

I am sure that the President of the United States soon to be sworn in, George Bush, will attend to this matter and his energy secretary is going to have this as a priority. I know that. But we in Congress have to help them along by establishing these long-term investigations into our resources.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, first let me compliment the gentleman on his outstanding piece of legislation. It does bring to the forefront the lack of an energy policy, and his bill does set up a commission to say, we have to address all forms of energy so we have what I call the wheel of energy to provide the necessity for the center of the wheel to make it work.

As the gentleman mentioned, with coal, 64 percent develops our electrical energy now. We need nuclear. We need gas. We need oil. And, yes, even some hydro, wind power, solar power, all collected in the need for the BTUs.

We have requested, I have requested, an energy policy for the last 20 years and been turned down by the past administration that has not sought to not seek an energy policy.

So I want to compliment the gentleman for bringing this to the forefront. Because gas right now, natural gas, 1 year ago was \$2 and today it is \$9 on the market. So we do need this policy, and I want to compliment the gentleman for his resolution.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

There is another immediate dividend that I think will come from the establishment of the commission and forward movement on establishing an energy policy. I believe that OPEC, seeing what is happening, will automatically start to drop the prices.

Unfortunately for us who want this energy policy, that may give us some sort of relief that we will not have the will to go on with determining our own fate in energy. But I am willing to take that chance. We have got to have an energy policy. We have to stand pat against OPEC and become energy independent as a Nation in 10 years.

#### HEATING OIL SHORTAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) will continue with this dialogue, one of the things that a lot of people in America do not realize is that the reason we have the prosperity we have today is because we have had cheap energy.

Some people think that is wrong, that we ought to take and conserve all the energy. But if we want to grow, we have a supply and an abundance of en-

ergy so we can have the high-tech and the computer industry, by the way, which now uses 27 percent of our electrical power which did not happen 15 years ago. Twenty-seven percent of our electrical power today is consumed by computers.

For those that are in the computer world, think about it: when power goes down, their computer goes off. That means the airplanes do not fly. That means the stoplights do not work. That means this country comes to a halt.

And so what the gentleman has said, let us get a policy so that the future generations, yes, and the present generations in reality will have a constant supply of reasonably priced energy.

But if the gentleman would like for one moment to address something for me, he mentioned that if we do this the OPEC countries may drop their price. I happen to agree.

What would the gentleman think we should do, though, maybe what the commission can do, to solve that problem.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I have not been able to predict exactly what would happen. It seems to me that we ought to start a course on energy independence and go to it without respect to what OPEC does.

All I am saying is we will have an extra dividend to lower prices almost immediately, but then our domestic drillers will have to be given additional incentive to continue producing; and that may require tax incentive-types of legislation that we would have to put into place along with our energy policy.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, again, the commission can probably recognize what we can do to solve that problem. Because I expect what the gentleman said will come true, the first time the OPEC countries sees that we are serious about setting up a supply of energy, they will lower their prices so maybe some of my constituents and his constituents and the people in Florida's House will say, well, there is no need for this, let us not drill an ANWR.

Although, by the way, it only disrupts 12,000 acres out of 19 million acres.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, which reminds me, we are told, and the press knows more about it, that the current President, President Clinton, is contemplating a monument executive order in which he sets aside x amount of land and other resources in Alaska keeping them from development in what we are seeking here.

Can the gentleman tell us about that?

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, there is that possibility. I think it would be a terrible disservice to the country.

I would like to remind the gentleman and people that might be listening that this area is a very small area that has a tremendous abundance of oil, probably 39 billion barrels of oil, that can be accessible to the people in the lower 48 so we would not have to buy that million barrels a day from Saddam Hussein.

So if the President was to do that, it would be a terrible travesty; it would be wrong for the people and wrong for Alaska. But, most of all, it would be wrong for the people that are buying oil from abroad.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, what is missing from all of this discussion is the fact that all of us, every American, is interested in environmental quality. We do not want anything but clean air and clean water and a good area in which to live. But we are in a state of almost-crisis now where we have to talk about survival and meeting the needs of the American family.

I am talking about the basic needs of the American family. That is why we have to put the environmental concerns on an equal balance, not on a priority, and try to develop our resources as we need them.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, we can do both. As the gentleman from Pennsylvania knows, in Alaska we have a bigger caribou herd, more wildlife, a better environment just from the development of Prudhoe. And I say this can happen again in ANWR.

But more than that, if we want to see environmental damage, do not have the energy available and keep being dependent upon those countries overseas.

I keep stressing the fact that now, this year, remember gas was \$2 per thousand cubic feet last year; this year, right today, it is \$9.42. That means the average home buying gas today, their heating bill will go up 300 percent this winter. And that is a jolt economically, and it also means we are running out of natural gas because we have not been allowed to develop those fields in the lower 48.

So Alaska has got gas and we want to sell it to you, but the fact is we ought to be developing those gas fields in Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, and, yes, in Pennsylvania, they have gas in Pennsylvania, and go after those fields so we can have it available for the constituents that my colleague and I serve.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, we are not adverse to developing a plan of tax incentives to give our fellow Americans, the entrepreneurs, the incentive to go ahead and drill where they might fail; but we ought to give them that incentive to do so and to otherwise bring technology into place for the development of all these resources.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for doing this tonight on the floor of the House. I do appreciate his bringing this to light.