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## *House of Representatives*

HON. BILL SALI  
OF IDAHO  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008

### DEVELOP AMERICAN ENERGY

Madam Speaker, "if we open a quarrel between past and present," Winston Churchill reminded us, "we shall find that we have lost the future."

Madam Speaker, I fear that Sir Winston's words are applicable to the House today. We are pondering questions about the imprudent decisions of our past, and not acting wisely in the present. And we are thus at risk of losing America's energy future.

For the 15th day in a row, the average price for a gallon of gas set a new all-time high at \$3.83 a gallon. Many of my constituents in Idaho, and many Americans will spend more than \$50 every time they fill up at the gas station--in fact, for those who drive some of the most popular vehicles sold in the United States, filling their tank will cost more than \$98.

This should be no surprise. Today the United States imports a little less than 1/3 of our crude oil from OPEC nations and another roughly 1/3 from non-OPEC nations who gain the benefit of OPEC price increases from production restrictions and we produce a little more than 1/3 of from American sources. OPEC is essentially dictating the high prices we are paying at the pump.

Yet American families are being faced not only with record high fuel prices but also rising food prices with each passing day. In only two years, the price of a gallon of milk has risen by nearly 70 cents. The price of bread, in the same period, is up more than 15 percent. And on it goes.

When food staples and gas are both going up in price, the family is hit hard. In other words, it's not just family vacations that are being cancelled. These high prices also affect the ability of Idahoans to afford to get to work, drive their kids to the doctor and buy some of the simple necessities of life.

The implications of rising fuel prices on education are also becoming apparent with media reports that some school districts are planning four-day school weeks in large part because of the rising cost of busing children to school. The costs of transporting school children will also affect field trips and other extra-curricular activities.

Similarly, American senior citizens and low income households have been disproportionately affected by higher energy costs. In 2006, before the skyrocketing and record-breaking fuel price increases we are seeing today, low-income households in America spent nearly 20 percent of their income on energy-related expenditures.

This is a moral issue--an issue which for many low income families, senior citizens and hardworking families affects their access to education and even to their doctors, particularly in a rural state like Idaho.

Congress is and has been in control of the solution. To lower the price at the pump and to break our addiction to foreign oil, we must increase production of American energy, while in the short term conserving and encouraging innovation to increase renewable energy.

At her press briefing last Thursday, Speaker *Nancy Pelosi* (D-CA) acknowledged one of the universal truths of supply and demand when she said "certainly more supply lowers the price." I am relieved that the distinguished gentlewoman from California appreciates this elemental economic truth.

In recognizing the truth that supply lowers the price, Democrats followed *Speaker Pelosi*, supporting a bill to halt shipments of crude oil from being put into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. They estimated that the resulting increases in supply of a mere 70,000 barrels per day would decrease prices by 5 cents a gallon at the pump. Although recognizing this truth, my Democrat colleagues continue to oppose the production of American crude oil.

Today, 73 percent of every dollar we pay for gasoline at the pump is the price of producing crude oil. Increasing the supply of crude oil, and thereby reducing the price of crude oil, is the single most effective thing Congress can do to lower gas prices.

And yet while my colleagues across the aisle understand that increasing supply is necessary, they consistently have opposed increasing the supply of American-made energy through increased production of American crude oil.

I find this stunning in large part because our dependency on foreign oil is so unnecessary. As far back as 1980, the then-Democrat Congress--under then-President Jimmy Carter--set aside a specific parcel of land in Alaska for oil and gas development. In 1996 Congress voted to explore and produce crude oil from those lands, but president Clinton vetoed that bill. Since then, Congress has failed the American people in not pursuing the domestic exploration and production of oil. It's that simple.

Congress has continued to erect huge roadblocks to exploration and development of oil on federal lands and has prohibited deep water exploration and development of oil and natural gas resources.

If we are to remain prosperous, America needs energy--American energy from every source possible. This means that we must develop and produce oil and natural gas, but it also means we must be innovative--innovative in conserving energy and innovative in producing alternative and renewable sources of energy.

Electricity is just as vital as gas. It is estimated that our demand for electricity will increase by 25 percent over the next 20 years or so.

For example, there is great potential for woody bio-mass as an alternative and renewable resource. This would allow us in Idaho to remove hazardous fuels from the forest and seek ways to use it to produce energy.

In the Northwest, whenever we talk about renewable and clean energy, we cannot forget traditional hydropower, which provides 60 percent of all power supply to the Northwest.

Hydropower is renewable and for America means no greenhouse gas emissions. Hydropower offsets more carbon emissions than all other renewable energy resources combined. It's a viable, clean and potent source of energy.

Similarly, nuclear power will be essential for our future. It is safe and clean and affordable. There are 104 reactors in the U.S. at present, and licenses for 30 more nuclear power plants are being sought by a variety of companies and groups. Nuclear power is environmentally-friendly and cost-efficient for producers and consumers alike.

In sum, we have substantial energy supplies available on the lands within our own nation.

Tragically, due to the policy changes encouraged by the majority party, Americans across this country have only continued to see higher and higher gas prices.

Congress must not, in some sad tribute to the cramped ideology of an extreme agenda, fail to allow the use of the resources we possess within our borders and within our technological and economic grasp.

America needs a sound energy policy that develops domestic energy from every source available, including crude oil, natural gas, clean coal, hydropower, nuclear power and every alternative source of energy.

To put it another way, we need all the energy we can get from all the sources we can afford to access. Period.

Madam Speaker, let's not lose our future because we dawdle in the present. Let us summon the courage and fortitude to act, and act now. As Winston Churchill, a man greatly honored by our country would, I believe, agree, the American people, and the future they hope for, deserve no less.