

down, so these small businesses, and these poor Americans, are being impacted disproportionately.

Higher gas prices not only affect our ability to get around, but increasingly they are affecting each facet of our everyday life. Energy builds into our economy from the natural resource level right on up to the final product that goes out to the market and is utilized by the consumer.

Fuel costs are making transportation, construction, and food costs rise. Recently, oil hit \$145 per barrel and, from the beltway to Middle America, \$4 a gallon gas is the frightening norm.

In the face of these challenges to the American economy and consumer, we have failed to take the steps that are necessary to address this problem either in the short term or the long term. Unfortunately, the legislation we are considering today would do little to change that.

The legislation before us today would do little if anything to reduce oil prices. Blaming investors misses the primary cause of high fuel prices: Nearly 2 years of failed congressional energy policy that has done little to increase availability of fuel resources. That is the cause, and time and time again, we have looked at legislation that tries to disrupt the market—the market that provides an opportunity for the businesses of this country to supply energy to its consumers.

This Congress has been ignoring one of the fundamental rules of economics: Supply and demand. Instituting policies that disrupt the free market does not increase supply. Worldwide supply for energy is being outpaced by a growing demand.

President Bush is doing his part by removing the Executive order that limited the drilling for oil and gas off the Outer Continental Shelf.

The majority party now wants to shift blame from this Chamber to investors, who they would have you believe are robber baron speculators. If only it were so simple. There is no nefarious fiend sitting in a dark room waxing his black mustache playing the market like a mandolin. So who is investing then? Pension funds are, for one. They are making an investment in the growing strength of energy stocks and bonds.

In Colorado, the Public Employees' Retirement Association—we refer to it as PERA—has seen oil companies as an attractive place to invest their members' money. Their 2007 investment overview listed two oil companies in their top 10 stock holdings, including their No. 1 valued stock.

Is their greater interest in investing? Sure there is. But it is primarily because short supply of oil has caused its value to increase. This would happen with any commodity in a similar situation. Conversely, when we take steps to increase supply, prices will go down.

If I remember correctly, there is a guidance principle that applies to the

Public Employees' Retirement Association of Colorado that says you are going to invest members' money in that part of the stock market that is going to, in a safe way, give you the best return. Energy stocks match that criteria.

The day after President Bush lifted the Presidential moratorium on drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf, oil prices fell nearly \$7 a barrel. Let me say that again. We experienced a drop of almost \$7 per barrel in 24 hours because action was taken that got us closer to putting additional supply on the market. This translates into cheaper gas.

The national average price for gas yesterday was almost 5 cents less per gallon than it was before the Presidential moratorium was lifted. This shows that instead of blaming investors, we need to look for ways to increase supply. We do this by finding more sources of energy and using less.

One of the most promising sources of domestic energy is found in the West, much in my home State of Colorado. The oil shale found in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming could yield between 800 billion to 1.8 trillion barrels of oil. This is more than the proven reserves of the entire country of Saudi Arabia and certainly enough to help drive down gas prices and bring us closer to energy independence. Making us less dependent on foreign oil. We in the United States cannot currently begin to plan how to utilize this resource because of an ill-advised moratorium.

Why aren't we taking steps to utilize this resource and cut back on the \$700 billion we send overseas annually for fuel? Because the Democrats in the Senate and in the House of Representatives have prevented the Department of the Interior from even issuing the proposed regulation under which oil shale development could move forward. How do they try to correct this misguided policy? By blaming investors and proposing a piece of legislation that will potentially make things worse by increasing oil market volatility and eliminating investment opportunities.

I support some CFTC reform, such as providing them resources to improve current oversight and get more cops on the beat. I do, however, have major concerns with efforts that would impede the free market with additional regulations. This is especially important now that financial markets are global in scale. Attempts to regulate the market would only apply in the United States. This could cause economic activity to move offshore and help build foreign capital markets that compete against the United States, making us less competitive. This would cause us to lose jobs.

Instead of focusing on blame, we should be focusing on our resources, finding more domestic resources, such as oil shale and using less through conservation. We need more supply and less demand. As we move forward in this debate I hope the Senate will ac-

cept amendments, like the ones I hope to offer, that will do just that.

Thank you, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LAUTENBERG). The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise to join the sentiments of my colleagues from Georgia and Colorado who have spoken about the importance we must place as a nation on implementing an effective and meaningful energy policy in this country as quickly as possible. The United States is far too dependent in our energy policy on petroleum, and we are far too dependent in terms of the petroleum which we utilize from foreign sources.

We need to diversify our energy policy, and we need to do it quickly. By that what I mean is that while we are seeking to become less dependent on petroleum, we must aggressively develop and produce our own sources of petroleum to help stabilize and control the increasing and spiraling cost of oil. We also need to look at alternative and renewable fuels. We need to strongly move into nuclear power. We need to work on conservation aggressively. It is estimated that as much as 30 percent of the world's consumption of energy could be reduced through effective conservation measures. That is another huge source of energy—simply not consuming.

Yet as we have all of these alternatives and options out there, we are faced today with a bill in the Senate and a process to handle this bill that severely limits our ability to evaluate and, hopefully, adopt meaningful alternatives and to establish a sensible comprehensive national energy policy.

The bill we have before us today has one item in it, and that is a regulatory change, or governance, of the futures markets, often called the speculation bill. Certainly—and I will talk about it in a moment—certainly, we can debate whether there is a need for increased regulatory support and for evaluation and oversight and management of our futures markets. I believe there is room for that, though I believe the bill that is before us is not well written. However, while we are doing so, we ought to also take this opportunity—and Americans should be glad an energy issue is on the floor of the Senate, but we ought to take this opportunity, with a bill on the floor of the Senate, to look at the other ideas about how we should achieve energy independence. The circumstances we face now threaten not only our economic security but our national security, and Americans should cry out for this Congress to take solid comprehensive action now, not to simply face one issue that arguably is not even at the core of the need for the solutions.

The Senate ought to work the way it has worked in the past. Let me give a couple of examples. Bill after bill after bill, the way this Senate has historically worked, was brought to the floor, amendments were filed, a robust debate