

Well, many of them have said publicly they want to have another chance to vote on some parts of it, and I am open to the suggestion. But when I look at this bill in its entirety—the tax cuts, the help to small businesses, the closing of these tax loopholes, the help to the States—I think all of these things are an important and timely package of things we need to do across America.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority's time has expired. Mr. DURBIN. Then I yield the floor.

Since I see no Republican seeking time in morning business, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 3 additional minutes, and to extend the same 3 minutes on the Republican side, if they care to use it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING THE GREAT LAKES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, one of the greatest assets in my part of the world would be Lake Michigan. If you ask the people of Chicago: What do you think is the greatest thing about the city of Chicago, in a recent survey they overwhelmingly responded it is Lake Michigan because it is so beautiful, and we are fortunate to be near it and take advantage of it, using beaches and being out on boats, and mainly looking out the window at this magnificent lake, which I get a chance to do when I go up to the city.

So when the issue of the future of Lake Michigan and the question about whether it is going to be the victim of invasive species comes up, we take it seriously. I do not know how many years ago some people decided a very wise thing to do would be to import into the United States a fish called the Asian carp. So they brought in this Asian carp—and I believe it was in the State of Arkansas, though I do not want to pick on them; I think this is true—and they were going to raise these carp for some reason, and there was some flooding and the carp ended up in the Mississippi River. Now they are all over the Mississippi River and those tributaries leading to it.

Well, if we follow the Mississippi River north from Arkansas and make a right-hand turn north of St. Louis and head up the Illinois River, we are on our way up Lake Michigan. That is the route the Asian carp have been following.

Well, they are all over the Illinois River on their way up to Lake Michigan. These are fish which grow to enormous sizes and suck up everything in sight on which other fish would live. So they are an invasive species that is a danger to other species of fish, and there has been a great fear for a long time they would reach Lake Michigan and change its future as a fishery.

So I joined with Republican Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT, and we started pouring in millions of dollars 10

years ago to stop this fish. This fish is insidious. It just grows by leaps and bounds and attacks people. Hard to imagine, isn't it? Boaters going down the Illinois River will see these fish jumping out of the river at the boaters. It is a danger. I have seen videos, and I know it is.

This is an aggressive species of fish that can destroy Lake Michigan. So Congresswoman BIGGERT and I built electronic fences that create an electrical shock at points in the river to stop the fish from moving toward Lake Michigan. We have done that twice. We now think we have to do it more. There is a real concern not only in Chicago and Illinois but around Lake Michigan, the surrounding States, about how successful this effort is going to be.

Last week, we continued to fish and look for these Asian carp, and we found one in Lake Calumet, just miles from Lake Michigan. From my point of view, that was a wake-up call. Somehow a fish had reached the other side of the electronic barrier. I do not know if it was dumped in Lake Calumet—we are doing some studies to find out—or whether it migrated there.

Regardless, what I am doing with Senator DEBBIE STABENOW of the State of Michigan is introducing legislation today calling on the Army Corps of Engineers to take a serious, comprehensive look at ways to avoid any contamination of Lake Michigan from this fish.

These studies usually take forever. Senator STABENOW and I are encouraging the corps to move on them very quickly.

Secondly, I have written to the White House and have spoken with the President's Chief of Staff about appointing a coordinator who will try to bring together all the Federal agencies that are dealing with this invasive species, the State and local efforts, and coordinating them to be more effective and focus on stopping this fish moving forward.

We are trying to also increase the amount of money being spent to build fences and more electronic barriers to stop these fish from their migration toward Lake Michigan.

This is critical for us to do for the future of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes. It is something we have worked on for years. We will continue to work on it. We take it very seriously.

I thank Senator STABENOW for joining me in that effort, and I encourage all the Senators from the Great Lakes area, if they would consider it, to join us as cosponsors.

Madam President, I see the Senator from Missouri has taken the floor on the Republican side. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

CLEAN ENERGY

Mr. BOND. Madam President, today Members of the Senate will go to the White House to meet with President

Obama on energy legislation. There is general agreement among Republicans that we need to do more to promote clean energy and reduce our dependence on foreign energy sources. We also need real reform of our oilspill protection laws and agencies.

However, today I talk about where we disagree, and that is on the Democratic proposal to impose a national energy tax related to carbon emissions.

The President will try to convince Senators and the public to impose a national energy tax. Of course, he will use fancy terms such as "pricing carbon." But if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, then it is a duck, and this duck is an energy tax.

One form the Democratic national energy tax will take is a tax on gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel. Senator HUTCHISON and I just released a new report documenting the size of the gas tax in the Kerry-Lieberman cap-and-trade bill. My colleagues can find it on our office Web sites.

The Kerry-Lieberman cap-and-trade bill includes a \$3.4 trillion gas tax—with a "t." That is an average of \$90 billion a year.

The number is so large because Americans consume a lot of fuel—over 200 billion gallons a year. Putting a price on the carbon in this fuel, as Democrats and President Obama want to do, will impose a massive new tax increase on the American people. You don't have to take my word for it. Anyone can add up the cost of this new gas tax. We used all publicly available government information, such as the fuel consumption data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency and carbon pricing estimates from the Environmental Protection Agency. The rest is just simple addition and multiplication—multiplication and multiplication and multiplication—combining how much fuel we will use with the carbon tax rate they propose.

The \$3.4 trillion figure is based on EPA's estimates of future carbon prices. By law, as proposed by Kerry-Lieberman, the gas tax could be as high as \$7.6 trillion if carbon prices hit the price ceilings in this bill.

Kerry-Lieberman's \$3.4 trillion total gas tax will include a \$1.9 trillion gasoline tax on families, workers, and small businesses, a \$1.1 trillion diesel tax on farmers, truckers, and businesses, and a \$425 billion jet fuel tax on airline passengers.

Of course, politicians do not want to admit they support a new multitrillion-dollar gas tax. They use code words such as "pricing carbon" or "requiring the purchase of allowances."

They also try to take advantage of the current disasters, such as the gulf oilspill, to impose a new gasoline tax. I say we should be punishing BP, not the American people, with a new gas tax. A gas tax will not stop the oil from leaking, it will not clean up the oil that has been spilled, and it will not do anything to restore the environment in the coastal areas where that oil will hit.

To quote an MIT economist highlighted this week:

People are kidding themselves to believe that penalizing carbon will significantly shrink oil imports or the need for offshore drilling.

EPA's recent analysis of Kerry-Lieberman confirms this, showing that U.S. fuel consumption would decrease by only 1/2 percent by 2050.

All we do with a new gas tax is take trillions of dollars from American families and workers with no real impact on our oil dependency. In fact, the thing that has slowed gasoline consumption in the United States has been the recession. When people are out of work and businesses are not selling and work is not being done, then consumption goes down. Is that how we want to reduce dependence on foreign oil and reduce pollution? I say not.

Sponsors say a portion of these funds is going to the highway trust fund. However, this bill sends less than 2 percent of its value to the trust fund, or only a few billion dollars per year by my calculations. Even that will end in 2040.

Sponsors also point to their refund program where they claim they will give back two-thirds of the carbon tax revenues the government will take in. How many trust the Federal Government to return tax revenue to us once they get their tax-and-spend fingers on it? They have schemes that will send that money to politically favored groups. That is what has happened in the past, and that is what will happen in the future.

While they give back two-thirds of the revenues, the government still keeps one-third of the tax. One-third of a \$3.4 trillion gas tax means American families and workers, even if they got it back on a fair pro rata basis—which nobody believes they will—Americans will still face \$1.1 trillion in net new taxes from the gas tax.

You know something funny must be going on when big oil actually supports this bill. You heard me right; big oil supports this bill. BP, Shell, and ConocoPhillips actually helped draft Kerry-Lieberman. Do my colleagues know why they did that? They are not worried about a tax on gasoline because they know every single penny will be shifted to the consumers with their profit margins added. It may not be a bad deal for the gas and oil companies, but it is a bad deal for all of us as consumers.

Big oil knows they can pass most of the new tax on to consumers, so they are not worried about it. But Senator HUTCHISON and I remain deeply worried about families, farmers, truckers, small businesses, and fliers who will pay this \$3.4 trillion gas tax.

There is a better way. We can come together on new incentives for hybrid and electric cars, nuclear power, advanced fuels such as cellulosic ethanol and biomass, and even higher fuel efficiency standards for vehicles. But what we should not do is punish American

families, farmers, workers, and businesses with a \$3.4 trillion gas tax.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—

H.R. 5569

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor once again to ask all of my colleagues to come together, Democrats and Republicans, as Americans to do something we should have done weeks ago: reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program.

The National Flood Insurance Program is a vital, necessary program to provide flood insurance to our citizens around the country to help protect their homes and property. Yet it was allowed to expire on June 1. So for almost a month, we have not had a national flood insurance program.

What does that mean? That means there have been thousands of real estate closings that have been held up, unable to move forward. There are thousands of first-time and other home buyers who want to go to their closings, who are excited about everything that means, but because of politics up here, because of that getting stuck in the mud—even though substantively it should be completely noncontroversial—they cannot go to their closings, and all of this in the midst of an extremely serious recession. We should never allow this sort of lapse in the program, but when unemployment nationally is almost 10 percent, when we need every real estate closing we can get our hands on to help move the economy along and to try to get it to a better place, this is the last moment we should allow this program to expire.

As we all know, this reauthorization has been held hostage, and there is no more accurate way to describe what has been going on. It is completely noncontroversial. It is completely motherhood and apple pie. For that reason, it was taken hostage and put in the so-called extenders bill, which, overall, was very controversial and which had a lot of objectors, particularly because it balloons deficit and debt significantly—by tens of billions of dollars. I have asked several times over the last several weeks for that gamesmanship to stop, for the hostage to be released and for us to pass on a bipartisan basis the extension of the National Flood Insurance Program on its own.

That was rejected. Over those several weeks, one version of extenders after another was also rejected. There were four, maybe five different versions of

that bill which came to the Senate floor, and none of them achieved the required 60 votes to move forward. So the necessary extension of the National Flood Insurance Program languished for days and then weeks and now almost a month.

With so many versions of the so-called extenders bill failing, let's just get back to doing the right thing on this vital program. Let's take this specific measure—the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program—and pass it into law. The House has already done that. The Democratically controlled House has done exactly that—passed a full reauthorization through the end of the fiscal year. So let's take their bill and pass it and solve this problem and allow these closings to happen, give a little boost to the economy when we need every boost we can get. Certainly, people in the real world across America support that. As evidence of that, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter of strong support that the Senate take immediate action on H.R. 5569, which is signed by many different real estate and related business organizations that want to see those crucial real estate closings resume again.

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

JUNE 25, 2010.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER REID AND MINORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: We respectfully request the Senate take immediate action and approve H.R. 5569 that passed the House of Representatives yesterday and would reauthorize and extend the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through September 30, 2010.

The flash floods this year that inundated Oklahoma City, ripped through the Southwest and damaged residences from Montana to Tennessee are a grim reminder of the threat posed by flooding. Furthermore, the NFIP is the only protection for Gulf Coast property owners who face the threat of flooding by oil-tainted water as a result of the massive leak in the Gulf of Mexico.

The NFIP protects 5.5 million Americans. Unfortunately, no new policies have been offered to property owners who need coverage since the program expired on May 31, 2010. This is the third time this year Congress has allowed the NFIP to expire. The timing of this latest expiration—a day before the start of the hurricane season on June 1—could not have been worse for coastal residents and impaired real estate markets.

While we agree with many members of Congress the NFIP is in need of meaningful reform, America's property owners depend on this important federal program administered with the help of the property casualty insurance industry. Since the program expired, those who need insurance can't get it. Those who have it can't increase coverage. And anyone trying to buy property that requires federal flood insurance is out of luck—creating yet another disruption in a struggling real estate market.

Every day of delay in reauthorizing the NFIP contributes to the confusion and risk