



United States Senate

NEWS RELEASE

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ENERGY BILL GETS A PASSING GRADE – STILL MORE TO DO

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Late Thursday, Idaho Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo voted in favor of the Senate Energy Bill, H.R. 6. The bill focused on advanced biofuels and efficiency for automobiles, research and development of carbon capture and storage technologies, and the development of key international strategic energy relationships.

Craig said, “The Bill sets us on the road to a future of alternative fuels that can be produced from domestic agricultural sources and will fuel more efficient cars and trucks. Although the Bill included many provisions for the future that I cosponsored, it still fell short by doing nothing to reduce our dependence on foreign oil for today’s consumer. I will continue working to complete this energy policy by ensuring domestic production is expanded, because we can’t just conserve or innovate our way out of our current problems.”

Crapo said, “This energy bill will go a long way toward increasing our supply of domestic fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel, and cellulosic ethanol; reasonably increasing the economy of vehicles; and adopting aggressive energy-efficiency measures for appliances, buildings and homes and the electric transmission system. Of course, while efficiency increases help alleviate demand-side energy needs, we are still missing the much-larger production piece of the puzzle, including increased domestic production of our traditional energy resource base of oil, natural gas, and coal-based electricity. I will continue to work to see these issues addressed as well.”

H.R. 6 includes a biofuels mandate requiring the production of 36 billion gallons of biofuels by 2022. Craig worked with the Energy Committee to incorporate a cap on the use of corn-based biofuels or ethanol of 15 billion gallons to mitigate impacts on the food supply for the dairy, cattle growing and agricultural community. The balance of the biofuels mandate must come from advanced biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol. Iogen has plans to build one of the first cellulosic ethanol plants in eastern Idaho.

Craig and Crapo voted against forcing electricity generators to produce a percentage of their power from narrowly defined renewable energy sources defined in a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). Instead, Craig and Crapo cosponsored a Clean Portfolio Standard (CPS), which allows for the use of all clean generating sources of electricity, including hydropower and nuclear power, as well as energy efficiency.

The Senate rejected an energy tax increase package. Craig said, “Hasn't this Senate heard the plea of the American consumer over the last 6 months about paying more than \$3 a gallon for gasoline? This \$32 billion tax increase isn't going to change the price at the gas pump tomorrow or the next day or next week or next year, except to increase prices, which is not what the American public expects.”

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Crapo said, “While the tax measure included important incentives for alternative energy resources, which I strongly support, it is important to recognize that less than 2% of our energy needs can be met through these technologies at the current time. To make meaningful strides toward increasing domestic energy security and reducing consumer prices for electricity and the pump in the present, we cannot overlook supply-side issues facing conventional energy sources such as coal, oil and gas. The two strategies are not mutually exclusive and must be implemented in tandem to achieve real results for the goal of meeting the growing energy needs of the country in an affordable manner. I am hopeful that we can make real progress on the tax title to achieve this in the current Congress.”

In March, Craig joined forces with Senator Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., to introduce the SAFE Energy Act (S.875). The legislation focuses on three main principles to help reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil: innovation (biofuels); conservation (vehicle efficiency); and production (domestic oil and natural gas). Two-thirds of the SAFE Energy Act were adopted by the Senate Energy Bill, H.R. 6. The remaining piece, increasing domestic production of our oil and natural gas resources, was a glaring omission and would have provided the most relief to consumers in the short haul. Crapo is a cosponsor of S. 875.

For more information on specific votes, amendments, or floor speeches by Craig, please visit his Energy Bill Floor Journal on his website, http://craig.senate.gov/journal_energy.cfm.