

encourage motor vehicle manufacturers to build energy efficient vehicles. (This should have been done a long time ago!!) I am sort of happy about high gasoline prices because finally everyone will put into production technology that will free us from fossil fuels. Too bad we have to be forced to do good things eh? I hope you will support legislation that helps us change rather than stay dependent on an energy source that is doomed to get more scarce and more expensive.

I also have planted a big garden, so I am not so dependent this summer on the grocery store (and the rising cost from transportation).

Thanks for working on this issue.

KARI, *Rezburg.*

SENATOR CRAPO: Within the last few days we received our bill from Idaho Power. In it was our new level pay amount for this coming year. Our usage was up only very slightly, and we had only about \$4.00 to pay to balance out our account following this past year's payments. We were about as close to "even" as you can get. Our level pay (for Idaho Power) went from \$70 to \$103. This is a nearly 50 percent increase without a corresponding increase in usage. (Again, almost no increase in usage at all.) Energy costs are affecting even electrical power.

Gas prices are, of course, rapidly increasing. Diesel prices, however, continue to rise even more. One of the reasons we purchased a pickup with a diesel engine (for about \$5,000 extra) was because of the increased fuel mileage. Yet we are being punished for choosing fuel efficiency because the diesel prices continue to run far above even premium grade gasoline. I have read many times that diesel is not the most highly refined product from a barrel of oil. Because of the high fuel prices, we cannot afford to go camping as many times this year as last year, and I know of several others who either are not camping at all or are cutting back significantly.

I was talking to a friend of mine yesterday, who for many years with his family, was a missionary in Indonesia. He simply said that in Indonesia people riot and rebel when fuel prices go up because they know that when fuel costs rise, all costs rise. Of course, I would not want to see the civil disturbances in America, but I would like to see more people (including those in Congress who apparently do not see this) understand that fuel and energy costs affect all costs. We are not facing an isolated issue of a rise at the gas station. Shipping costs (whether by truck or plane) are up. Shippers will not just "eat" those costs—they will be cumulatively passed on to people who no longer have the economic cushion to absorb it.

I am frustrated by the current Congress' position of practicing opposition to oil exploration, increased refining capacity, and any other short-term responses to an immediate situation other than blaming us for using energy and blaming oil companies for the amount of profits gained by a low percentage of profit on an extremely high volume of business. I too would like to see alternative energy sources—but those are only long-term or very long-term solutions. Reducing usage sounds nice until people realize that shutting down a portion of our economy will have a ripple effect on every other part of the economy. When fuel costs get too high, businesses will end up closing either because of their own costs or because their customers no longer have money to pay them.

Another friend of mine owns a small plumbing business. He described just last week that because of the fuel prices he is now forced to either tell one of his employees to stay home and run the routes himself (taking time away from management and

finding new accounts) or combine two plumbers into one truck instead of them each going to separate jobs during the day. This reduces the number of customers he can serve during that day, which has a ripple effect both to and through his business.

How nice it would be to have available the mass transit from the Northeastern Corridor, from The Bay Area of California, or from the Los Angeles area. For Idaho and much of the West, this is not economically feasible without massive subsidies from the federal government. The distances between towns is too great to justify running buses or building rails—there are not enough riders.

Sometimes it would be nice to make some of the people in the Congress sit in a car as it travels at the posted speed limit the "short" trip between Boise and the next city of equal or greater size (Salt Lake? Spokane? Portland?). Perhaps this all-day trip through minimally-populated areas would help them understand that fuel is vital, distances great, and practical and affordable alternative travel options non-existent.

And none of this deals with the fact that when farmers know they will lose money on a field because the costs of production will exceed the possible revenue, they will simply not plant.

CARL, *Boise.*

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO: Thank you for this opportunity to share an example of how we are dealing with high energy costs. Our family is in Pocatello, and we have a son in school at the University of Idaho. It costs \$150 even with our 30 MPG cars for the round trip to either visit him or have him visit us. There is no real alternative of getting to Moscow from here as plane fare is much more than that, and the travel time is long no matter what the method. Getting a specialized education in Idaho such as a law degree necessitates students attending universities that are long distances from home. I am sure there are other families with students in far-off places that need face to face support making long journeys a regular occurrence.

I am not an expert on energy reserves, but it has been said by people that I trust to know these things that domestic oil production has been stalled/curtailed due to strict laws and environmental concerns. America has oil reserves in Alaska, Texas, the Dakotas, and offshore that we are not using due to various regulations. I would recommend allowing this domestic production to happen as soon as possible.

Nuclear energy production is a necessity. With recent advancements, this type of energy is low-cost, safe, environmentally-friendly, and good for the domestic economy. I would request that more nuclear plants be approved for construction and use.

I appreciate your time and consideration in these matters.

JOHN, *Pocatello.*

HELLO SENATOR CRAPO: A quick little story with a huge impact. I live in a nice apartment complex and know several people who live here. I have recently talked to a couple of them, and they are having to outright move to get closer to their jobs in order to make more per hour than the cost of a round trip in their car. I myself am a 100% disabled Veteran. I have to routinely make trips to Spokane, Washington, in order to get medications to be monitored for my health problems. Recently, I have had to postpone/reschedule trips in order to save for the trip due to the huge increase in fuel prices. People here in Sandpoint are also losing their jobs left and right due to company downsizing caused directly from rising fuel prices. What is this country coming to? I

think "many" Senators and Congressman/ladies should be reminded that they work for us, the people of this country, because if we want to we can elect them right out of office just as quickly as we elected them into office. That also goes with the President of this country. All this lip service and no action. People just expect this any more and have little faith that anyone will do anything to help this nation rather than line their pockets with dirty money or favors for selling the U.S. out in one way, shape, or form. Again, thank you for voting no regarding the increase in gas prices. Idahoans are "so" proud to be in this state. We are proud that the upper management such as yourself still believe in our Constitution and defend all amendments, not just the ones that will get you elected. This means more to us than anything I believe. Also, you carry through with your promises to Idaho State and the people of this state. You set the example for all the Senators, Congressmen, and the President to follow.

Sincerely,

MIKE, *Sandpoint.*

Unfortunately, the high prices of energy are not just hitting Idahoans at the pumps. The high gas prices have opened the floodgates for the cost of consumer products to be increased across the board. Everywhere we turn, it costs more. Any mode of travel, food, clothing, household repair (the repairman has to figure in the extra cost of gas), the cost of fertilizer and feed for our livestock. Everyone is concerned about the amount of foreclosures in the state. That will only get worse as what income Idahoans had is diminished by the additional cost of everything including gas. It will be even harder for Idahoans to pay their house payment and we may see even more foreclosures.

Mother Nature is having her way with our agriculture states with flooding, etc. That will drive the cost of food and feed even higher, and so much for ethylene. Be careful or it will be a battle between feed and ethylene. If our nation does not wise up and start producing our own food, fuel, etc. and quit building houses on our most fertile ground. The legacy we will leave ourselves and the future generations will be that we gave away or built on our future and the nation by buying and outsourcing too much to foreign countries. We will be at their mercy for our food and fuel.

My humble opinions,

MARY, *Bonnors Ferry.*

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO: Your vote against climate change legislation smacked of partisan politics more to please the oil companies and less to do with supporting Idahoans paying less for gas.

Regarding your request for my observations on the current situation:

I do NOT support: nuclear energy technologies (because of the catastrophic consequences when failure happens); rampant destruction of natural habitats for meager results. (i.e., Alaska. What is the sense in investing millions of dollars to drill for oil in the ANWR when estimates say it contains only enough oil to solely support U.S. consumption for 7 months?); tax breaks for oil companies making windfall profits.

I DO support: Wind and solar power; effective renewable and alternative fuels; more stringent gas mileage demands on automobile manufacturers; more research on affordable hybrids; reduction in price on hybrids; tax incentives for both building and purchasing hybrids; tax penalties for purchasing Large SUV and low gas mileage autos; incentives for conservation; penalties for price gouging on oil companies; Government support for States developing better