

Your letter indicates your priorities are all screwed up. Your statements that "... I support legislation to fully utilize proven American oil and natural gas reserves in a way that preserves the environment . . . enhanced domestic production, expanded refinery capacity, renewable and alternative energy sources, nuclear power, conservation . . ." are just plain silly.

Unless you and everyone else takes the responsibility of cleaning up and protecting our environment before worrying about the cost of gasoline, Mother Earth will certainly become uninhabitable about the time of Armageddon, which some people say is supposed to happen in this century.

We need real leadership from servants like you.

The environment is the number one issue. Consider:

Carbon fuels:

The use of carbon fuels must be drastically reduced. This cannot be done by:

Increasing exploration for and production of fossil fuels.

Allowing excess profits for the oil industries.

Manufacturing ethanol, and other hair-brained boondoggles.

Failing to set high mileage standards for motor vehicles.

Allowing patent protections to become barriers to energy efficiency.

A ho-hum attitude toward developing renewable alternative energy sources.

A similar attitude about developing alternate forms of transportation (mass transit).

Allowing more urban sprawl.

Making war. Manufacturing and fueling war machines uses huge amounts of energy.

Recreational toys—dirt bikes, auto racing, off-road vehicles, speed boating, etc.

Nuclear Energy:

Absolutely not, unless and until the problem of the disposal of nuclear garbage is fully resolved so that our descendants for many generations to come will not have to contend with our stupidity.

These are sticky questions. Are you going to lead?

JOSEPH, *Sandpoint*.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion about the high energy prices. The high gas prices have caused our family to plan our trips better, combine trips, and limit use of one of our vehicles which gets very poor gas mileage. While these are not necessarily bad things, the amount of our income which is spent on fuel continues to rise. I am also a small business owner here in Twin Falls. My business requires my employees and me to travel to various cities in the southern Idaho area to perform computer and network maintenance and support. Our business expenditures for fuel will probably force us to have to raise our service rates.

One of the biggest gripes that I have with our Congress is the lack of will to do anything constructive about this energy problem. Legislation is preventing the United States from drilling for oil in our country. Many members of Congress talk a lot about purchasing more fuel efficient cars or using public transportation. While I would love to be driving a fuel efficient hybrid auto, as the father of a family of six, I cannot afford to purchase such a vehicle. I also do not have the financial resources at my company to purchase new autos, either. As you are aware, public transportation in Idaho would not be a profitable enterprise. Our cities are, for the most part, not densely populated enough to justify mass transportation. Besides, I need a vehicle for my job, so taking a bus or train to work would not really be something I could do anyway.

I am sure that you will receive many e-mails similar to mine. I hope that you are

able to make a difference in solving this problem.

Thanks,

SCOTT, *Twin Falls*.

You have fought hard for us here in Idaho and hope you can do something about the escalating costs of energy. We do not live in a state with subways, rail service and we have limited bus service only in major cities. What is Congress thinking? Please have them change their ways and let us tap into our own reserves. Stop exporting to other countries and help other fellow Americans.

The average person in Idaho only makes \$7 to \$8 an hour and has to travel over 45 minutes to get to work. Adding the extra burden of gasoline, more and more will not be able to go to work. [They will lose] their jobs and then sign up for assistance. Does that make sense?

Do something positive for this country.

PAMELA, *Riggins*.

Thanks for this opportunity to give feedback. All of us do not like paying \$4 per gallon. The important thing is that all Americans would be willing to make the sacrifice, just as we did in WWII. We can car pool, change our habits, etc. The difference is that in those days, Congress actually represented the people. Americans would be willing to help out with the energy problems if there was real leadership.

When Americans see Congress refusing to give tax credits to those of us who would love to install alternate energy or use solar (as has been done big time in Germany) it leads to massive frustration and then Americans get whiney and complain. But if we had real leadership that said, "Look, times are tough, but we'll get through it together, and what our country is going to invest in is . . . And we are going to do it like this . . ." Americans would willingly pay more at the pump. But right now it all seems so futile. The public pays out big bucks, and Congress will not act to fix the problem.

Idaho doesn't even give tax credits for those of us who would very willingly go solar. Or how about tax breaks for citizens who promise to car pool to work or buy cars with high fuel mileage?

There is no real leadership, and I do not even expect this note to help, to be honest. But, I guess hope blooms eternally!

FOSTER.

My husband and I are both 78 years old . . . I am retired, but my husband works part-time to help make ends meet. The cost of electricity has gone up, the cost of water has gone up, the cost of natural gas to heat our home has gone up, the price of food has gone up, and the price of gasoline at the pump is ridiculous.

Why is China allowed to pump crude oil off our shores when American cannot? It seems that there are too many times that Congress has forgotten who they represent—the people, not the lobbyists. What roles are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank playing in our price of gasoline? We have all the natural resources we need right here in the U.S. but Congress will not let us touch them. Why? It is time to look out for America—that is what you are there to do.

Will Rogers once said "We could slow down the aging process a great deal if it had to make its way through Congress."

Stop bickering and get something done!!! Both parties!!!

DICK and BETTY, *Boise*.

I live in an RV. I use space heaters in the winter because electricity is cheaper than propane; that is changing. I do not run either of my rooftop A/C units; I run a fan. I live in

Nampa and work variable hours in Boise; [public transportation] will not work for me. When gasoline was \$3.57 a gallon, it cost me \$75 to \$80 a week to drive my 1987 Dodge conversion van [which I dearly loved]. I could not afford this. I was forced to buy a 1991 Chevy Astro from my neighbor; he is carrying the contract [the only way I could manage it]. I do not like this vehicle. It has body damage, is impossible to camp in, and is quite unattractive. Last week, with fuel at \$4.07 a gallon, it cost me \$47 for one week. It is quite an improvement, but quite a sacrifice. I have long heard stories of highly fuel-efficient engines, rights of which were bought up by The Big Three and the oil conglomerates and put on the shelf, never to see production. What is up with that? When I left Boeing and went into the Navy in 1968, I had a 1961 Olds F-85 that got 26 miles per gallon when fuel was cheap and plentiful. What happened? I have no objection to properly safe-guarded nuclear power sources. I fully believe in sustainable [solar, wind-farm, etc.] resources. I do not care at all for the axe that the Mid-East nations hold at our neck for energy sources. I do not care at all for the oil conglomerates posting record profits while I pay through the nose. We sure need to do something.

EDWARD, *Nampa*.

You asked about my energy costs; well, this is my situation. Back in 1990, I suffered a major heart attack. I was 49 years old. The hospital bills wiped out any savings I had, but all were paid off in full! I received my first Social Security check in December 1990. In 1991, on a Social Security check of \$460 monthly, I was making space rent on my trailer, as well as payment on a trailer, and had money left over to get all my other bills paid off, plus put a small amount (\$10 or \$15) in savings. Now, with a Social Security check of \$872 monthly, after paying space rent, I am left with \$650 monthly. I allow myself only \$60.00 a month for gas. That does not even fill the tank and because of the inflation rate, when you gross out that figure, that is not enough income for banks to even talk to you about a loan to purchase a fuel-efficient vehicle. Sorry to complain, but things were a lot better in the early nineties than they are today. And this ethanol is a joke! What are people going to do later this year when there is a shortage of corn and soy beans? Will the oil companies, who seem to have no regard for us humans, outbid the food processors so they can make more? And my 23-year-old car, it won't run on it anyway. Nor will anybody else's that I know. When I hear of these CEOs "earning" 12 million dollars a year, I just want to be sick. Here is an idea. It will not work, I can hear the CEOs screaming bloody murder already. But here goes: 1) Nationalize the oil companies, 2) Set a nationwide price of no more than \$1.50. Eliminate all state sales and road taxes off the price. Set a federal sales and road tax of no more than \$.75 cents per gallon. Since diesel fuel is a by-product of gasoline, set a price of no more than \$.75 cents per gallon, and allow no oil company CEO to earn more than \$2 million a year. Like I said, it will never get past Congress (I believe there are too many with their hands out), but would it be nice to be able to bring prices back down, help the little farmer and trucker and all of us old folks. Thanks for your time,

Your friend,

STEVE.