

Mr. THUNE. Through the Chair, I thank the leader for his answer. And I will be available. Mine are filed, and I would love to get them actually up.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I understand the majority leader may want to close, and I am happy to wait until he does, if he wishes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have been told we can do what we call wrap-up. It will take a minute or two. If my friend from Tennessee would withhold, we will rip right through this.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I will be delighted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

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

I am writing to you to help you see the impact that the recent rise in energy costs in this country has done to my family and many other hard working, middle class families in this great State. My wife of ten years and I have been blessed with four wonderful children and have chosen Idaho like our fathers before us as the place we want to raise our children. We love the outdoor recreation that this area affords us. We like to camp and enjoy many motorized recreational activities. We also live in an area where driving is needed for my employment and necessary for everyday survival. Idaho does not have a large amount of public transportation. Our population base does not support it. With many kids I drive a Suburban which is out of necessity, not indulgence as many may think. We need the four-wheel drive for

our winters here and the room for all of our children. It is a great way to have one vehicle for all seasons.

Please begin to drill offshore and in ANWR right away. I believe that with increased production and additional refineries we can make a lasting positive effect on the supplies of oil and gasoline in this country for generations to come. I also plead with you to build more nuclear plants which offer the most clean, high output energy we can produce. We are way behind in this area also considering other countries who generate most of their power with Nuclear Energy. I believe we should take care of our own needs and when I hear that we have more oil reserves than all of the Middle East combined I feel as though our enemies are within not without. If Congress is waiting for a time to act on this, it is now. If our reserves are available and silly legislation is keeping us from them, we need a new group of leaders who are willing to protect the interests of U.S. citizens over all else. Our country is strong but we need affordable energy to stay ahead of the game. I do not mean subsidized energy, for that will only be paid in taxes instead of at the pump. Increase the supplies and sell it to us, and restrict sales to other outside countries. Allow less regulation on refineries, and drilling rigs to promote U.S. companies involvement in increasing the supplies needed now.

SCOTT, Idaho Falls.

I do not need to tell you a story—they are all the same everywhere. We need to drill in the United States now. We are crippled by our own inaction. The longer we do nothing the longer there will be no relief in sight for high fuel and natural gas prices. We have not seen the worst I am sure. We also need to build oil refineries, nuclear power plants, liquefy coal and expand wind farms. We need to stop diverting precious farm land to ethanol production. Ethanol has turned out to be a huge, wasteful mistake. It uses far too many non-renewable resources to produce a gallon. The net effect is nothing in terms of reducing our dependence on foreign oil and look how it has affected the price of food and will continue to do so. To summarize: Drill here, drill now, pay less. Thank you sir for asking Idahoans for their opinion.

PAM, Homedale.

I listen every day to the news, telling me how much oil prices rose overnight and how much of an increase I will expect to see at the pump. Each time I hear a one cent or two cent rise, I panic. Not for myself, but for my family. My parents own a ranch in small town Idaho, where fuel prices exceed even our big city imaginations.

I wonder how they will afford to fill the tractors to plow fields to make the corn that our nation loves to consume. I wonder how they will be able to haul the cows to market in order to sell them for pennies, barely enough to cover the fuel of hauling them.

Then I hear the government saying they should switch from diesel trucks to smaller cars . . . I have never seen a hybrid that can pull a stock trailer with 12 cows. I hear the government say no more drilling in Alaska, yet they also say we will run out of oil soon. I listen to economists say that our economy is on the downfall. Gas prices rise, food prices rise, Idaho minimum wage stays the same, they continue to develop on the farmland that could provide food for cheaper prices. What are you doing in Washington that is helping middleman America? Nothing and, by doing so, you are killing the America dream one gas pump at a time.

You ask for opinions, but where's the change? By allowing oil companies to monopolize the industry, the American people have no way of overcoming the fuel shortage.

Ways you can help:

Open oil reserves in Alaska.

Put a price cap on the cost of fuel, forcing lower profit margins for big business oil companies.

Provide an incentive for creating alternate fuel sources that can meet the needs of ALL Americans (including farmers and ranchers).

Make hybrid cars more affordable and give incentives to those who want to purchase one.

Stop giving economic stimulus checks for \$600 to the richest and only \$300 to the poor/middleman. The middle American needs the \$600 more than the person that made \$30,000 last year.

TERRA.

The only real solution to high energy prices is to consume less. I am using less diesel myself by planning trips carefully, car-pooling, walking and biking. I see many others in Boise doing the same. I support a higher federal tax on carbon-producing energy sources, with the revenue used to support rail shipping and travel and transit.

MARILEE, Boise.

Wow, it almost sounds like you are running a commercial for the oil and gas or the nuclear industry. Yes, energy price increases have hurt all Americans, but part of the blame lies with the oil/gas and nuclear industry as well as the average Joe, who have continued to buy gas-guzzling vehicles, buy huge homes that are 40-60 miles from their work location. The oil and gas industry has done little to expand capacity and have repeated huge profits in recent history.

I have a diesel pickup that rarely moves, only when pulling the horse trailer or hauling the flat bed trailer to move hay, etc. I use coupons at the store whenever possible because of the rising food costs, and we have cut back on going out to dinner, movies, etc.

But drilling oil in the Arctic or off the coast is not going to solve the problem; the Alaska Pipeline was supposed to solve the oil crises when it was built.

Every day I commute from Nampa to Boise. I wish I could find someone to commute with or work from home, but the work just does not allow it. But I know lots of people speeding done the highway, who are driving alone in their cars to the same work location, and Idaho has done virtually nothing to conserve fuel, no HOV lanes, no rapid transit, metered on ramps, fact is the Idaho legislature is doing everything they can to prevent finding ways to conserve previous recourses and the U.S. Congress has done little to help. Congress has repeatedly voted not to increase the average fuel economy of vehicles until recently or assist with mass transit projects. Our rail system is falling apart, and Congress is not helping. Moving products by rail is one of the most economical ways to move material.

Yes, we need to get a handle on high fuel prices, but the best way is to reduce demand. I would support limited drilling for oil and gas, and development of nuclear energy but relaxing regulations is not the way, we need to ensure lots of oversight to make sure it is done right. I have seen hundreds of dead migratory birds caught in oil overflow ponds at drilling sites. I have witnessed the mining industry use toxic waste product as a soil binder on county roads. I have seen companies contracted to build interstate highways steal sand and gravel from the U.S. government, so I have no faith in industry.

So, please, find a real solution that works. Thanks.

ROB, Nampa.

I am writing in regards to your request on how the energy prices have affected our