

First, I want to talk about ethanol. It is difficult to understand why Congress continues to believe that ethanol is a desirable substitute for gasoline. It is widely reported that even if all of the 300 million acres—500,000 square miles—of currently harvested U.S. cropland produced ethanol, they wouldn't supply all of the gasoline and diesel fuel we now burn for transport, and they would supply only about half of the demand for the year 2025. We are not going to grow our way to energy security. We are also starting to see the devastating effects our current ethanol production is having on our scarce water supply, the environment, and human health.

Despite these facts, one of the bill's most prominent features is a five-fold increase in the ethanol mandate from the currently required 7.5 billion gallons by 2012 to 36 billion gallons by 2022. Meeting this mandate will require even more corn-based ethanol and the production of other so-called advanced biofuels, largely made from cellulosic ethanol. Although cellulosic ethanol production is in its infancy and does not exist commercially today, the bill specifies that 21 billion gallons of the 36 billion gallons mandated be cellulosic ethanol. This is nothing more than a congressional gamble with American taxpayer dollars.

If Congress is serious about moving away from oil to alternative fuels it cannot, as it has done here, subsidize political favorites and engage in statutory prescription. This will actually slow energy innovation and may even retard the gains we have made. An excellent example of this point is the exclusion of woody biomass material from our Nation's overgrown forests from the production of advanced biofuels. Companies throughout the West, including many small businesses, are working in partnership with the Federal Government to help restore our national forests by removing this woody biomass material and using it to produce energy. This oversight in the bill complicates these efforts and could seriously slow the gains my home State of Arizona and other Western States dominated by Federal lands have made to combat catastrophic wildfire.

Now, let's turn to the other major feature of this bill—federally mandated increases in corporate average fuel economy, CAFE, standards. This bill requires each manufacturer's fleet to average 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a roughly 40 percent increase over current standards for cars and trucks. What this proposal seems to overlook is that more fuel efficient cars and trucks already exist on the market for those who want them. And as gas prices rise, my guess is increasing numbers of consumers will buy smaller, more fuel efficient cars without being told to do so by Congress. The point is that this is a consumer choice issue. By federally mandating these increases there will be less choice, in-

creases in car sticker prices, and the very real possibility of more unnecessary highway deaths due to the increases in lighter vehicles, which generally are less safe in collisions on the road. A National Academy of Sciences study concluded that vehicle downsizing costs 1,300 to 2,600 lives per year.

Another major problem with the CAFE provisions in the bill is the failure to clarify the regulatory responsibilities of the National Highway Transportation Safety Board and the Environmental Protection Agency over the regulation of tailpipe emissions and fuel economy requirements. The administration in its Statement of Administration Policy makes this point. Failing to address this issue will likely leave industry to sort through layers of contradictory regulation.

Beyond the biofuels and CAFE provisions, the bill includes a full assortment of new efficiency mandates for appliances and buildings and even takes measures to phase out incandescent lightbulbs. Industry in the private sector has already brought to market alternative lighting technologies to the traditional lightbulb, and as prices drop consumers are switching over to them. Provisions like these are nothing more than Congress's attempt to take credit for something the market is already doing and accomplishing far more quickly and efficiently than the government can, I might add.

In sum, instead of enacting poor energy policy, Congress should focus on what it must do before we leave here this year—fund the Government by enacting fiscally responsible appropriations bills and ensuring our troops have what they need.

#### PASSAGE OF FARM BILL

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, with the passage of the farm bill, I want to commend the work of my legislative staff led by Kasey Gillette our senior legislative assistant. Kasey did an excellent job on both substance and strategy always focusing on how the bill would impact farm families and the agricultural economy of Pennsylvania. Kasey had two great teammates: Caryn Long and Alex Davis, who labored for months on very complex matters in the bill. Without the work of Kasey, Caryn, and Alex, I wouldn't have been able to have four amendments adopted during the floor debate and five others adopted during the committee markup.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE HALE

• Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, this morning WABI-AM radio in my home State of Maine dedicated the George Hale Studio in Bangor. I commend Clear Channel Communications for recognizing the many contributions George Hale has made to our State dur-

ing his 54-year career in broadcasting, and I am honored to offer a few words in tribute to him.

George Hale is a true broadcasting legend. For more a half century, he has kept the people of Maine informed, he has entertained us, and he has brought us together as a community of friends and neighbors. He has brought the best of Maine into our homes, and he has always been a welcome guest.

Still going strong today, George Hale will forever be associated with the Bangor Auditorium and the great high school basketball tournaments held there, but that is just a start. University of Maine football, baseball, and basketball have all benefited from his great work, and he is beloved by generations of fans, coaches, and players. Whether describing victory or defeat, he always treats the athletes with respect and appreciation for their efforts.

Generations of Mainers have begun their day with George. Many used to begin their day by tuning in at 5:45 a.m. to hear his thoughts and comments on everything ranging from Red Sox to world affairs.

And the tradition continues today. Along with his friend and cohost Ric Tyler, George's show provides news and insight about the issues facing Maine and the Nation. As one who has appeared on his show many times, I can say that George always treats his guests with fairness and respect.

George was blessed with a great voice, and he has used it well as a powerful spokesman for great causes. His support for the March of Dimes, and especially his advocacy for the folic acid campaign, has greatly helped this outstanding organization carry out its vital mission of improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. The March of Dimes and George Hale truly are a championship team.

WABI-AM radio is known as the Voice of Maine. It is a fitting name because George Hale truly is the Voice of Maine. He is a great friend to me and to all the people of my State. I know we all look forward to many more years of hearing that great voice from the George Hale Studio.●

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4357. A communication from the Director, Regulatory Review Group, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulatory Streamlining of the Farm Service Agency's Direct Farm Loan Programs" (RIN0560-AF60) received on December 7, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4358. A communication from the Administrator, Risk Management Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Common Crop Insurance Regulations; Potato Provisions" (RIN0563-AC05) received on