and they are moving around, positioning themselves under the guidance of the air traffic control system. They are constantly almost running into each other—or in the air—or just missing. It is unacceptable. It is horrible. It is heading in a much worse direction. It is not something we talk about much, but once in a while stories of near misses at our Nation's airports in fact do make the news.

Let's be honest. If it had not been for the quick thinking and action of a few air traffic control people and our pilots, our Nation would have had one if not several major accidents claiming the lives of hundreds of people over the last several years.

This legislation and the managers' amendment I have offered contain provisions to improve the safety of the Nation's aviation system and the FAA's oversight of that system. The AMAC, as we call it, includes a number of provisions to improve safety, providing the FAA with the resources to conduct thorough oversight of air carriers and foreign repair stations—this is a very controversial subject so expect to hear more about that—and upgrade the existing safety infrastructure at our airports.

Later in our debate—not today, not this morning—I will outline the important facts of the safety provision in the bill.

The bill addresses the other core challenge which will be facing our aviation system, and that is keeping America's small communities connected. The Presiding Officer and I understand that. So does every Senator in this body; if they choose to focus on it, they should be able to understand it. The continuing economic crisis facing the U.S. airline industry absolutely imperils, in stark and terminal terms, the future of hundreds of small rural communities across our country as area carriers drastically reduce service to small rural communities—which is exactly what is going on. That acceleration is going to pick up.

Then you have to say years ago we did this e-rate thing to make the Internet available to everybody in every classroom; no different rural and urban, everybody had it. We went from 15 percent connection to 97 percent.

Not so on aviation. We are going in the other direction. While small and rural communities have long had to cope with limited and unreliable service, we are grateful to have limited and even unreliable service. We are grateful to be able to get into a little prop—because that is what we have—and get from here to there because we can connect in the hub-and-spoke system.

All of these problems have been exacerbated by the weakened financial condition of most U.S. airlines. I am going to talk about that this afternoon. The reduction or elimination of air service has a devastating effect on the economy of small communities. Having adequate air service is not just a matter of convenience or pride, it is a matter of survival: economically, psychologically—self-esteem. Without access to reliable air service, no business is willing to locate its operations in these areas of the country, no matter how attractive the quality of life, no matter how much less the housing costs, no matter how much land may be available. They will not go there. Airports are economic engines that attract critical new development opportunities and jobs.

West Virginia has been able to attract firms from around the world. Why? Because corporate executives know they can visit their operations with ease—for no other reason. As I will explain in my next speech about the state of the airlines, which is a very depressing speech and therefore important, that is in jeopardy. Rural and smalltown America must continue to be adequately linked to the Nation's air transportation network. That is all we can do. We can't get from here to an important place directly, but we can link into the hub-and-spoke system, which has been what we have always done.

I wind up. Small and rural communities are the first to bear the brunt of bad economic times and the last to see the benefit of good economic times. That is not fair. Americans are Americans. The general economic downturn and the dire straits of the aviation community have placed exceptional burdens on air service to our most isolated communities. The Federal Government must provide additional resources, and our bill does that.

The bill also reaffirms our commitment to rural America by increasing the essential air service—the Presiding Officer well knows what that is—and also to the Small Community Air Service Development Program, for 4 more years, and we also have a passenger bill of rights which will be discussed later.

The industry would be required to provide a number of things: Telling people about what planes are on time, what are not, what the pattern is; sort of to get a sense of all that, but there is a lot more. So all of us recognize there are no quick and easy solutions to this timely and timeless problem that plague our aviation industry.

Aviation incorporates so many things that are so critical to all of us. It connects people to distant family members, links businesses to businesses, allows people to interact easily on a global scale. We are a global world, but it is still amazing to me to be able to get on a plane in the morning in West Virginia and be in Asia that same day.

So what railroads were to the 19th and 20th centuries, air transportation is to the 21st century; with all due respect to our interstate highway system. So given the challenges our Nation's aviation system faces, I think we must pass S. 1300, which is called the Aviation Investment and Modernization Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to inquire as to how much time I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 37 minutes remaining for the use of the minority at this time.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, let me say to my friend from West Virginia, we have done a good job in the areas you are talking about because it was not too long ago that all the AIP concentration was going to big regionals. Due to our efforts, we now have given greater power to the State aeronautic boards, who have a better idea as to what the needs are in the State of West Virginia, my State of Oklahoma.

I think we have come a long way. I would certainly echo what you say. I am a little privileged to be the last active commercial pilot in the Senate, so I take a personal interest in these things.

But there is nothing that can help a community be more viable than a good general aviation airport, an airport that can serve the commercial community. In fact, you can look through our State and see where the communities are not doing well and tie that to the capacity they have—air traffic capacity.

So I think we are going to be doing a good thing by addressing that this afternoon. That is not why I am here though.

BIOFUEL MANDATES

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are in the midst of global food difficulties. You have been seeing it on television, and it is the result of decades of misguided environment and energy policies. As worldwide food availability decreases and prices continue to skyrocket, decades of ill-conceived planning by politicians and bureaucrats right here in Washington, afraid of expanding our energy supplies, are now bearing ugly fruit.

American families and the international community continue to suffer from these misguided policies, and Washington has to take the first step to begin to address these problems. I think we know what the problem is right now. We have mandated certain things to take place in terms of our fuels, it has had a result of increasing prices of food, but it has another unintended consequence; that is, it is diverting the use of corn to go to fuel as opposed to food.

Now, I am here today to demand two dramatic and necessary actions to help mitigate our current biofuel policy blunder. I have always supported all forms of energy, including biofuels, for a diverse and stable energy mix, but currently policy has skewed common sense and violated the principles of sound energy policy.

These effects are being felt in my home State of Oklahoma, where I am hearing concerns regarding ethanol.

Scott Dewald, with the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, described one aspect of biofuel's unintended consequences on April 28. He said:

Cow-calf producers all the way to the feeding sector are feeling the pinch of high corn prices. Today's biofuels policies have completely ignored the costs to the livestock sector.

Now, first, Congress has to revisit the recently enacted biofuel mandate, which can only be described as the most expansive biofuel mandate in our Nation's history. The mandates were part of last year's—it was December it was taken up—Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Congress has to have the courage to address this issue and to address it now, to recognize we made a mistake in December.

Second, the EPA—this is something people are not aware of, even though this is mandated. EPA has the Congressionally-given authority to waive all or a portion of these food-to-fuel mandates as part of its rulemaking process. The EPA has to thoroughly review all the options to alleviate the food and fuel disruption of the 2007 Energy bill.

A lot of people do not realize and did not think—at the time they thought, well, this is very helpful to the corn States. We all want to help the corn States. My State of Oklahoma also grows corn. But they did not think about the unintended consequences of the cost of all fuel and everything you see on the shelves in the grocery store.

Last summer, when I offered an amendment to the Energy bill that would have put in place a stocks-to-use mechanism to provide the EPA Administrator more flexibility in waiver authority in the instance of crop shortages, I was told by the majority whip my amendment was not necessary.

Incidentally, The Hill newspaper reported yesterday the same majority whip who said my amendment was not necessary now acknowledges that:

U.S. ethanol policies may be partly to blame for a global food crisis threatening to leave millions hungry.

I am glad to have his support in this concern I am expressing today. During the 2007 floor debate, he said:

There is already a waiver provision in the bill that offers protection to consumers if corn prices or availability become unsustainable.

Last June when I offered this amendment, corn was trading at $3.70 a bushel. Less than a year later, corn is now trading at $6 a bushel. Corn prices and availability are now unsustainable. I ask my colleagues who opposed my amendment to now join me in calling for the EPA to exercise its waiver authority provided in the underlying bill.

I am working with my colleague from Texas, Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, to urge the EPA to take action. Senator HUTCHISON also announced she is introducing legislation that will freeze the biofuel mandate at current levels, instead of steadily increasing it through 2022.

Senator HUTCHISON correctly noted this is a commonsense measure that will reduce pressure on global food prices and restore balance to America's energy policy. The whole world is now reacting to the consequences of overzealous biofuel mandates.

While I supported realistic mandates in the past, I continue to support the development of cellulosic ethanol. I was one of eight Senators who voted against the 2007 Energy bill, with its restrictive biofuel mandates, last December.

On Tuesday, December 4, I joined with several Senators, including JACK REED, a Democrat from Rhode Island, BEN CARDIN, BERNIE SANDERS, and SUSAN COLLINS, in writing a letter to the President to:

. . . urge the administration to carefully evaluate and respond to unintended public health and safety risks that could result from the increased use of ethanol as a general purpose transportation fuel.

The letter noted the administration had called for a national effort to reduce consumers' demand for gasoline by 20 percent in 10 years, in part through increased use of renewable transportation fuels such as ethanol. Sadly, these onerous biofuel mandates, which would significantly increase renewable fuel use, particularly the use of ethanol over the next two decades, became law.

Since December, the world has been confronted with irrefutable evidence that our current biofuels mandates are having massive and potentially life-threatening consequences. Once again, we are reminded how restrictive Government mandates and ill-advised bureaucratic meddling produce unintended consequences. Trying to centrally manage and plan a global food distribution network and economy through clumsy, unrealistically high mandates has been a proven failure.

An April 28 article on our current biofuel mandates in the National Review, by Phil Kepren and James Valvo, detailed the mindset of bureaucratic planners.

Each new generation of central planners believes the previous generation wasn't smart enough. Yet central economic planning is forever doomed to failure since the approach itself limits human freedom, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

To put it in other terms, as Ronald Reagan said: ''The more the plans fail, the more the planners plan.''

A large auto manufacturer has erected a billboard for their lineup of so-called eco-friendly cars that run on ethanol that is currently being prominently displayed not far from the Capitol. This advertisement—I saw it yesterday—asks a simple question: ''Why drill for fuel when you can grow it?''

That sounds like a politically correct question, to which the auto company's marketing team must have thought was an obvious answer. Let me allow world leaders and mainstream media outlets, the UN, and former believers in mandated Government standards to further answer the billboard's marketing campaign in no uncertain terms; that is, what the question is: Why drill for fuel when you can grow it?

The answer is found in India's Finance Minister's statement he made earlier this month. He said:

When millions of people are going hungry, it's a crime against humanity that food should be diverted to biofuels.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said:

Food prices were raising the specter of famine in certain countries. A conflict is emerging between foodstuffs and fuel . . . with disastrous social conflicts and dubious environmental results.

The United Kingdom Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has called for a reevaluation of biofuels. He said:

Now that we know that biofuels, intended to promote energy independence and combat climate change, are frequently energy inefficient we need to look closely at the impact on food prices and the environment of different production methods and to ensure we are more selective in our support.

The Scotsman Brown also noted hunger is:

the number one threat to public health across the world, responsible for a third of child deaths. Tackling hunger is a moral challenge for each of us.

The President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, has now called for:

an investigation into whether the push for biofuels is to blame for rising food prices.

According to an article in the United Kingdom Register, the EU may:

cancel its target of requiring 10 percent of petro and diesel to be biofuel by 2020.

That is what they are doing in the United Kingdom. Now they recognize they made a mistake. The article explained:

Recent weeks have seen riots over food prices in Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia and Mauritania. Rice prices have hit record levels this year and several countries have banned exports. India has renewed a ban on all exports of nonbasmati rice.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon warned in April that high food prices could wipe out progress in reducing poverty and hurt global economic growth. The U.N. Secretary-General said:

This steeply rising price of food has developed into a real global crisis.

He called for world leaders to meet on an urgent basis. You know, it is funny that I have been quoting the United Nations. I am probably the biggest critic of the United Nations in this Chamber. But I have also been very active over the years in Africa and doing the very thing we are trying to do now, to make sure that fewer people starve to death.

The head of the U.N. world food agency summed up global food difficulties this way. He said:

A silent tsunami which knows no borders is sweeping the world.

On April 25, the U.N. food agency chief, Jacques Diouf, warned of possible civil war in some countries because of global food shortages.

I wish to pause a moment and note that some of the rhetoric by the United Nations and others may be a bit over the top and prone to hyped alarmism. I have taken to this Chamber many times to debunk so-called environmental crises and media manipulation of environmental issues.

I do not want to now be accused of overhyping our current global food situation. But please do not let over-the-top rhetoric obscure the fact that the world is currently facing a serious biofuel mandates problem and needs remedying.

Ironically, the anti-energy environmental left has spent decades worrying over various crises that never seem to materialize. You have to give the environmentalists credit, they may finally get their bona fide crisis, but alas, it will be one created by the very policies they advocated.

It is kind of interesting because we can recall the environmentalist community advocating the use of ethanol and the mandates and then not recognizing this creates a greater pollution problem as well as a starvation problem.

The most interesting is the mainstream news outlets have now turned on biofuels and, in particular, corn ethanol. Publications that normally uncritically parrot the leftwing environmental agenda are now among the biggest denouncers of our current biofuel policies.

The New York Times, for example, has stated:

> Soaring food prices, driven in part by demand for ethanol made from corn, have helped slash the amount of food aid the government buys to its lowest level in a decade, possibly resulting in more hungry people around the world this year.

Time magazine was blunt in an April 7, 2008, article titled ''The Clean Energy Scam,'' by reporter Michael Grunwald, who wrote that our current policies on corn ethanol are ''environmentally disastrous.'' ''The biofuels boom, in short, is one that could haunt the planet for generations—and it's only getting started,'' Grunwald wrote.

Time magazine also featured Tim Searchinger, a Princeton scholar and former Environmental Defense attorney who said:

> People don't want to believe renewable fuels could be bad. But when you realize we're tearing down rain forests that store loads of carbon to grow crops that store much less carbon, it becomes obvious.

Time magazine also said the rising prices were ''spurring a dramatic expansion of Brazilian agriculture, which is invading the Amazon [rain forest] at an increasingly alarming rate.''

Former CBS newsman Dan Rather has also weighed in. Rather wrote on April 27:

> When more acreage is devoted to corn for ethanol, less is available for food production.

In this case I agree with Dan Rather. He said:

> Here in the United States, food is less often a matter of life and death, but it is putting an additional dangerous strain on families who are already struggling to get by in a faltering economy.

Rather added:

> Already there are reports of charitable food pantries unable to meet the needs of those they serve.

The New York Sun put it bluntly about the impact of our policies: ''Food Rationing Confronts Breadbasket of the World.'' That was an article on April 21.

A 2007 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded that biofuels ''offer a cure [for oil dependency] that is worse than the disease.'' Other organizations have weighed in. The National Academy of Sciences conducted a study finding corn-based ethanol may strain water supplies. The American Lung Association has raised air pollution concerns from the burning of ethanol in gasoline. Cornell ecology professor David Pimental called our current ethanol policy a ''boondoggle.''

Pimental said:

> It does require 30 [percent] more energy oil equivalents to produce a gallon of ethanol than you actually get out, and it causes a lot of severe environmental problems. This is very significant. It takes 1,700 gallons of water to produce 1 gallon of ethanol.

No one ever talked about that last December.

Friends of the Earth has urged the UK to abandon its current biofuel targets, which I believe they are now doing. Food campaigner Vicky Hird from Friends of the Earth said:

> [UK Prime Minister] Gordon Brown is right to be concerned about the impact of biofuels on food prices and the environment. Evidence is growing that they cause more harm than good. Food production must be revolutionized to prevent a global catastrophe.

Jane Goodall, the internationally famous primate conservationist, warned about biofuels and the impact on the rain forests in Asia, Africa, and South America:

> We're cutting down forests now to grow sugar cane and palm oil for biofuels.

She said this in September of last year.

The group, Clean Air Task Force, recently reported that nearly 12 million hectares of peat land in Indonesia has been converted to accommodate a palm oil plantation. The land was reportedly drained, cleared, and burned for conversion to a plantation.

Even Miles O'Brien of CNN, a man of whom I have been harshly critical, and yet a man I consider to be a good friend in spite of our honest differences of opinion, and I are together on this issue. He reported on CNN on February 21:

> If every last ear of corn in America were used for ethanol, it would reduce our oil consumption by only 7 percent.

He is right. O'Brien also reported:

> Corn ethanol is not as clean, efficient, or practical as politicians claim.

I agree with this. I am glad to find something on which my good pilot friend and I can agree.

Lester Brown, who has been dubbed ''the guru of the environmental movement,'' has added his voice in opposition to our current biofuels policies. Brown cowrote, on April 22:

> It is in this spirit that today, Earth Day, we call upon Congress to revisit recently enacted Federal mandates requiring the diversion of foodstuffs for production of biofuels.

Brown wrote that our current biofuel mandate was ''causing environmental harm and contributing to a growing global food crisis.''

Brown continued:

> Turning one-fourth of our corn into fuel is affecting global food prices. U.S. food prices are rising in twice the rate of inflation, hitting the pocketbook of lower income Americans and people living on fixed incomes.
>
> America must stop contributing to food price inflation through mandates that force us to use food to feed our cars instead of to feed people.

Brown concluded:

> It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that food-to-fuel mandates have failed. Congress took a big chance on biofuels that, unfortunately, has not worked out. Now, in the spirit of progress, let us learn the appropriate lessons from this setback, and let us act quickly to mitigate the damage and set upon a new course that holds greater promise for meeting the challenges ahead.

I agree. Not very often do we agree, but I do agree with that because there is something we can do about this. When you have Lester Brown, Miles O'Brien, Dan Rather, Time magazine, the New York Times, the United Nations, and Jim Inhofe all in agreement on changing an environmental policy, you can rest assured the policy is horribly misguided. All of these publications and individuals now realize the pure folly of the Federal Government's biofuel mandate.

You might ask, how did we get here? I would say, when the Republicans were the majority party, I was the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. I worked successfully with my colleagues to create a comprehensive yet measured approach. The result of this work, the Reliable Fuels Act, was ultimately incorporated into the 2005 Energy bill. This original renewable fuels standard—that is, the RFS—took a commonsense approach in that it prescribed just 4 billion gallons of renewable fuels in 2006, growing to a feasible 5.5 billion gallons in 2012. This low rampup allowed time and flexibility for the many foreseen and unforeseen challenges likely to surface with the implementation of such a program. Under my leadership, the committee held at least 13 hearings on the RFS program, examining issues from the future of transportation fuels to the most recent and, unfortunately, last oversight hearing in September 2006 which highlighted the implementation of the RFS program.

However, despite the enormous amount of attention and the eventual legislative enactment of that now greatly expanded RFS program, the EPW Committee has failed to hold even one hearing on RFS this Congress.

This morning I challenged the chairman of that committee. I am still ranking member, but I challenged Chairman BOXER to hold such a hearing. Despite the EPW Committee's failure to conduct any oversight, by 2007 it had become increasingly clear that to double the RFS mandate into a shorter timeframe would prove reckless and premature. Yet many in Congress refuse to acknowledge the many warning signs.

The 2007 Energy bill mandated 36 million gallons of biofuels by 2022. Of this, 15 billion gallons are now required from corn-based ethanol by just 2015. Washington was abuzz last year with talk of energy independence, cutting our reliance on foreign sources of energy, increasing supplies of fuels, investing in biofuels, lowering the price of energy, especially prices at the pump—all fine goals. Yet this Congress's actions didn't meet its rhetoric. I believe a secure energy supply has to be grounded in three principles: stability, diversity, and affordability. Our policies have to promote domestic energy production, including oil, gas, nuclear, corn, as well as renewable fuels.

I have said this over and over. We need all of the above to meet the energy crisis in America. What the Democrats and the green movement failed to understand is environmental regulations are not free. They have a very real price. We should be producing more fuel at home. It is good for our security, good for jobs, good for consumers.

Working with Congressman FRANK LUCAS, I sponsored and secured Senate passage of the first national transitional assistance program to help farmers grow dedicated energy crops for cellulosic biofuels. This measure is vital to the development of cellulosic biofuels in the United States because it would encourage U.S. agricultural producers within a 50-mile radius of a cellulosic biorefinery to produce nonfood energy crops for clean burning fuel.

In addition, I am proud of the research taking place in my State of Oklahoma. It is being done by the Noble Foundation and its partners. By focusing on cellulosic ethanol, we can stimulate a biofuels industry that doesn't compete with other domestic agriculture. Since you can grow it all over the country—and that is not to be said about corn—you avoid the transportation problems of Midwest-focused ethanol. Cellulosic ethanol can increase both energy and economic security.

Washington has a long way to go to get energy policy right. The future of energy is going to require a wide variety of fuels and approaches. We all need to work together to achieve our common goals. The only way they can defeat us is to divide and conquer. We have seen examples of that recently. But we all need to work together. I call on all of my colleagues today to set aside our differences and work together for an abundant, secure, and environmentally sound energy policy.

It is worth repeating that when you have Lester Brown, Miles O'Brien, Dan Rather, Time magazine, New York Times, the United Nations, and JIM INHOFE all in agreement on changing an environmental policy, you can rest assured that the policy is horribly misguided. All of these publications and individuals now realize the pure folly of the Federal Government's current biofuel mandates. Once again, I call on Congress to revisit the enactment of this mandate.

Secondly, what we have to do—and I still am the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee which has jurisdiction over the EPA—is to call upon EPA to put a stop to the mandate now. It can be done while they are trying to determine what effect this has on our food supplies. The only way to do it is to stop the mandate while the review is taking place. People are starving to death because of this transfer from food to fuel.

As the ranking member of the EPW Committee, which has jurisdiction, I am going to ask for an immediate waiver to stop this mandate.

I yield the floor to my good friend from Kansas who agrees with everything I just said.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from Kansas.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank my friend and colleague from Oklahoma.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the bipartisan agreement reached by the Senate Finance and Commerce Committees on the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration Airport and Airway Trust Fund. In my view this agreement represents the true meaning of the word ''compromise'' and shows what is possible when we really roll up our sleeves and go to work. I have been working on this bill for 2 years. Reauthorizing the FAA and the Airport and Airway Trust Fund is not only a top national priority, but it is a top priority for my State of Kansas as well. Kansas and aviation have a long history together. Aircraft pioneers such as Lloyd Stearman, who happened to sell his company to Walter Boeing, Walter Beech, Clyde Cessna, E.M. Laird, Amelia Earhart, William Lear, and many others, all have close ties to Kansas. It was a team of Kansans that really created the first commercially produced airplane in the United States. It was called the Laird Swallow. This plane took flight in April of 1920, just 88 years and a few weeks ago. My, how far we have come.

Today, about 40,000 employees in Wichita and the surrounding counties make their living building planes, manufacturing parts, and servicing aviation. The aviation industry directly and indirectly supports over 140,000 jobs in Kansas—140,000 jobs—and will soon contribute roughly $9 billion annually to our State's economy. That is not only significant, that is amazing.

Kansas is home to nearly 3,200 aviation and manufacturing businesses, including Cessna, Hawker-Beechcraft, Bombardier-Learjet, Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems, Garmin, and Honeywell, just to name a few. However, aviation is not simply an economic engine in Kansas, it is part of our history, our way of life, and, most importantly, part of our future. It is an example of our entrepreneurial spirit.

In late October of 2006, at my invitation, newly appointed Department of Transportation Secretary Mary Peters traveled to Kansas to see firsthand what the aviation industry means to our State. Congressman TODD TIAHRT and I joined the Secretary on a tour of Cessna's headquarters and manufacturing facility in Wichita to show the importance of general aviation—general aviation—to the Kansas economy.

Cessna actually traces its roots back to Clyde Cessna who built his first plane in Rago, KS, in 1911.

The Secretary and I then traveled to Olathe, KS, to visit the Kansas City air traffic control center. There we spoke with the controllers and the trainees about their work, listened in as they actually directed traffic through the Kansas City airspace, making it possible for people to fly in safety.

During our visit, the Secretary heard firsthand from industry leaders about the importance of updating our air traffic control system, and that the current tax mechanisms provide the most appropriate avenue to raise the necessary funds to upgrade into what they call NextGen technology—next generation technology.

This key message was delivered to me and the Secretary personally, and I have been delivering that same message to my colleagues since this debate began some time ago. It is no secret that I care passionately about this issue and how general aviation is treated, and to make sure they are treated fairly. With my State's close connection to the history of this industry, obviously, you can see why.

Kansas manufactures—this may be unbelievable to some—Kansas manufactures roughly 70 percent of the world's general aviation aircraft—70 percent.

Throughout this debate, general aviation has been called to increase its contribution to the Airport and Airway Trust Fund to help pay for the modernization of our air traffic control system.

All along the way, general aviation has stepped to the plate and agreed to help pay for the necessary increases to move our aviation infrastructure into next generation technology.

I cannot recall a time when an industry has come to me and said: We want to help. We are willing to support an increase in our taxes to actually do so. But that is exactly what the general aviation community did. Their only request has been that they be able to pay through the current efficient and effective tax structure of the fuel tax. That was their only request.