

attention to our letter and is now exercising, as I understand, its jurisdiction under the legislation that we passed to look at prices.

In addition, we have numerous hearings scheduled. We've had some this week, next week, and the week after looking at various different aspects of this. Clearly, our consuming public, whether they be commercial, which are probably having the most critical problem because that's their livelihood, as well as those of us who are not driving for commercial sake but for important sake, to get to school, to get to work, to get to hospitals, to do all those things, we are very cognizant, as I know all of us are, of the strain that is being put on the consumers of our country.

□ 1700

Not only are they seeing an economic downturn, but at the same time that they are having reduced capacity to purchase things critical to them, gasoline and home heating oil are going up almost every week 5 to 10 cents. And so we are addressing that. We met with all the chairmen who reported out the energy bill last year and asked them to address this issue short term, medium term and long term.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that.

I would like to find something to do that would have this impact as we get into this driving season. I know that Mr. RYAN introduced a bill today that would take the money that otherwise would have been used for earmarks on both sides of the aisle and use that to offset the loss of revenue to the highway trust fund of a gas tax holiday. That would be one of the things that we could do in the next 2 weeks that should have immediate impact at the pump by Memorial Day if we did it before that Memorial Day break. But if we could do something to reduce gas prices, that would be a major thing.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield on that?

Mr. BLUNT. I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. One of the things I know I am personally for, and I think the Speaker is for that, as well, and we have urged the administration to take action, is not purchase additional oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at this time. I would be opposed to taking oil out of the reserve. But if we stop purchasing oil for a period of time, reduce our demand as we fill the SPR, not only will we reduce demand, economists tell us that would have an effect on price, perhaps about the same as the gasoline tax holiday that you refer to.

There are a number of pieces of legislation. Mr. WELCH has a bill. Mr. LAMPSON has a bill. And many, many other Members have a bill. The administration, we believe, can do this on its own. We think that would be good policy while we have this crisis to stop filling up, not reducing, but to stop filling up our own reserve and reduce demand. Economists tell us that would

have a positive effect on bringing prices down as well.

Mr. BLUNT. Based on the increase in prices, if in fact that would have the same impact as a gas tax holiday, maybe we should do both. I suspect there would be substantial support on the floor to do both.

The only other item I am going to mention today is the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. It was 1 year ago tomorrow that the House, the Senate and the administration made an agreement on trade. That was about a year after the Colombia Free Trade Agreement had been negotiated. We have not passed that agreement yet and don't have any schedule on the floor. I would hope that we will continue work to get the Colombia Free Trade Agreement and the other trade agreements but particularly the Colombia agreement to the floor and do that in the spirit of the agreement that the Speaker and administration and Senate negotiators announced a year ago.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to say that both the Speaker and I believe that the administration, in reaching an agreement that you refer to, made a positive step in terms of incorporating within trade agreements a consideration of workers' rights and environmental concerns so that our manufacturers and our job producers in the United States had a fair, more level playing field in which to compete and that our workers were competing with workers who had the right to organize and were getting decent wages.

The Colombia agreement, as you know, was not sent down here after agreement between the administration and the House leadership. The response was to simply not take it off the agenda but take the time limit during which we might consider that. That was an interim step which did not, as the Speaker has pointed out, take Colombia off the agenda. It simply didn't put it on the agenda for immediate consideration. But that is still on the agenda. It is still available, a force, and it is still under discussion.

Mr. BLUNT. I hope we can get it done.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MAY 12, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, that when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN EN- GROSSMENT OF H.R. 5818, NEIGH- BORHOOD STABILIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 5818 and amendments to H.R. 3221, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2419, FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Upton moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2419 (an Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012) be instructed to recede to the provisions proposed to be added to Section 9001 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 in the form of a definition of "Renewable Biomass."

Mr. UPTON (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) will be recognized for 30 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I will say I know that the hour is late. Many of us are trying to get home for the weekend, and there is business after me. So I don't at all intend to take too much of my 30 minutes that I have. But let me yield myself as much time as I may consume now.

Mr. Speaker, we are woefully unprepared to meet our energy needs for the next 30 years. Some estimates say that our needs in this country are going to increase as much as 50 percent by the year 2030. So we are going to have to do a much better job on not only looking at alternative forms of energy, we are also going to need to do much more on conservation, nuclear and a whole host of things. And as the majority leader indicated a short time ago, we are looking for some long-term strategies.

What this instruction to the conferees does is it takes, in essence, a piece of legislation, a bipartisan piece