

the bill that were targeted by Senator COBURN's amendment were included by the House in their version of the fiscal year 2009 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. The Senate also carried one of the eight in our version of the bill.

So while I did not sponsor any of these projects, I find these projects are consistent with the work performed by the Department of Energy, and I saw no reason to eliminate them.

Let me briefly describe the sorts of projects that we are talking about.

One of the projects would provide \$951,000 for the direct methanol fuel cell. This type of fuel cell has the potential to meet low power needs, less than 1 kilowatt, with increased performance and improved storage ability.

Another project is focused on solar energy, providing \$951,000 to improve the efficiency of home windows, with the same goal—reducing net energy consumption.

As I said, every project on this list was requested by one or more Members of Congress. The process is fully transparent and the Members of Congress who requested this funding are fully accountable. That is why I opposed the Coburn amendment.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH.) The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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 well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose 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:

Just last week we had to trade in our truck, which was fully functional, in excellent condition and paid for, to finance a vehicle that we could afford to drive out of the local area. I have family and friends at Hill AFB, UT and in Eugene, Oregon. I have driven my truck to visit them before but would seriously have to plan ahead and save money to do it again using our truck. So, now we have a new to us used vehicle (a 2002) that is great, but now I have two car payments all over again. We had to weigh the fact that while we had a great truck, what good does it do you if you have to actually think about driving it someplace as close as Mountain Home? We used to drive it between Mountain Home and Micron all the time five years ago and never gave it much thought. Thank goodness we live in Kuna now, but still, when I go back to school, the 25 miles or so between Kuna and BSU would make a serious dent in my GI Bill money, which is just enough to cover daycare and tuition.

MEGHAN and WESLEY.

I am writing to you today out of major concern for our nation's stability. The price per barrel of oil continues to rise and, with it, so does our cost of living. I am just an average stay-at-home housewife raising my 6-month-old daughter with my husband, who works hard to be our sole provider. In the last six months, we have resorted to me giving up my job as a result of rising fuel, grocery and daycare costs. My husband owns an SUV, which is parked stationery now in our garage, and is taking my sedan to work each day. I rarely leave the house because of fuel costs skyrocketing! We do not have a lot of debt and rely on our savings, which is now dwindling to keep up with the rising costs of everyday living here in Idaho.

We are hurting, and I know from speaking to friends and family, they are hurting, too. The economic stimulus checks that we received went into my savings account to help our family pay for gas and groceries. Every two weeks, I buy groceries and it costs us \$165 a visit, every time we fill up the tank on our SUV its \$100 dollars every week in a half. I believe that we are in an economic crisis and that we are entering a depression, not a recession. The media maintains that we have not entered a recession yet. What reality are the media and our legislators living in?

Please take control of this situation! Do not let oil govern the direction our nation is sliding towards. Offer consumers some sort of fuel alternative. Fortunately, we do not use oil to heat our home. Those homeowners' must be reeling watching the fuel costs soar. You must react now! Salaries are stagnant, the cost of energy is rising, food costs are rising, home prices are falling all of these indicators of an impending Depression!

We cannot afford to wait 5 years for solutions to today's energy crisis! My recommendation is to put a team together in the city of Boise, which includes average middle class citizens that can give a more realistic view of everyday living costs and come up with some real alternatives/solutions which can be implemented now!

Both my husband and I have pulled our 401k plans out of the stock markets hoping for some stability. After working so hard to save through the years, it is heart wrenching to watch your 401k savings spiral downward! America is bleeding and we have to stop the flow of red! Offer the American people some

real solutions. Solutions that do not include lining the pockets of foreign oil industries with our bleeding American dollars!

I thank you for your time. I am sure you are well aware of this crisis. I wanted to give you a voice from an average middle class American Homemaker. I look forward to your administration making a memorable stand by offering America real solutions to this energy crisis!

ADRIANA.

Thank you for asking our opinion; this is a fresh change from the normal status quo in Washington. I live in central Idaho in a subdivision that has 3 full time residents and the closest town has a grand total of less than two hundred people. I love where I live and would not trade it for anything but it is getting harder and harder to just pay the bills let alone do any outdoor activities that require fuel. I work in construction and the company office that I work for is 25 miles away and 1300 feet higher in elevation than where I live. My wife works 15 miles away and has the same elevation change. This winter we had over five feet of snow on the level and temperatures below zero for many days. Needless to say, riding a bicycle is out of the question, driving a small car with no ground clearance just to get good mileage is no more than an invitation to spend the night in the snow in freezing temperatures. I have been paying \$4.99 a gallon for diesel for the last 4 weeks or so and gas for the cars has been over \$4.00 for about the same amount of time. Our weekly gas budget has almost doubled in the two plus years that we have lived here not to mention the cost of propane going up. I can guaranty you that our wages have not kept up and it does not look like there will be any increases in income in the near future. In order to have a weekend at the lake we now have to take at least one day off to make it worthwhile to go and go once every three weeks instead of every week or so. I have friends and family that used to come up all of the time and can no longer afford to come up. Tourism is a very large part of the economy up here and without the people coming to visit, going out to dinner, buying gas and just spending money this area will suffer.

I believe that we are being governed by a few very vocal extremists and special interest groups, who have enough money that they do not care or have lost touch with the average person. They advocate for and lobby for (I do not have time to lobby for anything or go to meetings I have to work to pay for the gas) all of these special regulations that supposedly protect something. I have been told by the government on more than one occasion that "We do not care what it costs to do that but you must comply to our regulations". We need to get the government out of the way, drill for oil in Alaska and off our coasts, build more refineries, increase the atomic usage and cut the ties with the countries that do not like us, but want our money and use it against us. In short we need to become more self sufficient, like we were in the past.

Thank you for your time

WADE.

Thank you very much for your e-mail. I get so frustrated and worried and feel like "we the people" are never considered by the politicians who run our government.

For the past 20 years I have lived on a small ranch in the south east corner of Idaho right near the Utah border. It has always been hard for us to make a go of it on the ranch. In fact, without our retirement we would never have been able to make it. Our nearest grocery store is either 36 miles to Malad or 46 miles to Tremonton, Utah. The

nearest large town is Pocatello, which is 100 miles from us. Ogden, Utah, is 80 miles and Brigham and Logan, Utah, are 60 miles away. Needless to say we must travel quite a distance to get the things we need. There are some times we must take the truck and this takes a lot of gas. The high price of gas is just killing us financially. Just the last two days we had to spend \$100 for fuel just to move our cattle from one field to another. We have cut down our trips and that is pretty hard to do when we really need something. There are trips to the Dr. and we always have pills that need to be refilled.

My husband has worked very hard all his life to provide a good living for our family. We have tried to prepare for the future so we would not be a burden on our children or have to live off the government. Our retirement is in a 401K in the market and we are losing money every day. We are getting old with no source of income and I will tell you it is pretty frightening.

Everything in our economy is tied to oil and energy prices. I think it is only fair to ask our Congress to act responsibly and get doing something now!

The statistics I hear say we only use 15% of the oil resources that are available right here in our own country. I have heard politicians say it won't do any good to drill because we won't see any results for such a long time. It does not take a genius to realize that if we don't start doing something now we will never get the relief we need.

I think we could start by doing something about those silly regulations that prevent us from doing so many sensible things.

I think we should be allowed to drill for oil and explore for energy resources right here where we live. I think it can be done responsibly if our hands are not tied with ridiculous regulations. I also think we could start building new refineries. I agree that we should explore and expand alternative energy sources, including nuclear. What about Iraq? We have done a lot for them why can't we get oil from them?

The thing that I think is totally irresponsible is to tax the oil companies and to put global warming nonsense before the needs of human beings.

It has always been my philosophy that doing something productive is better than setting on our hands and doing nothing. I say to the congress roll up your sleeves and get to work doing something worthwhile.

I would like to thank you for all the service and many hours you have spent in behalf of all of us in Idaho. I am grateful to have you for my Senator.

LOUISE, *Stone*.

I am a single parent trying to live on disability, a low fixed income. The current price of gas has affected me severely. I live two and a half hours one way from my doctors in Boise and I must make three to four trips a month. I do not have the resources to relocate or carry on like this.

These are a few things that I think have lead to the high price of fuel in the U.S. Until recently, all energy futures trading in the U.S. took place on the New York Mercantile Exchange, which traditionally determined the market price of crude oil and natural gas commodities bought and sold here in the United States. Recently a large portion of the futures exchange was moved to London England where they could operate outside of the regulated exchange markets. Since this took place it has driven the price of crude up dramatically, by investors with little or no assets investing in the future price of crude by putting up a fraction of the outright value of the crude oil they are investing in. The basic facts are clear—this market is purely and simply being controlled by over-speculation."

In 2000, at the urging of Enron and other large energy traders, a provision was slipped into an omnibus bill conference report that eliminated CFTC oversight of energy commodities traded by large companies outside of the regulated exchanges. This so-called Enron loophole has severely restricted CFTC oversight of energy trading. Supply and demand = There has not been a new refinery built in the US in over 30 years. We have more oil here in the US than in all of the Middle East if you take into consideration The shale in the Rocky Mountains, the oil in ANWR Alaska and off our coast.

All four of these things must be done to drive the price of fuel down in the U.S.

1. Remove this loophole for energy futures traders.

2. Change the amount of money put up front by investors in the futures trade energy market to 50%.

3. Allow drilling at ANWR in Alaska, off our coastlines and also allow the extraction of oil from Rocky Mountain shale.

4. Streamline the process for building new refineries (cracking plants) in the U.S.

Your help is needed and appreciated.

MARK, *Council*.

Thank you for notifying me that you are trying to do something about the gas prices. My husband and I are retired, but we had no retirement to fall back on. Now we live on Social Security. Our needs are not great, but the increased gas prices and the resulting increased food prices are dealing us a severe blow. We now drive to the grocery store and to church and almost nowhere else. I have also cut down on the groceries that I buy. We have even decided to cut way down on our evening meal so that we do not have to buy so much food. Any help you can give us and people in the US like us will be so appreciated. I know being a Congressman is not an easy job. I do thank you for working for the citizens of Idaho and the United States.

KAREN, *Coeur d'Alene*.

The price of heating oil has quadrupled since installing our heater. We left wood because of injuries not allowing either one of us to get the wood, split, or even get it into the stove. We are worried about being able to have any this coming winter.

Our use of our boat—the only recreation that we have. The boat does not use much fuel, about 2 gallons a day out on the lake fishing. But we cannot get the boat to the lake. It takes a rig to do that, and the rig only gets 24 miles per gallon. And to make it worse, we are only 25 miles from the lake or 9 miles to the Clearwater River! We have to worry about heat this winter. So no recreation.

I work 15 miles from home. I have a car that gets 35 plus miles per gallon. I only earn \$6.25 per hour. At present gas is \$3.99 a gallon. It eats into any profits I might have. Any higher and I will be forced to quit.

I know a girl who no longer can work there. She had a baby. The cost of child care and fuel was more than her wages. So she is on food stamps much to her dismay.

This right-to-work state with its low wages. It takes 3/4 of an hour to earn a gallon of milk! And the rest of the groceries go up every delivery of foods. Because of fuel costs.

A lot of people, not only in this state, are in the same boat. Some are having to give up jobs. Some are having to close their businesses. Some are giving up their homes. It hurts more out here in the real world than it does in the beltway. The whole economy is going down the tubes all because the price of energy.

The argument that it is only \$50 or so per month more. Well...then there is the add-on for food, and everything else. And on a fixed

income, with a low wage job to supplement. That is a lot.

I will add another thing. The summer mix for the fuel cuts the gas mileage. How's that one!! for a stupid regulation?

And you can bet your boots, if all those foreign countries and speculators thought we were really going to drill our own oil, the prices would drop like a rock. Drill for oil along with all the other things. Build nuclear, build my hydropower systems. Do it al. Open all the oil potential fields. Make our country totally self sufficient. Get away from the dictators!

KAREN, *Juliaetta*.

My family (Dad and four brothers) owns a roofing business here in Boise. The high fuel prices have made it difficult for us to make a profit. The price of materials has increased every month for the past three months and some say that they will increase by 30-40% before the end of the summer. I see this as a direct result of the price of fuel. The construction industry in Idaho has taken some hits and I don't think that Idahoans can really afford for the price of home production to increase. Especially when you consider how many houses are currently on the market and how many people are facing foreclosure.

America is the best country in the world. I think that our dependence on foreign oil is the pinnacle of stupidity. We have the resources, the technology and the manpower to become energy dependent without hurting the environment. Capitalism is the way to ensure that America will remain the best country in the world. Please do your part to help us become energy independent by letting us drill in our own country and use our own resources without taxing the oil companies and nationalizing energy production.

Idaho is the greatest state in America; I love it. It is beautiful and I would like to share that beauty with my kids someday without having to sell my house in order to pay for the gas that it cost to drive around this great state. Thanks for the great work!

VICTOR, *Boise*.

I would like to tell you my story regarding the energy prices, not only has our family been impacted by the cost of fuel, but it has also been impacted by the loss of income. I am a single parent, and up until a year ago had an income of \$35-38K a year. The only work I am able to find is part-time employment for minimum wage. (I have too much experience for the jobs posted.) Add that to the continuous increasing fuel prices and the harder I try to get ahead and to make ends meet the more behind I get. The stimulus check I received, because of the high cost of fuel, went to bills and groceries rather than into the economy as I would have enjoyed. I am constantly "robbing Peter to pay Paul" within my budget. I have to have a vehicle, which requires gasoline, to get to work. With the cost of gas equaling an hour of net income, it takes the biggest percentage after my mortgage/rent payment.

If possible, relief at the pump would be greatly appreciated. I know I am not the only who has a limited income and is struggling financially.

LORI, *Garden City*.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REUNION OF THE MUSICAL GROUP PHISH

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to give recognition to an event taking