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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Infinite Spirit, generous giver of life's joys, from Your vantage point of eternity, look afresh into our times. Teach our lawmakers to serve You as they should so that they will do what is best for our Nation and world. As they seek to do Your will, help them to see Your glorious image in humanity and search for opportunities to empower those on life's margins.

Lord, inspire our Senators to trust the unfolding of Your loving providence so that they will not become weary in doing what is right. May they live with such integrity that Your purposes will be accomplished on Earth. Remind us all that it is in giving that we receive and through dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, there are a lot of reasons to like the broad bipartisan Energy bill which is

before us. You will like it if you are an American interested in producing more energy. You will like it if you are interested in paying less for energy. You will like it if you are an American interested in saving energy. There are a lot of important reasons to support the Energy Policy Modernization Act.

Here's another one. You will like it if you are an American interested in bolstering your country's long-term national security. That is always important, and Americans are telling us it is especially important today. They see our commanders, for instance, attempting to juggle myriad threats from across the globe with diminishing force structure. Well, if we are interested in improving our overall strategic position, then there are ways this broad bipartisan Energy bill can help.

First, the Energy Policy Modernization Act is designed to boost America's liquefied natural gas exports. That doesn't just hold potential for America's economy, it holds potential for America's global leadership, including the security of our allies. We know that Russia is the dominant supplier of natural gas to Western Europe, and we know that building America's own export capacity can enhance European energy security in the long run. So, in broad strokes, "by increasing our ability to export natural gas—in the form of liquefied natural gas or LNG—to Europe, the U.S. can weaken Russia's strategic stronghold while boosting our domestic economy by increasing energy exports." That is how Congressman CALVERT, a Republican, and Congressman ISRAEL, a Democrat, put it in an op-ed they authored last year after returning from a trip to Ukraine.

Here is what a former Obama energy adviser wrote in November: "Increased LNG trade can also enhance energy security for our allies," he said. "[Russian state-owned energy giant] Gazprom's grip on Europe is weakening, and U.S. LNG will accelerate that shift even as Russia seeks to counter it. . . ."

Enhancing America's own export capacity is also important when you consider that Iran has just been freed from Western sanctions and is looking to expand its own trade in energy resources, including its natural gas potential. Robust LNG exports to Asia can also enhance America's stature there, too, and give our allies in the region a stable source of energy.

Boosting America's natural gas exports is one reason to support the bill, but here is another. The Energy Policy Modernization Act is designed to reduce our foreign reliance on minerals and raw materials needed for everything from military assets to smart phones.

We can strengthen American mineral security by developing our world-class American mineral base. The necessary modern policies can move us ahead, and this bill contains positive steps forward.

Here's what else this bill would do. The Energy Policy Modernization Act is designed to defend our national energy grid from terrorist cyber attacks. It would help prepare us by authorizing additional cyber security research, it would help deter attacks by erecting stronger cyber security defenses, and it would help provide for faster and more effective responses when threats do arise.

At the end of the day, here is what you can say about the Energy Policy Modernization Act. It aims to make America more secure in an era of insecurity. It aims to make America more prosperous in a time of economic uncertainty. It is a bipartisan bill that deserves to pass. It is great to see so many Republicans and Democrats in this Chamber who actually agree with that. It is great to see both sides working with the bill managers to process amendments and move this legislation along.

I ask Members to continue working in the same spirit of cooperation.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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