inherited a $1.3 trillion deficit. That is a fact. That doesn't come from me; that comes from the Congressional Budget Office. I understand, at least in part, why that happened. Some of us on the floor of the Senate did not support giving away tax revenues we didn't have. Some of us didn't support going to war without paying for it. I had that discussion. How about paying for some of this? The previous President said: You try to pay for it, I will veto the bill. Is it surprising, then, that we are deep in debt? Not particularly surprising to me. Those are not very thoughtful decisions.

FINANCIAL REFORM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, 16 years ago I wrote a cover article for the Washington Monthly magazine. The title was ''Very Risky Business,'' the subtitle, ''If we don't watch out, a new kind of Wall Street gambling—exotic derivatives trading—could shake the market and put taxpayers on the line for another bailout.'' I talked about $35 trillion in derivatives. That is now a fraction of what is out there. I talked about banks that were trading on derivatives on their own proprietary accounts. I said they might just as well have a roulette wheel or a craps table in their lobby. It is just flatout gambling, and it ought to be stopped.

It is not surprising to me because I made the same point 5 years after that, when they tried to repeal Glass-Steagall—and did successfully—in order for us to compete with the Europeans. That took apart the protections that existed after the Great Depression. It was decided that we don't need those protections anymore. They took it apart. I was one of eight Senators to vote no. I warned on the floor then that another taxpayer bailout would come within a decade. It did, regrettably.

Now the question is, as we put together a piece of legislation to address these issues, what do we do that doesn't have us just having a press conference to say: Look at what we did. What is it we have to do to make sure this doesn't happen again? Have we really tightened the regulations?

Let me go through a couple things. Will we have dealt with too big to fail? The answer is no, not really. Too big to fail means there are some businesses in this country in the financial services industry, some of the biggest financial institutions, that are determined ''too big to fail,'' and their failure would cause grievous harm to the economy, perhaps bring the entire economy down. Therefore, if they are too big to fail, they are, by definition, going to be bailed out.

I happen to believe that if you are too big to fail, you are simply too big. You ought to be pared back, trimmed down until you are not too big to fail. That is not what is happening here. We are going to pass a piece of legislation in which the biggest financial institutions are bigger than they were before we got into this mess. Too big to fail doesn't mean you are too big. In fact, you can get bigger with the kind of legislation that is being considered in conference.

Proprietary trading. Will they still allow banks to trade on their own proprietary accounts? Will they put a restriction, finally, on banks' ability to make speculative bets using their own capital in their own lobby? We will see. It doesn't look like it.

What about the issue of naked credit default swaps, CDSs? They have no insurable interest on any side of them, just flatout betting. No, this isn't going on in Atlantic City or Las Vegas; it is going on across the country with financial institutions. Will this be trimmed down? It doesn't look like it.

How about the ratings agencies, the agencies that gave AAA ratings to fundamentally worthless securities, had a bunch of people left with bad securities in the bowels of financial balance sheets? What about that? There was an amendment on the floor of the Senate to deal with that. That has now been watered down. Or capital standards.

I won't go on except to say that I hope the sum total of this conference between the House and Senate on financial reform is about working for the American people and not the interests that helped create this mess. I hope this is a time to suck it up and do the right thing. I hope the conferees understand that if this bill is excessively weakened—and it wasn't strong leaving here—they should not assume they will have the votes to automatically pass that kind of legislation back in the Senate and perhaps the House.

This is very important. This is not some other issue. This is about whether the economy will continue to provide strength and expand and promote hiring. It will be what our children and grandchildren experience in terms of opportunities for the future in our great country.

It is a conference that is pushed by all sides to do various things for various interests. I hope they understand that this is something that will revisit us again in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years from now unless we do the right thing and make certain we address the key issues.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I wish to talk about energy legislation. I have been reading today all the stories in the newspapers about the caucus we had last week in which we described energy legislation and climate change legislation and what we should or should not do.

There are two challenges for this country at this point: No. 1, we are far too dependent on foreign oil. Over 60 percent of the oil we receive comes from outside of our country; 70 percent of the oil we use goes into the transportation sector. We are far too dependent on foreign oil. If something should happen to shut off the supply of foreign oil to our country, our economy will be flat on its back for a long while. We need to be less dependent on foreign oil. No. 2, there is something happening to our climate. We are not completely sure what that is, but I don't think there is any question that there is a wide scientific consensus that something is happening to the global climate.

We should work on both, no question about that. But there is a practical limitation of what we will be able to consider and do between now and the end of this year. I have said previously that I support a cap on carbon. I support pricing carbon. I have said I will not support what is called classic cap and trade, which would serve the interests of Wall Street by creating a $1 trillion carbon securities market so they can trade carbon securities on Monday and Tuesday and tell us what the cost of our energy is going to be on Thursday and Friday. I have no interest in doing that, nor would I support it. But there are ways for us to price carbon and to restrict carbon. I understand that.

The question has lingered now about a piece of legislation that came out of the Energy Committee 1 year ago this month. We had 12 weeks of markup. It was a very difficult markup. We passed, at the conclusion of the markup, a bipartisan piece of energy legislation that advances our country's energy interests and will make us less dependent on foreign oil. It will substantially reduce carbon emissions because it will dramatically change the amount of production that comes from renewable energy, wind, solar, biomass, and so on.

For a year we have now waited for that legislation to come to the floor. It has not come to the floor because some say: If we can't do comprehensive climate change legislation, then we don't want to do any legislation. Even that which would reduce carbon, even that which would substantially increase production from sources of energy where the wind blows and the Sun shines so we can collect this energy and put it on a grid.

It does not make any sense, that we would not consider a bipartisan energy bill and end this year having failed to address something that, A, was bipartisan, and B, will in fact reduce carbon and will give us an opportunity to be less dependent on foreign oil. That makes no sense, not to be able to take advantage of that kind of success.

It seems to me there are not 60 votes in the Senate to bring up a comprehensive climate change bill in June or July of this year. I know some people will have heartburn when I say that. I just think that is the case. If that is the case, let's not block a bipartisan energy bill that does address production, efficiency, and a lower carbon future.

We need to produce more in this country. We need to save more, that is, conserve more. Even as we do that, we

need to produce more energy in a different way—wind energy, solar energy, the biofuels, obviously, that are renewable and, generally speaking, reduce carbon.

Building an interstate highway of transmission capability is essential because it is not the case that all people live in areas where they get the best sunshine or the most significant amount of wind. If we are going to get the most energy available from wind and solar, we need the kind of transmission that is capable of getting the wind energy and solar energy and then moving it to where it is needed.

The building efficiency plan that contains the best and quickest capability for saving energy is also in the bill we have written.

We will and we should produce more domestic oil. We are doing unbelievable things in new kinds of horizontal drilling. The Bakken shale in my State is the largest assessed reserve of recoverable oil ever registered in the history of the lower 48—just in the last 2 years—up to 4.3 billion barrels of technically recoverable oil.

Coal development, including carbon capture and sequestration, an especially beneficial use of carbon—all of that is capable of being done; and, yes, some nuclear energy. I support loan guarantees for nuclear plants, like requested by the Administration.

I think all of this is capable of being done in a way that reduces our dependence on foreign oil and is good for our economy. I understand change is hard and that is never demonstrated more concretely than in this Chamber. Change is very hard. I mentioned some while ago that a man named Rudolf Diesel showed up at the World's Fair in Europe about 110 years ago. Rudolf Diesel showed up with a new engine which we now know as the diesel engine. He was very proud of the engine he had developed, and it ran on vegetable oil. Yes, that was 110 years ago. Rudolf Diesel's new engine ran on vegetable oil. Most of what we can and should and I hope will do, does not need to represent a new idea.

Ninety-seven percent of our transportation sector runs on oil. So Senator ALEXANDER, myself, and Senator MERKLEY have just introduced the electric drive transportation bill. We are moving toward electric drive vehicles, and we are establishing the capability of demonstration cities for infrastructure and all the things that are necessary, including battery investment and so on. I think ultimately we will have a 400- or 500-mile battery in vehicles that are electric drive vehicles.

Think of the changes in transportation, and it is pretty unbelievable. Nobody knows exactly what the future is going to hold, but we either decide to make that future or we just let it happen. I am a big believer in making it happen. In 1935, it took 3 weeks to go from Chicago to New York. Twenty-five years later, it took 3 days by railroad, then the cars, and then the jet airplanes, and all of a sudden things changed dramatically.

From the Roman legions time until when Lewis and Clark came and spent the winter in North Dakota on their wonderful expedition, there was no change to speak of in travel. One could travel as fast as a horse or a river stream could take them, and that was it. All of a sudden, in the last century, century and a half, things have exploded. But it has required a great deal of energy.

So the question is, What kind of energy? How do we produce it? What makes us less dependent, for example on foreign oil, so we do not find ourselves, at some point, tipped over in an economy that cannot work because we do not have the energy? How do we address the energy issue, still paying attention to the issue of climate change? Those are the issues.

As I indicated, very few people can see the future. In fact, most people are skeptical about anything. They say Fulton, when he developed the steam engine—he apparently was with Napoleon, talking to Napoleon about his idea—and Napoleon said: Are you kidding me?

He probably did not quite say it that way. He said: You are saying you are going to make a boat sail against the wind by putting a fire under its deck? I don't think so. That was Napoleon's response to Fulton.

Or Einstein said: There is no evidence whatsoever that nuclear energy will ever be achievable. I do not know, has anybody ever said Einstein lacked clarity about the future?

David Sarnoff once famously said about the wireless music box, which we now call the radio: Who on Earth would pay for someone to send a message that goes to no one in particular? Or Harry Warner who said: Who would pay to hear actors talk? So much for prognosis. Watson, at IBM, said he thought there was a market worldwide for about five computers. That was his assessment.

So it is very hard to predict the future. No one can see very far. The question, it seems to me is: Are we going to decide reasonably what we want our future to be, with new technology—perhaps using old technology—and move there, or are we just going to sit around and let things happen?

That is why this Energy bill is so important. We are charting a new path. RES—we say we want 15 percent, and if we can get the bill to the floor, I am going to offer an amendment for 20 percent. We want 20 percent of all electricity produced in America coming from renewable sources. Driving renewable energy will make us less dependent on foreign oil.

I also support domestic production of oil and gas and domestic production of coal. By the way, coal is one of the most significant quantities of resources in our country for energy, and there is great concern because it produces carbon when you burn it, and that is tough for the environment and goes against the issue of the global climate change matter. So what do we do about that? Well, one of the things I am convinced we can do is understand that carbon is a product, not just a problem.

What can we do with carbon? Well, we can produce fuel with carbon. We have work going on at Sandia National Laboratories that uses a heat engine. You put CO_2 in one side and water in the other side, and you fracture the molecules and chemically recombine them, and you produce fuel. So take carbon and air and produce fuel, along with some water.

I do not think these problems are unsolvable. But in order to get there, we have to get this Energy bill to the floor of the Senate, and it has now been 1 year. I noticed this morning there were 15 or 20 of my colleagues who said: If a bill does not contain climate change, we would not support any bill coming to the floor.

Well, do you know what? Climate change means you want to reduce carbon to try to protect our environment. How do you reduce carbon? With the very kinds of policies that exist in this Energy bill, and we have done it on a bipartisan basis.

So my hope is, in the next couple of weeks or so, that we might finally, at last—at long, long last—get to the point where we are bringing up a piece of legislation that is out of the committee, that is bipartisan, that will protect our environment but, most importantly, will invest in virtually every form of energy production and conservation and make us less dependent—much less dependent—on foreign oil.

That ought to be the goal of all Americans. We do not think much of it, we do not talk much about it because we just assume energy is going to be a part of our lives beginning tomorrow morning. We get up in the morning, we turn off the alarm—that was electricity—we turn on the light—that is electricity—make a piece of toast—that is electricity—get a cup of coffee—that is electricity—take a shower—that is electricity to heat the water. We get in the car and turn the key to start the engine—that is oil.

The fact is, we use energy in a prodigious way all day long and never think much about it. But if, God forbid, tomorrow morning something happens that shuts off the supply of foreign oil to this country, our economy would be in deep, desperate trouble. We would be smart, we would be wise, to understand that over dependence, that excessive dependence on foreign oil, is a detriment to this county's future. We better get about the business of trying to address it. There is a way to do that, and a way to do that at the same time that is very helpful to this country's environment by restricting and limiting CO_2 emissions because we are going more and more toward the development of renewable sources of energy for the future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

GULF OILSPILL

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I just want to make some brief remarks this afternoon concerning the ongoing tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico and the Deepwater Horizon response.

Sixty-one days ago is when the tragedy started. We are here, 61 days later, and we still have this tremendous pouring of oil from the bottom of the sea floor into the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, the amount of oil that is coming into the gulf now equals the size of the Exxon Valdez oilspill every 2½ days.

Yet while this oil continues to gush, and while we have hope that the containment dome will capture more and more of this oil as it comes from the bottom of the ocean, we are still seeing a weak, at best, response from the Federal Government in trying to keep this oil from coming ashore.

Last week—a week ago tomorrow—I met with the President of the United States and Admiral Allen in Pensacola. At the same time, I raised the issue of skimmers. Why are there so few skimmers in the Gulf of Mexico? Why were there only, at that time, 32 skimmers off the coast of Florida? The President and Admiral Allen told me they were making every effort they could to get more skimmers to the gulf and that they were welcoming skimmers from foreign countries coming to our country to aid in the effort.

I told them at that time there was a State Department report saying that 21 offers of assistance have been made from 17 foreign countries, and they had been refused. I was informed back that, no; that is not the case and in fact we are using skimmers from foreign countries. I came to find out, through discussions with my office, there are still offers and there have been offers from foreign countries for skimmers and, in fact, those offers were refused.

I will come to the floor tomorrow to talk about that in more detail.

But the state of affairs is there are now only 20 skimmers off the coast of Florida, when there were 32 last week. There are now just 20, while there are 2,000 skimmers available in the United States alone. That number comes from Admiral Allen. I spoke to Admiral Allen last week, along with my colleague from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, and we said: Where are the skimmers?

I showed him information like I have today, which is the Deepwater Horizon response report from the incident command in the State of Florida. Then it showed 20 skimmers. Today it still shows 20 skimmers.

I asked him to reconcile this for me. If we are asking for all these skimmers, if we are calling for all of them to come here, where are they? The response is anemic at best. So today I have sent a letter to Admiral Allen asking for an inventory of the 2,000 skimmers that he has said are available in the United States of America.

When I talked to the President and Admiral Allen about this last week, they said: Look, some of these skimmers are not available because we may need them for an oilspill. Well, we have an oilspill. Just because they may be required to stand on watch somewhere in case an oilspill happens someplace else, that is like saying to the people of Pensacola: Your home is on fire, but we can't send the fire engine because there may be a fire someplace else. It does not make any sense.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD, as well as this report from the State of Florida about the 20 skimmers off the coast of Florida.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2010.

Admiral THAD W. ALLEN,
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard,
Washington, DC.

I am tremendously concerned over the lack of skimmer vessels responding to the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. It is clear that we are facing a disaster of unprecedented size that requires a response with an unprecedented scope. As a result, every available skimming resource should be responding to the Gulf to combat the encroaching oil that is befouling Gulf beaches—including Florida's.

As of June 20, there were only 20 skimmers responding to the oil spill in the waters off Florida's coast, yet you have stated that there are approximately 2,000 skimmers in the United States alone. For Floridians, these numbers do not add up.

I respectfully request that you provide me with a current inventory of all domestic skimmer vessels, including their current locations and operational responsibilities. Also, please detail whether each of these skimmers has been solicited by the Unified Command to assist in the ongoing oil response.

Also, I am troubled by the apparent lack of communication between the Unified Command and elected officials regarding the actual location of skimmers responding in the Gulf on a daily basis. As a result, I respectfully request a daily update via e-mail as to the number and location of skimmers throughout the Gulf region and specifically off Florida's shores.

More and more environmental and economic damage is being wrought on the Gulf with each passing day. These damages should not be further exacerbated by a lack of appropriate response vessels or poor communication between response leaders. I appreciate your continued leadership in this unprecedented effort and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

GEORGE S. LEMIEUX,
U.S. Senator.