

of oil and gas. Prudhoe Bay is required to adhere to State law as well as Federal law. We care about where we get our oil. If we look at the area of Saudi Arabia and OPEC nations, we don't seem to give any consideration on how it is produced and whether it is done environmentally and in a compatible manner.

Alaskans are proud and protective of the environment, and we are willing to do our part to end the energy crisis. There is no NIMBY in my State; that is, "Not in my backyard." Seventy-five percent of all Alaskans favor exploration. The Alaskans who live there—the people who must breathe the air, drink the water, and make the decisions about their communities—support exploration. It is absolutely unfair to deny them the same kind of opportunity everyone else enjoys in this country.

Kaktovik is a small village in ANWR in the 1002 area. Environmentalists say there is nothing there, that it is the Serengeti of the north. It is a village of about 250 people. There is a physician there, a small school, and a general store. They are real people.

Do not be misled by the suggestion that somehow we don't have the capability and we cannot do it safely. We can. Why not do it for American jobs?

This issue reaches a critical mass this week as Congress finally—and I emphasize "finally"—begins to work on a comprehensive energy bill. I urge my colleagues both here and in the other body to recognize that this is a fork in the road, and our efforts can have great impact for the American worker. Do we continue down the path of instability and rising energy costs—a path that finds more American families with pink slips and uncertain futures—or do we head down a path for job creation based on solid science and growth?

With a comprehensive, balanced national energy strategy in place, we can look forward to reliable, affordable, and plentiful energy that has fueled this economy in the past and that will power a bright future. I hope that is the choice because we cannot afford to make the mistakes we made in 1992.

I will not stand by in this body and allow us to pass an energy bill that does not increase the supply of energy in this country. It simply is unconscionable. That is apparently where we are headed, to some degree.

I think it is important that we recognize what is going on in the House of Representatives and those in opposition who are suggesting alternative renewables with no increased supply, and recognize that we have a serious concern over the loss of jobs in this country.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Chattanooga Times by Lee Anderson who has been to ANWR and has

some interesting things to say about it.

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

President George W. Bush wants to help head off our future energy problems by drilling for oil in the far, far north of Alaska, in an area called the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Environmentalists and liberals are yelling, "Over our dead bodies." And now that the Democrats control the United States Senate, they think they will win. But would you rather continue to rely on Iraq's Saddam Hussein and a host of other foreign nations for American oil?

There are some facts about Alaska and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that sensible people should look at rationally—though many people won't do that.

In the first place, the proposed drilling site is so far away and in such a desolate, cold and forbidding area that almost no one will ever see it.

Second, it's not far from Prudhoe Bay, where current oil production is proceeding without serious problems.

But perhaps most important is the fact that the proposed oil production would affect very little land. Consider:

Alaska spreads over 615,230 square miles; already has 125 million acres in national parks, preserves and wildlife refuges.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge consists of 19 million acres. But the area proposed for drilling is only 1.5 million acres. And of that, only about 2,000 acres—about twice the size of Chattanooga's Lovell Field—would be used.

Will reason prevail and bring oil production? Probably not soon.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield any remaining time to the Senator from Wyoming. I thank the Chair for his attention.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. President.

I appreciate the comments of my friend from Alaska. Certainly that issue is important to all of us. We will be dealing with it soon.

SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I want to talk about some of the bills that are coming up and what I see as a very important aspect of what we do here in the Congress. What we do, of course, is important. But let's have some reasoning about where we want to be over time so that the decisions we make as we go through our daily work will be implemented with a vision of where we want to go.

Obviously, we have different views of what our role is here. I was listening to my friend from Nevada, who is concerned about balanced budgets because the Federal Government will not be able to spend enough. Others believe that maybe a balanced budget is where we ought to be and that there ought to be some limit on the size of government.

The fact is that States and local governments are very important compo-

nents. It makes a difference in where you see things down the road.

I am specifically interested in what is happening in agriculture. We will have a bill before us today on supplemental funding for agriculture. Before long, we will have the 2002 appropriations for agriculture. More importantly, perhaps next year or even at the end of this year, we will have a new farm bill. That farm bill and the appropriations bills we are now dealing with will help us decide where we are going in agriculture.

Those are the kinds of decisions in the longer term that we have to make. Of course, we have to deal with the necessary daily things, but we really ought to be asking where we want agriculture to be in 10 years or in 15 years. These appropriations bills will have a great deal to do with where we go.

I think the same thing is true with health care. We are in the process right now of seeking some revision of Medicare. It is needed. We are talking about how we are going to handle pharmaceuticals. What is it we want? How do we want health care structured over time? What do we think is the best way to serve the people of this country? Those are the kinds of decisions that I think too often we don't really give enough consideration to—where we are tied up with how we are going to get funding for this for next year and how we are going to keep this program at this level.

Hopefully, we can step back and see with some vision. Maybe you call it 20/20. Where do we want to be over a period of time?

The Senator from Alaska talked about energy. We are doing some things with energy. Here again, I think we ought to be talking about where we are and some of the things we want to have happen over time, with less dependency on overseas and less dependency on OPEC. At the same time, I am sure we want to be certain we have an adequate supply so that we will have a strong economy and so we can do the things we want to do—reasonably priced—over the long range.

One of the things we experience in my State, an energy-producing State, is boom and bust. All of a sudden, natural gas is worth \$9 when it was \$1.5 or \$2. Everything goes up all of a sudden. Then the price comes down, and the economy comes down.

We want diversity of fuel; we don't want to be dependent on one thing.

Conservation: Obviously, we need to decide what to do. What do you want over time? We want conservation. Is that too much of a sacrifice? Can we do research so that conservation will allow us to use less fuel and still have the same kind of services? I think so, with renewables and new uses.

I remember someone talking at an energy meeting in Casper, WY—where I live—saying we have never run out of a

fuel. I suspect that is true. What do we do? We find new and better sources or we use them in a better way. I suspect that is what we ought to be thinking about in terms of applying our long-term efforts.

What about agriculture? Obviously, we want sufficient food. Obviously, we would like to be able to supply food to foreign markets. We want clean food and safe food.

I think most people would like to see family farmers remain on the farm so we don't become an entirely corporate body. Of course, we want to preserve open space. We want to preserve the lands that are being used—and farm communities.

These are some of the things we really ought to measure against what we are talking about to see if they indeed have the best chance to produce those kinds of visions.

Medicare: We want health care for everyone. We want to keep it in the private sector—at least some of us do. Sometimes that is a different point of view. We want to encourage research. We want to limit catastrophic costs so no one is saddled with unreasonable costs; and, of course, control utilization. How do you do that? Certainly, each of us has to have a little participation in the cost. We want top-quality care.

My time has about expired. I want to make the point that we have some opportunities always, but particularly on those three bills. There will be others that will help shape the future. Education, of course, is another one. Where do we want to be over a period of time?

I am hopeful that in addition to doing those things—obviously, in the short term—we will also measure what we do and how it will impact what we give when the time comes for us to deal with it in the future.

I think my time has expired. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAYTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes in morning business.

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

ENERGY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to summarize where we are on the comprehensive energy legislation issue that all of us are interested in moving ahead, and to tell you my perspective on it at this point.

As we began the year, we identified two sets of issues. There were the short-term challenges we faced as a country, and then there were the more long-term issues. The short-term challenges included the very high prices for electricity in California, which I think all of us recognized at that time were not just unreasonable but were exorbitant really for many residents in California. Really, the wholesale prices, being very high, were not being passed on to consumers at that time, although the consumer retail prices started to reflect those high prices that had been charged for such a long time.

Second, of course, natural gas prices were very high. That was a concern.

A third short-term concern was the inadequacy of funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. That is the program Congress put in place many years ago to help low-income families in this country pay their utility bills. The demand on that program was so great during this last winter, and even into this spring and early summer, that most States that operate that program, and are dependent on Federal funds to do so, were out of funding. So that was another short-term problem we needed to address.

Fortunately, most of these short-term issues have been addressed in some significant way. The price of wholesale power in California has come down, perhaps not as far as it eventually will and should, but it has come down substantially. The price of natural gas has come down. Again, that is not being reflected to the extent it should as yet in home utility bills, but that hopefully will happen quickly, too.

As to the LIHEAP program—the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—we have put \$300 million of new funding into the supplemental appropriations bill that we sent to the President to try to keep that program functioning through the rest of this summer.

So those are short-term issues we have seen resolved to some extent. And I feel good about that.

There remain, however, a great many long-term challenges that the country has in dealing with its energy future. Let me mention a few of those because I believe we can work in a bipartisan way to deal with them to help resolve those issues.

One, of course, is supply. We do not have assured adequate supply going forward over the next several years. We need to look at ways to increase supply. One is affordability. We are concerned about the price of the various sources of energy: Electricity, natural gas, gasoline at the pump.

Efficiency in the use of energy is a major challenge. We have tremendous inefficiency in power production in this country. We need to find ways to in-

crease efficiency in that respect. In many cases, two-thirds of essentially all the power for fuel going into our power plants is lost because of inefficiency in power production.

I believe we all want less pollution from the burning of fossil fuels. I think we have come to recognize that as fossil fuels burn we do have pollution. We need to find ways to diminish that. We need more diversity in our fuel supply. We need to shift to more use of renewable energy, to the extent the technology permits that, and to the extent the cost of producing that renewable energy permits.

So we have a great many long-term goals that the country wants to achieve. I believe we can do that. I think we can do it in this Congress. I think we can do it in this session of this Congress.

The President, to his credit, has presented the country with a national energy plan. There has been a lot of criticism of parts of that plan. I share some of that criticism. But I do think the President should receive credit for having made this a priority issue for the country. He has said this is something he thinks needs to be addressed. I agree with that; this is something that needs to be addressed.

We need to pass an energy bill addressing these long-term concerns. The House of Representatives is expected to act this week on a major energy bill. There will be substantial controversy about some of the provisions in that bill. And there are, frankly, several provisions in the bill, as it comes to this Chamber, with which I do not agree.

I do not agree with the proposal to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling and exploration. I do not think that is a substantial solution to our problems. I do not believe we should produce legislation to accomplish that, and send it to the President, even though he has requested that we do so. So that is one point of disagreement.

I hope very much that we will do something significant to improve vehicle fuel efficiency. We are always concerned about the growing dependence on foreign sources of oil. And those sources are growing. We import a tremendous amount of oil. Most of that goes into the transportation sector, and most of that for cars and light-duty vehicles of various kinds. So we need to find ways to increase vehicle fuel efficiency. We can do that as well.

Let me say there are a great many other challenges we also have. I know time is short. I intend to begin a markup of an energy bill in the Energy Committee this Wednesday. I hope we can move ahead on a bipartisan basis. Then we can also set the framework for moving ahead, when the Congress returns in September, on the balance of a comprehensive bill.