

to the size of our state, Idahoans are being left with few options in the face of higher gasoline prices. That is, sadly, my personal case.

I have the good fortune to be employed in Moscow for the University of Idaho. My home is up near Sandpoint. It is more than a commute distance, but I do get to go home on the weekends—a two-hour drive through, as I'm sure you're aware, some of the loveliest country anywhere. It is also twice as expensive now as it was when I joined the University in 2003.

Sure, I would love an alternative. But population density in our state does not allow light rail to be competitive, public transportation on that route runs only between such, ah, urban centers as Desmet and Hayden. (That would be greater metropolitan Desmet. If you go through there, do not blink.)

In short, we are stuck. Along the way, I've been noticing quite a few more cars parked near the highway than I used to. Big ones—Tahoes and Suburbans and other 4WD monsters too uneconomical to run under the new energy regime. Cars that offered their owners a measure of safety during the Idaho winters, and you are aware of what the last one was like. (By the way, it snowed in Moscow on the 10th of June. I am not kidding.)

What we are compromising with here in the name of economy is safety. There aren't really any numbers to describe that sort of choice, but it is not unusual in the transportation arena. Mandating a higher mileage requirement for domestic automobiles, for example, runs straight into the safety issue. I'd like people in D.C., to be aware that SUVs aren't necessarily useless affectations, and that choosing an alternative is not quite as easy out here as it is, say, to hop a train on the Boston-Atlanta metropolitan axis.

What to do? Well, it is generally good guidance to advise the government to get the heck out of the way in circumstances such as these. That means reviewing and discarding out-of-date environmental restrictions, for one. Can we really believe in this age of nuclear fuel re-processing that we still need to have swimming pools full of poisonous spent rods when something practical might be done with them? Silliness. It needs to be reviewed and corrected. It means not mandating nationwide speed restrictions when region A has different requirements than region B. It means stopping every state from mandating different gasoline formulae so that the refineries have to guess what and how much to make for where, when. That drives up their cost in the meantime. I'd love the government to "encourage" private research into alternate energy, largely by refraining from over-regulation.

Sure, I'd love a cheap, government-subsidized train ride from Moscow to the Canadian border, but I simply cannot countenance robbing my fellow citizens to pay for it. If it cannot stand on its own, let it be.

What I want most of all is for the government to stop flapping mindlessly to the gassy wind coming from the global warming hucksters. Just because it is an international political enthusiasm does not make it backed by valid science. And if we are going to clobber our economy in an effort to choke off carbon dioxide, of all things, we really ought to do so based on something other than computer modeling with more assumptions than data backing it. The government can say "no" to that sort of garbage but if it says "yes" it better be ready to pay for the damage. And not, I hope, with my money. Thanks for letting me vent, Mike.

TIM, *Moscow.*

SENATOR CRAPO. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion and state my case in this situation.

Oil is the fuel of democracy, and there is no other natural resource available at this time that can replace it. None. I am convinced that unless the Congress acts now, they will be harnessed by the undertakers of historical fact with sabotaging our once-vibrant and globally-dominant economy with fuel prices that will cripple our ability to remain competitive at home and abroad.

[Conservatives] have a real opportunity to take this issue and own it. I cannot fathom a capitalist democracy offering up to investigate the profits of private industry when the government themselves are the only ones clearly guilty of benefiting from a windfall profit. By definition, a windfall profit is benefiting from a market occurrence you had nothing to do with. The government has nothing to do with the profitability of these oil companies, but benefits by levying the taxes and regulations.

Here's an Idahoan's approach to solving this:

1. Suspend the federal taxes immediately—this will not fix a thing, but will give a brief reprieve while you approve more domestic oil exploration.

2. Immediately announce that all [conservatives] will unite to pursue immediate off shore drilling, on shore drilling and especially drilling in remote locations such as the ANWR.

3. Stop corn subsidies to the corn growers for ethanol that has proven to be a political hay-making machine. I see right through this pandering to the early caucus and primary states, and it is wrong. It does not bring down the cost of fuel.

4. Approve more refineries to handle the flow of crude from our own wells and pipelines.

5. Explain to the American public why Iraq fuel is not flowing here yet in an amount that would benefit both nations.

6. Approve more clean energy like nuclear fuel and get Yucca Mountain open.

7. Approve more clean coal-burning power stations in the West. Look at the Navajo Nation!!!!

Most level-headed like-minded Americans will follow your lead in the pursuit of patriotic exploration of oil in our country. We need it. It has been long enough since we last cared about the state of our country in preserving our economy so we can preserve our country and way of life.

I love my way of life and wasted about five minutes calculating my [carbon] footprint on some website. I found out what I already knew—my carbon footprint was ten times larger than the average world citizen. Well, no news flash—the average Idahoan produces ten times more benefit to the world than the average world citizen. That is what makes Idaho great, and I love my state!

Get out front of this wave of frustration and cash in on the patriotic exploration of domestic oil. We will support you. I hate depending on politicians—but I have no choice on this one. I am depending on you to get something fixed.

BEN.

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO. Lowering the price of gasoline will not solve the current crisis for our country. If, by legislation, we were able to gain another source within our country, Americans would return to complacency and fail again to conserve. I believe a better use of legislative power is this:

Actually ask Americans to conserve what we have.

Support those many innovative people now researching alternative fuel (cooking oil, peanut butter, soybeans, hydrogen, whatever) for a sensible, quick and urgent solution—with the same fervor that went into the race to be first on the moon.

Offer incentives to car manufacturers to discontinue gas hogs, or provide an economical conversion option for existing engines; and to begin consistent production of hybrid vehicles with stellar mileage capacity on these alternate fuels.

Reduce dependence upon oil and gas from all sources, whether from unfriendly nations or from our own reserves.

Thank you for asking.

BJ, *Post Falls.*

To Whom It May Concern: The energy prices are of great concern to our family. We budget very conscientiously and always spend less than we make and try our best to pay down our mortgage and invest regularly. Our budget for gasoline has had to double over the past two years from \$150/month to \$300/month. We are a one-income family, and my husband commutes 50 miles round trip to work every day.

Due to the housing market, moving closer to work would cost us even more over a five to ten-year period, since the value of our house has decreased and the value of housing near his work has managed to stay pretty level. Not to mention that we like where we live and do not want to move. We have a very low fixed interest rate in our current mortgage as well.

As a result of the increasing costs, even camping, as a family vacation, is becoming cost-prohibitive. To manage the increase so far, we have reduced our travel plans and cut some from our regular savings and investment budget. However, with the concurrent grocery price increases and overall inflation, I foresee further cuts across the board for our budget as our costs rise and income stays the same.

Unlike the government, gas pumps, grocery stores, etc., we have no one to pass along our "cost increase" to. We have to make do with what we have.

I am infuriated that we allow other countries to drill offshore and yet not ourselves. The U.S. would run a cleaner and more efficient operation offshore than any of the other countries we currently encourage to work there. I am also a supporter of nuclear energy and think we need to keep building refineries for oil, concurrently with nuclear energy plants and other energy sources.

I often look at the policies that are being proposed and it is difficult not to believe the conspiracy theories that there are many in power who want Americans to suffer, who want the dollar's value to keep plummeting, who want energy prices to soar for their own political ends.

I hope my story and my opinion help in your research.

Blessings,

LORNA, *Boise.*

SENATOR CRAPO, I recently completed a complete analysis of sources of alternative energy at my ranch in Swan Valley, Idaho. Fuel and energy costs are now so prohibitive that we cannot sustain our business without passing on those costs or we will have to face the prospect of just shutting down. I looked at wind, water, bio gas and solar and, initially, I did not consider the capital costs required to install them. I used actual history for electricity and propane usage over the past couple of years. We raise beef cattle and registered horses, so I have plenty of possible methane production; we have a pretty constant canyon wind, especially in the summer; and we have a large stream that borders the property and it has a high flow rate in the spring and early summer. I carefully estimated wind days, solar days, flow volumes and efficient, but realistic manure collection. What I found was that for about \$300,000 to \$500,000 of capital, I could cover no more