

As long as we can, we'll volunteer for these events, but even so there comes a time when we simply cannot afford it, much as we'd like to volunteer.

Respectfully,

BILL.

SENATOR CRAPO: The ever-increasing fuel prices have forced me and my family to make significant changes in our lifestyle. My wife is a stay-at-home mother, taking care of our two boys; so, consequently, we live on a fixed income like most Americans. To keep our fuel costs at our budgeted amount, we've been forced to purchase a motorcycle for commuting to and from work. This decision comes with a certain level of risk, but it is a choice we have made in order for my wife to continue to stay at home and raise our boys. Should fuel prices continue to increase, we may be forced to have my wife return to the workforce, which, I hope you would agree, is not what this country needs. With fuel prices soaring, it is very aggravating to hear that China and India are 50 miles off the coast of Florida, slant drilling for oil in the continental shelf but yet it is illegal for us to do the same. It is aggravating to hear that the last refinery was built in this country over thirty years ago! I understand this is because of all the regulatory legislation. It is aggravating to hear politicians complaining about big oil profits when their profit margins are only around 8%! It is aggravating to hear politician's discussing windfall profit taxes when it is profits that have built this country! I hope you would agree that it is profits that drive innovation and technology! If the politicians were working on the country's business and not discussing the use of performance enhancing drugs in baseball, cheating in football, writing letters to Rush Limbaugh, etc. . . . the energy crisis in this country would most likely have been solved years ago!

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my thoughts on energy prices and how it has impacted our family as well as allowing me to vent my frustration with some of the leadership of this country. I applaud you on your recent fight on the "climate change legislation." I believe the climate change and global warming is a huge myth, and I pray we never implement cap and trade; which, I believe will be the beginning of the end. Keep up the good fight & God Bless!

Respectfully yours,

SCOTT.

Like many others, I am concerned about the rise in energy costs—for me it has a great deal to do with my health. I was diagnosed with MS a few years ago. One of the most difficult times for me is the summer. MS makes the heat pretty much unbearable, so the air-conditioner runs most of the time—especially through May to October. I also must use the air-conditioner in my car when I drive. When the heat strikes, I become fatigued so much so that I cannot move. This makes it hard to be with friends and family, especially my 13 year old son—who is very active. I do hope that we can find some alternatives to gas and oil, and look forward to hearing how you can help.

Thank you,

KIM, Boise.

It may seem as though it will take a holy cow to get our legislature to think "oil independence," but as I am sure you realize, we have over 100 years of oil independence at our fingertips; that's right here at home in Utah, Montana, and the Dakotas, this is not counting the offshore oil available off both coasts, OR do we need to help China find our oil. It is about time for a wake-up call. I do

support your logical and commonsense approach to the energy crisis we have at hand and support your direction.

Keep up the good fight; let us stop sending our dollars overseas. Oil independence—that is the ticket! Thanks for listening.

JOHN.

MR. CRAPO: Perhaps you should read the Idaho State Journal, the "Your Letters" in the first section of the paper dated June 16, 2008. Side with big oil, as it clearly looks as you did, and then expect your constituents to write in to you and give heartbreaking stories seems a bit ludicrous. Opening up wilderness for drilling is a 10+ year detour as that is the estimate as to when we would actually see any of that oil in the system.

If you want to help:

1. Find ways to help the average home owner to install solar panels on rooftops or in backyards to help offset the rising electrical rates. This needs to be through low interest easy to obtain loans and even grants for low income homeowners, not tax breaks, as the initial investment is large and out of range for home owners such as myself. This would result in lower electrical bills and maybe even a money-generating opportunity for the homeowner as they can sell excess back to Idaho Power.

2. Help establish more wind farms and make sure that the end product stays in Idaho, not transmitted out of state. The out-landish approval hearings and appeals need to be stopped.

3. Nuclear was never and is never the answer; the end product of such is a disaster waiting to happen.

4. It is time to come to grips with the fact that oil prices will never come down. We have created this dragon, and now it has come to burn our villages. Do we really need Hummers, large SUVs, NASCAR? I think not. The automobile makers in this country need to be held to higher standards and take the lead on producing vehicles that actually make respectable gas mileage. This country put men on the moon, but we cannot produce a vehicle that actually makes a respectable MPG, and I am not talking 30 MPG but 50MPG+.

5. Yes, it is time to crack down on big oil. The profits that these companies have been posting are insane. The arguments that production costs have risen, etc., are a slap in the face to anyone listening to these numbers. These are profits, not gross income.

Best Wishes,

MATTHEW.

My wife and I are in our mid-sixties, my wife on Social Security. The spiraling fuel prices are beginning to wreak havoc on our conservative budget. I am on the verge of riding a bicycle to work, nine miles each way. I know that we, as a country, have the ability to produce all the energy we need for generations, but [no solutions are forthcoming]!

I hate to think I have worked my entire adult life just to have prohibitive fuel prices keep us from doing many of the things we have looked forward to.

For a change we can believe in, do something about it! Let us start by tapping the massive resources we have available to us here at home. Americans like myself will not be quiet forever.

ALAN, Meridian.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback. I have many friends who are retired from the military and police. [Most,] like me, are conservatives.

As we e-mail each other, the same theme and thoughts continue to be repeated. Why [does it seem there are no answers from our

Congress regarding energy prices? There have been plenty of hearings on issues like baseball, impeaching the President and grilling oil executives, but nothing that actually fixes the problem.]

The lesson of history [appears to be lost by many people]. The oil embargo was the first shot fired in this global war. The Saudis are not our friends, and the entire Middle East is [a consistently unstable area], yet we have done nothing for over 30 years!!!

Why would or should our President seek additional production [from that area] when this country has known reserves that could be effectively used to deflate the cost of oil, gas and diesel. I am not a lawyer, but even I, as well as most commonsense thinking people, have figured this out.

The very removal of the current restrictions on drilling of our currently known resources would drive the costs down almost overnight. This would take courage and leadership.

This is not considered to be a long-term plan for energy independence. However, if used as a bridge, it would allow for the needed technical expertise to develop higher efficiency engines and alternate transportation choices. This would serve this country better than the current so-called energy policies currently in place.

With China drilling for oil just off the coast of Florida, how can you guarantee that they will not use current technology to "poach" our oil reserves in this area?

Given the track record of [action so far], I do not have much confidence in anything getting done.

RONALD, Council.

I am a single parent. I work hard and also go to school as a full-time student. It is a 30-mile drive to my school one-way, and 77 miles to work one-way. The cost of gas is not my idea of fun. Thankfully my primary vehicle gets 40 miles to the gallon, which helps to take the sting out of it a bit, but not much. I am having to curtail a lot of the activities that I do with my children that include taking them swimming and such, due to the fact that I need to get to work or school and cannot afford much else. I have been watching the prices go up, oil companies and their executives [receiving record] profits and no relief in site. Most Americans are suffering while [a small group] are building bigger bank accounts. I believe in capitalism completely, but not [at the expense of] the common American. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out who is behind all of this, and that there are most likely a few traders out there and maybe even others driving the price of fuel up too to further pad their pockets. I never understood why some wanted to cut off the supply to the strategic reserve as that is such a small drop in the bucket that it will never do any good in the long run. Food costs are going up due to rising fuel costs, which means now I do not get some of the things my kids used to enjoy as often. We do not even go out to dinner or even a movie as that small amount of fuel could make the difference in getting to work or class for me. And trust me in saying, [my family relationships have suffered] because I cannot afford things we used to do that they want to do. When the time comes that they say the cost of satellite TV needs to go up due to fuel costs I will have had it. I am watching way too many companies use that excuse to raise prices when fuel has nothing to do with their goods and or services. This has got to stop, and the oil companies get reigned in and severely penalized for what they are doing. Open the Alaskan and Gulf reserves and slap major government regulation on the oil companies like was done to