policy that is focused on finding more energy while using less will put us on the path toward affordable and reliable energy.

Recently, the President made a historic announcement that he ended the Executive moratorium on Outer Continental Shelf energy exploration. Congress cannot wait another day to follow suit by lifting the congressional moratorium as well. This outdated moratorium is blocking access to offer 18 billion gallons of proven reserves in the Outer Continental Shelf. In addition to the proven reserves, an estimated 86 billion gallons of undiscovered reserves exist off of our shores, 85 percent of which is still off limits. Congress should give coastal States the right to explore for oil and natural gas more than 50 miles off their shores.

Another promising area for domestic production is the development of oil and natural gas in section 10-02 of the Alaska Wilderness Wildlife Refuge. Congress authorized production in this remote area of Alaska's North Slope over 12 years ago. If it hadn't been vetoed by the Clinton administration, the United States would have an additional 1 million barrels of domestic production each and every day. One of the objections that gets raised by those who oppose exploration on the North Slope of Alaska is something that has been used for a long time: It would take 5 or 10 years to bring that energy on line. That is an old and tired argument. Evidence of that is when it becomes the punchline on the Jay Leno show. Jay Leno himself, in a monolog, has made that very same observation—that the argument being used today by our political leaders to avoid having to deal with this issue of developing some of our domestic resources is that it would take 5 or 10 years to develop. That is the very same argument that was made by political leaders over a decade ago.

It is important that we get past that argument, that we deal with the issue of our dangerous dependence upon foreign countries for our energy supply, and that we do so by developing the resources we have here at home, including the 6 to 16 billion barrels we know exist on the North Slope of Alaska.

In addition to the traditional sources of oil and gas, unconventional sources of oil are an important solution to our

energy crisis as well. Coal to liquids and oil shale in Western States and oil sands in Canada are abundant supplies of fuel and should be fully developed to meet our growing energy needs. Unfortunately, Congress is once again standing in the way of domestic energy production.

The United States has an estimated 2 trillion barrels of oil shale in Western States—more than three times the reserves of Saudi Arabia. Unbelievably, politicians here in Washington are keeping this resource off limits.

As we continue to debate this issue, American energy companies stand ready to invest billions of dollars to make oil shale production economical and environmentally sound. This investment remains stifled since Congress is prohibiting the rules for such production from moving forward.

In addition to oil and natural gas, the Federal Government needs to stand by its commitment to renewable energy.

According to Merrill Lynch:

Biofuels are making up a huge portion of oil supply growth.

Biofuels are now the single largest contributor to world oil supply growth.

As biofuel production increases, our infrastructure to transport and use this fuel must increase as well. Congress has to break the monopoly of oil on the U.S. economy by investing in renewable fuel dedicated pipelines, biofuel refueling stations, and by requiring the production of flex fuel vehicles. Approximately 7 million flex fuel vehicles are on the road today. This is significant progress from a few years ago, and American automakers deserve to be applauded for their dedication to biofuels. However, millions of vehicles are still being produced and purchased without the flex fuel option.

That means the vast majority of Americans have no choice but to pull up to the pump and fill up on traditional gasoline at whatever price the oil company wishes to charge. In this sense, there is virtually no competition in our transportation fuel marketplace. Congress should also continue to promote the use of hybrid vehicles and create incentives for plug-in electric hybrids, which will lessen the use of gasoline and diesel fuel.

Finally, we should enact moderate reforms and reasonable reforms to limit excessive speculation. Non-commercial investors are playing a historically high role in all commodities, including oil futures. Many analysts say this is adding a premium to the price of oil, which does not reflect the fundamentals of supply and demand. Congress needs to take commonsense steps to limit excessive speculation, without overreacting. Any overreaction will simply move trading overseas to markets with less transparency and oversight.

It is important to note that regulation alone is not going to bring down the price of gas. We need a comprehensive plan that includes all promising solutions to our energy crisis.

I want to make one observation, as well, regarding this issue of speculation, because I know a bill has been filed, and cloture was filed on a motion to proceed to legislation that would be a speculation response, or answer, to the energy crisis in this country. Frankly, I may vote for it. I haven't seen all of the details of it. I understand from people who are close to it that a lot of it is good—about 80 percent, and 20 percent might be things I won't like. I might be willing to vote for something like that, but it cannot be that alone. That is a minimalist solution and we don't have a minimalist problem. This is a problem that demands a major and comprehensive solution and attention from the Congress that includes not only addressing that issue—the narrow issue of speculation—but also the important issue of domestic production, increasing our supply, increasing the production of energy in this country, and also looking at ways to reduce our demand.

With regard to the issue of speculation, I want to read from an op ed in the Wall Street Journal by Martin Feldstein, back on July 1. This is what it says:

Now here is the good news. Any policy that causes the unexpected future oil price to fall can cause the current price to fall, or to rise less than it would otherwise do. In other words, it is possible to bring down today's price of oil with policies that will have their physical impact on oil demands or supply only in the future. For example, increases in government subsidies to develop technology that will make future cars more efficient, or tighter standards that gradually improve the gas mileage of the stock of cars would lower the future demand for oil and therefore the price of oil today.

Similarly, increasing the expected future supply of oil would also reduce today's price. That fall in the current price would induce an immediate rise in oil consumption that would be matched by an increase in supply from the OPEC producers and others with some current excess capacity or available inventories. Any steps that can be taken now to increase the future supply of oil, or reduce the future demands for oil in the U.S., or elsewhere, can therefore lead both to lower prices and increased consumption today.

The best thing we can be doing for American consumers is not a narrow minimalist response to the narrow issue of speculation but one that addresses the fundamental issue of supply and demand, because that drives marketplace prices. I believe if the world market believes we in the Congress are serious about addressing that issue—the fundamental issue of supply and demand—it will be reflected in those future prices. That isn't to say we should not have a solution that addresses the issue of speculation as well.

I am for a number of ideas being proposed. I think we need to have more cops on the beat. We need to authorize increased funding and staff for the CFTC, and I think we need to require the CFTC to gather information on index traders and swap dealers, to codify position limits and transparency for foreign boards of trade. Those are reforms that I think are important to address in any comprehensive energy bill.

But you cannot address the narrow issue of speculation and expect to impact, in the long term, the dangerous dependence we have on foreign sources of energy. We could address the issue of speculation, but what does that do to affect the basic fact that every single day we get 60 percent of our oil from outside the United States? We use 20 million barrels a day in the United States, or about 24 percent of the world demand, and about 12 million barrels of that, or 60 percent, comes from outside of the United States. That is not a sustainable place to be for a country that is worried about the impact high gas prices are having on its economy, and the impact it could have on our economy in the future if we don't address that dependence upon foreign energy.

We have to have production, and I think the American people get this. I think the American people are interested in this issue of speculation. I think they believe there is a role that plays in the price of oil and the price of a gallon of gasoline. I also think they understand we cannot solve the problem we have in this country absent addressing the issue of domestic production.

Increasing our domestic supply, reducing domestic demand—that is how we go about solving, in the long term, an issue or addressing a problem I think will affect the economy for years to come and make future generations of Americans continue to be held over a barrel by countries around the world that are hostile to the United States.

We cannot address the issue of energy by this bill alone. As I said, I am open to supporting and voting for the bill that is going to be introduced that addresses speculation, but that cannot be it. If that is all we do, we have done very little to address the long-term problem we have, and that problem is that we get 60 percent of our energy from outside the United States. You cannot say no to domestic production. You cannot say no to offshore production. You cannot say no to oil shale. You cannot say no to coal to liquids. You cannot say no to nuclear or to new refineries. You cannot say no to all those things that would help increase our domestic supply and affect that calculation, that basic equation of supply and demand, which is absolutely disastrous for the economy of this country.

I have traveled my State, as most Members of Congress do, on a regular basis. I had a number of meetings over the Fourth of July break where I met with people who are impacted by energy. I met this morning with corn growers who are in town, and also with agriculture and the tourism industry—all of those types of small business interests, people who are impacted, and families who are impacted by the high cost of gasoline. In my view, there is probably no bigger issue in the short term, and no bigger issue in the long term, that impacts the American economy and that could do more harm to

that economy than this issue of high gas prices and the dangerous dependence we have on foreign sources of energy. We cannot solve it by saying no. We have to say yes to additional domestic production, yes to conservation measures that will use less energy, yes to renewables and biofuels, and yes to addressing this issue of speculation.

We need a comprehensive approach, not a rifle shot that deals with one aspect of it but doesn't solve the fundamental problem we have, and that is the fact that in every single State we pay a terrorism tax to countries outside the United States.

There is \$700 billion of wealth this year that we will shift outside of the United States and pay to other countries around the world—in many ways, petro-dictators—a “terrorism tax,” because we have to get energy from them. They set the price and we pay it.

Until we change that fundamental calculation and dynamic, we are going to continue to see high gas prices and high oil prices. And that is not something this economy can withstand. It is certainly not fair to the American people for us to sit by and not take serious, meaningful action.

When the markets recognize we are serious, I believe we will see relief for the American people on the price of a gallon of gasoline and the price for a barrel of oil. That is why we need a comprehensive solution.

When this debate gets joined in the next week and following week, I am going to do everything I can to see that it is not addressing just one narrow issue but addresses this issue of production, addresses the issue of demand. That is the only way, in my view, that we will solve this problem.

I look forward to that debate. I hope we have opportunities to offer amendments. I hope it is not going to be one of those deals where the tree gets filled and we do not have a chance to vote on meaningful solutions to our energy crisis. The Senate needs to be heard. All of us need to have an opportunity to offer amendments and have them voted on, and I hope the process will allow for that.

I yield back the remainder of my time. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I have also come to the floor to speak about the direction I believe our country needs to move to lower gas prices and decrease our dangerous dependency on oil from places in this world that do not share our values and are not friendly, safe places to operate.

I wish to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague, the good Senator from South Dakota. I have been very pleased to work with him in a group of five Democrats and five Republicans. We hope to expand our group as there is more interest in trying to find a centrist approach, a common-sense center core that can move us away from saying no to saying yes in a

smart way, yes to more production—not everywhere but in certain places where we believe there are reserves of oil and gas that our country most certainly needs, in a safe environmental way that can protect our coasts.

I know that issue is very sensitive to you, Mr. President. You have spoken eloquently about that on the floor, and you have made some excellent points, as other Senators. I know the Senator from New Jersey was here earlier today, and there have been Senators from different coastal communities.

I am not insensitive to the needs of coastal communities. I represent one myself. We might not have the beaches that Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and New Jersey have, but we do have very special coastal areas that we also want to keep clean and pristine because of our fishing, because of our boating, and because of our other recreational sports that involve more than just sitting or playing on a beach. We do a lot of water activity, and we need that water to be clean and pristine. So we are not unaware of those challenges.

My colleague who just spoke is absolutely correct. Not only he but others have talked about the importance of saying yes, and this morning in a bipartisan energy summit conducted by the Democratic chairman, Chairman BINGAMAN, and the ranking member, Ranking Member DOMENICI, Daniel Yergin, who is the chairman of the Cambridge Energy Research Association, had a great deal of wisdom to share with us. I think, Mr. President, you were at that hearing. There were many good, insightful comments made. Statements were made this morning that could help guide us to a more secure approach.

One that stuck with me—I am going to paraphrase it because I don't have his quote. He said something along the lines of it has taken us 20 years to get into this tight oil market, and it is going to take us some time to get out, but there is a way out. He said it is imperative that we increase our supply of oil in the world, and particularly for the United States since we are consuming so much of it, and there are many places that production can be found and improved.

He went on to say: We have made some real progress in conservation, but, of course, we have to do more.

Again, we have been saying no for 20 years—no to this refinery, no to producing here, lawsuit after lawsuit, actions that shut down production. We must begin to say yes. Twenty years of saying no, and I am not leaving this, of course, at the doorstep of only Democrats, which is what some of our friends on the other side want, to blame just the Democrats. The Republicans have been in charge of this Congress for the majority of those years. Now they are claiming they were the ones saying yes all along. No, it was their Congresses that were saying no.

But this is not about blaming Democrats or Republicans. This is about

starting all of us to say, yes, we can; yes, we can get prices down; yes, we can make America more energy independent.

I would like to correct something I said the other day that is not true, and I am very sorry because I was not clear, but I am clear now.

I came to the Senate floor with this chart and said that all of these light blue places represented moratoria areas. While it is true for the lower 48, all of this entire west coast is off production, the eastern Gulf of Mexico under Alabama and next to Florida is off production, for the most part, with very few exceptions, with wells here. All of this area on the east coast is off limits to production.

I also said Alaska was off limits to production, and that is not true. This was changed very recently, and Alaska has now opened up, not ANWR, which is this little tiny point which is so hard to see on this map, but the rest of Alaska has opened up. I am going to show another chart that describes it a bit better.

This is a more accurate chart, and it is up to date. Again, I apologize, but that was an old chart. This is all off limits. Everything on the west coast is off limits and has been for decades. All of this area on the east coast, except for this blue diamond, is off limits by executive and congressional moratoria. The President has lifted his moratoria. He has lifted the executive moratoria, but the congressional moratoria still remain.

The place that has been the most open—and we are very proud of this in Louisiana and Texas—is the gulf. This is the western gulf, this is the central gulf, and this is the eastern gulf. The reason the eastern gulf is a different color than the rest of the chart is because this moratoria was extended actually under an agreement that was made on the Senate floor—and I was part of that action—to extend this moratoria longer than the moratoria on the east and west coasts.

The west and east coast moratoria are year-to-year moratoria. They are done in the Interior bill, and they have been routinely passed year to year. The eastern gulf moratoria is in law, and it extends until 2022.

Alaska is now basically opened, these blue sections. It is going to be very hard for people to realize this because it is really shocking to me, and I look at this all the time, but this dot approximately right here, this little dot right here is ANWR. This dot is what we fight over really, let me say—we fight over this little dot. Here is a whole State with lots of opportunities, and yet every discussion for the last 20 years has been about this little dot.

I know that little dot has a lot of oil and gas in it, and I voted to open it. But I am to the point now where we have to stop talking about ANWR and start thinking about other places in and around ANWR—with the help of our Senators from Alaska, who are

very knowledgeable and very good on this issue, Senator TED STEVENS and Senator LISA MURKOWSKI—where we can get oil and gas in places that are not so remote where the infrastructure exists to move this gas from Alaska, which sits up north, to the lower 48, either by pipeline or by tanker to get oil safely to us.

There are benefits to drilling in Alaska. There are not many people there to aggravate. There are only 500,000, and people in Alaska, like people in Louisiana, want to have oil and gas drilling. They believe in using their natural resources, whether it is oil and gas or trees. We believe in actually cutting a lot of our trees because they grow back. We don't believe in cutting old, primitive forests and special places, but we actually believe that cutting trees and growing them back helps provide the good products we need, and we know how to manage our forests.

Alaska is a lot like Louisiana. We could find oil and gas here. And there is a lot of it. The problem is the transportation and the infrastructure, and there are some risks associated with moving oil through tankers. There is always a risk associated with long pipelines. We have that same infrastructure in the gulf where we have pipelines coming up from Louisiana.

I would like to show what some of this infrastructure actually looks like so people get an understanding when we talk about opening areas to drill. This is the kind of infrastructure that it takes to actually get it done.

This is a picture of the Gulf of Mexico. This is the tip of Louisiana and the coast of Texas and Mississippi. This is Mobile Bay, and this is the Florida panhandle, and it goes down. This pipeline, as the Presiding Officer knows, is a pipeline that is laid under the gulf to move gas to Florida from Mobile Bay because the eastern gulf is closed right now to production. But yet Florida has great need for gas, and the good people of Alabama send it to the people of Florida. There was a lot of controversy about this pipeline. There were people in Alabama, even Members of Congress, who said: Why send the gas to Florida? Let them drill their own gas. That is not part of this debate today, but it is a good question. There are answers to it. It is an interesting discussion.

These are pipelines, every one end is a rig or at least a well. These platforms are large. They are very deep. They are almost like skyscrapers out in the gulf. You cannot see them from the shore. This is invisible to the naked eye. You don't really see this. If you are in a boat, plane, or swimming, it is all subsea.

This is a picture of the network of pipelines required to move millions of barrels of oil from the ocean to people. If you took a snapshot onshore of where there is production in Wyoming or Utah or Colorado or New Mexico, you would see much the same thing—a maze of pipelines and wells—because it takes more than waving a magic wand

for the oil to jump out of the ground and into people's tanks. There are a lot of steps that have to go into it.

So part of opening the OCS and opening more onshore is you want to open it in places that it is likely for the industry to reach and to have people—because even though robots are doing a lot of this work, we need people to show up on the rigs to build the platforms. That is why I fought so hard for money to come from these activities. When people tell me and some of my colleagues say, But, Senator, this resource belongs to the United States of America; why should Louisiana share any of these resources, I say, because Louisiana is the platform for oil and gas production, just like Texas. And with all due respect to the United States of America, the United States could not access these resources if we did not allow these resources to be accessed and then brought through our shores for distribution.

There is the distribution pipeline. It doesn't just affect Louisiana, it affects the entire country. I am going to show you the gas distribution system. This is not an oil distribution system, this is gas. All of the manufacturers in the Midwest and on the east coast need natural gas. There are very few places they can get it. They get it basically from the Gulf of Mexico. This is the trunk, in real terms, of how much gas there is. It says 6.4 billion cubic feet from the Gulf of Mexico production. The other big trunk comes from Alaska, and there is potential gas in Canada. This comes from Alaska. Basically, that is it. This is where the gas comes from.

So when prices of natural gas are high, it is because there is only a limited source in America, and we are not opening gas reserves where there might be more here, there might be some more here, and obviously there are more in Alaska. So that is just an example. But as you can see, the production in the Gulf of Mexico doesn't just benefit the people in Louisiana and Mississippi. Without it, you couldn't keep lights on in this Chamber or in New York or Chicago and other places that are very important.

I wanted to clarify that most of the OCS is off limits. Most of the OCS is off limits, and while you see lots of posters and pictures, and everybody is trying to move the numbers to justify their position, the fact is that in the lower 48—not counting Alaska, Alaska is not on here—less than 19 percent of the OCS is open to development, less than 19 percent. All of this is off limits, this is off limits, and this is off limits. The only area we can drill is here.

I would like to read this number here: It is 33 billion barrels of oil here on this side of the gulf. When people say there is no more oil in America, it is because we are not looking for it. There is plenty of oil onshore and offshore, not counting the oil we could actually get from coal—coal-to-liquids technology, clean—and not counting

the oil we could potentially get from shale, which is boiling the rock into a liquid and producing the oil, which could be billions of barrels.

I agree with Senator SALAZAR that the technology is not quite there yet, and maybe it is going to be too much of a drain on the water supply in the West. Perhaps it might be a very serious environmental problem. But we don't know. I think we should find out. That is my point. We don't know, but we need to find out because one day we may need to boil that rock, and if we need to, we need to figure out how to do it.

There is plenty of oil here. But when people say "the science," trust me, if there is a scientist in America who wants to come anywhere around Washington to say there is no oil because they have explored it, I will debate them until my last breath, because we have not looked. There has been some seismic—not a lot of seismic—and the technology is so improved now that we can be much more certain of where oil and gas is. Just to say there are 33 billion barrels of oil here and then to jump to the conclusion that there is no oil here, that there has to be no oil here and no oil here, is really defying common sense.

I will end with this, Mr. President. Do we need to do more than produce? Yes, we do. Just increasing production is not the answer, but it is a step that must be taken. We are too great a nation to, every time prices hit \$5, send a little piddling letter over to countries such as Saudi Arabia begging and pleading, as if we are some second-rate power, asking them to increase their oil production when we won't increase it at home. It is not right. We must increase our production, and we can do it safely.

I know there are others who wish to speak, so I will wrap up in just a moment.

We need to also—and this is where my friends on the other side of the aisle have not been very good in their own right. They have not been for mandates pushing conservation, and we must start driving a different kind of automobile, and not just expanding mileage from 20 miles per gallon to 27 miles, but CAFE standards reflecting efficiencies from 25 miles per gallon to 27 or 35.

We need to move to a different kind of automobile because it is the fuel demand, it is the gap between the 20 million barrels we use every day and the 8 million we produce. There is a 12 million-barrel-a-day gap. If we could close 6 million of that by more production domestically and close the other 6 million by conservation, America would have no more problem, the price would come down, and we would be free and happy—a powerful, free people again. And we have to get that way.

We once dominated in this industry. That is how we won World War II. We would not have won without our domination in the energy industry. We have

to dominate again, and we can do it through conservation and production.

I hope our leaders, both the Democratic leader and the Republican leader, understand that there is a group of us who don't want to go home until this is done and that we are going to do everything we can because I don't believe we should be drifting out of this Capitol anytime soon until we have given a clear and unmistakable signal to the American public that we hear them and that we understand the economic strain.

Our economic model was not built for \$5 gasoline, and we cannot sustain it. That is what we were told, and not by the Republican policy people or the Democratic policy people but by two of the brightest minds on this subject. They said the U.S. model cannot sustain this high price for long. It will cause and has caused serious economic disruption. It must be corrected.

So I hope, Mr. President, that we most certainly do this. I am open to things that perhaps I wouldn't have considered in the past, and I hope my colleagues will have that same open mind. If so, we can perhaps get some extraordinary things done.

Either tomorrow or next week, I am going to come back and talk about the myth of oil spills because the signs I see on this floor about oil spilling in the gulf—I want to continue to remind people that less than 1 percent of the oil in the ocean is caused from drilling in the ocean. The majority of it is natural seepage, and I am going to have some information that will show that. The people of Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi are very proud of this industry that we have helped to birth not just for our country but for the world, and we are determined to help people understand that it can be done in a clean and environmentally sensitive manner.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

LIHEAP

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I understand that there are a lot of differences in this body on the issue of speculation, which presumably is going to come up next week, on the issue of the role of the large oil companies and the enormous profits they are making, and there are differences of opinion about how fast and how aggressively we should go to sustainable energy and energy efficiency. But in one area, it appears to me there is less and less of a difference of opinion, and that is that more and more Members of the Senate understand that we are facing—right now, this summer, and in this coming winter—an energy crisis in terms of people going cold and perhaps freezing or dying from heat exhaustion this summer.

I am very proud to say that we have had tripartisan support for a very substantial increase in the LIHEAP legis-

lation bill I have offered; that is, S. 3186, the Warm in Winter and Cool in Summer Act. That bill now has 47 cosponsors—34 Democrats, 11 Republicans, and 2 independents. At a time when more and more Americans are concerned about the partisanship here in Congress, I am happy to say that this bill has very strong tripartisan support.

I wish to thank the 34 Democrats who are cosponsors, including Senator OBAMA, Majority Leader REID, and Senators DURBIN, MURRAY, LANDRIEU, LEAHY, CLINTON, CANTWELL, JACK REED, KERRY, KENNEDY, SCHUMER, LEVIN, CARDIN, BROWN, KLOBUCHAR, MENENDEZ, CASEY, BINGAMAN, LAUTENBERG, STABENOW, BILL NELSON, BAUCUS, SALAZAR, WYDEN, WHITEHOUSE, ROCKEFELLER, DODD, TESTER, MIKULSKI, BIDEN, KOHL, DORGAN, and McCASKILL. I thank all those Democrats for their support, and the 11 Republican cosponsors we have, including Senators SNOWE, STEVENS, COLEMAN, SMITH, SUNUNU, COLLINS, MURKOWSKI, GREGG, LUGAR, BOND, and DOLE. I also thank the Independent, Senator LIEBERMAN, for joining me as a cosponsor. Both Independents are on that bill.

Let me also thank Majority Leader REID for completing the rule XIV process and putting this bill directly on the calendar. Senator REID understands, as I think most of us do, that this bill has very strong support. For the health and well-being of many millions of people, whether in the Northeast or in the South, it is absolutely imperative that we pass this legislation as soon as possible.

In that regard, I want to express disappointment that just this morning, my Republican friend, Senator CORNYN, objected to a UC for passage of this bill and then objected to putting this bill on the floor and even giving us the opportunity to vote on it today. I hope my Republican friends and the Republican leadership reconsider this action because the truth is, there is a lot of support on the Republican side for increasing LIHEAP. I think it is imperative that we work together and we work as quickly as possible and we take a very strong load of anxiety off the shoulders of people from all over this country by passing this bill and getting a similar bill passed in the House.

This tripartisan bill would nearly double the funding for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2008, taking it from \$2.57 billion to \$5.1 billion. That is a total increase of over \$2.5 billion. This, in fact, is the amount at which LIHEAP is authorized. We should make no mistake about it, the issue we are dealing with is a life-and-death issue. It is life and death today, and it will be life and death next winter.

I would like to report a statistic that is not widely known. When CNN gets its cameras out, they go to the tornadoes and the floods and the forest fires, and that is appropriate. Those are terrible tragedies we are all concerned