

consider the concern of my constituents of \$1.93 gas, \$1.81 corn.

**WHEN WILL GOUGING ON OIL  
PRICES STOP?**

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the outrage of the week in energy is that finally we know how much some of these companies have been charging. During a brief time last winter in a desperate attempt to keep the lights on, California paid \$3,880 per megawatt hour to Duke Energy of South Carolina who now owns plants, thanks to deregulation, in California. Of course, they do not feel much of an obligation to keep the lights on. What they are trying to do is maximize profits. Price gouging, it is open season on price gouging in the western United States. Yet, the Bush administration says there is nothing and they will do nothing about this. They will not even investigate whether price gouging is going on.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is charged with determining whether or not there is a market, a functional market, and prices are fair and reasonable. The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the staff, the professionals, has found that in fact what is going on in the western United States is not fair; it is not reasonable. But guess what? The chairman, Mr. Hebert of Louisiana says he is just not going to do anything about that. He will pray for us, he has told us, but that is it.

Now, this is extraordinary. This is the chairman appointed by President Bush. Now, we might wonder about the motivation. Well, there are others other than Duke Energy involved, and perhaps that is the motivation. Many of these companies that are making profits up to 1000 percent over last year's profits are based in Texas, many in Houston, Texas. Many are very large contributors to the Bush administration.

The CEO of one of these energy monoliths, the Enron Company, the chief architect of much of the legislation that has brought about this disaster, has personally, personally, one individual contributed in his lifetime more than \$2 million individually, personally, to George Bush as a candidate for many different offices; \$2 million.

His company, of course, is in for many, many times that but, hey, they make it back in about a minute in these energy markets so it is a really good investment on their part. The same gentleman is now hand picking other people to go on to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. So we cannot expect that we are going to see much relief there.

So then we turn to the Bush energy plan. Does this offer us relief? Well, I

do not think so. If we look at the Bush energy plan, we had Secretary Norton before the Committee on Resources today, it is dig, drill and burn. We are not going to conserve.

I asked her, I said if we went into the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, if we went every place you want to go, if we went to the most sensitive coastal areas off Florida, which I doubt will happen because we have another Bush as governor, but let us say we went to the most sensitive areas off California, who this administration seems to be willing to stick it to every day, and off Oregon and Washington and other parts of the country, and found all the oil, went into Alaska and found all the oil, I said can you envision that we could increase possibly our supply of oil by a factor of ten, that is, instead of having  $x$  number of years, 100 years' supply, we would have 1,000 years?

She said, oh, no, we would never get there.

I said, let us just say you did. Let us just say there is a heck of a lot more oil out there than you thought. People want to talk about we are going to become oil self-sufficient. If we continue to increase our consumption at the current rate, we do not conserve, if we found a thousand-year supply of oil in the United States we would use it up in 79 years; the miracle of compound interest, of compound increasing demand.

Conservation has to be a robust part of this plan. But guess what? Conservation does not put profits in the pockets of the oil companies based in Texas and Louisiana and elsewhere, and the new energy companies based in Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina and elsewhere, but price gouging at the gas pump, price gouging in the wholesale electric markets does. So that is the energy future that is being promised in this plan.

Now one can turn to Congress. Are we going to get relief out of Congress? Luckily, today the so-called Emergency Energy Relief bill being offered by, strangely enough, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), backed by the chairman from Louisiana, strangely enough, can I see something going together with this crowd here where they produce this stuff as the people who do not want to do much about it?

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Their bill finally came crashing down today. That is good, because it would have done nothing for the consumers in the Western United States, nothing for us at all. It would have done nothing to rein in price gouging.

They did not want to have to consider a price cap amendment to rein in what has become publicized more and more in recent weeks as outrageous manipulation of the market by some of these energy companies. The Reliant Company, putting their floor traders,

their commodity traders, on the phone to the people who actually operate the plants in California; and when the price drops in the national markets, they tell them to shut the plants down. They do not care if the lights stay on. They are just trying to maximize their profits.

The American people know this. They know they are having it stuck to them every day at the gas pump. They see the facts, that Exxon-Mobil is the most profitable corporation in the world, with profits of \$15 billion last year. They see those prices going up and on and up and know they are being had. This administration is engaging in inaction and stone-walling real relief, at its peril.

**WITHDRAWAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1271**

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 1271. My name was added in error.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIBERI). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

**AN ODE TO THE SIXERS**

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker,

"It hasn't happened in 18 years,  
But it's the NBA Finals and the Sixers are here.

It's been a long time since Moses and Dr. J.,  
But the Sixers are playing like the good old days.

Shooting and defense, both ends of the floor,  
They've shown every team in the East the door.

First we took out the Pacers, without breaking a sweat,  
Then we clubbed the Raptors, and cut down the net.

The Bucks from Milwaukee took us the full seven,  
But the final game was a rout, and we're in hoops heaven.

We have the Answer, Alan Iverson, the league MVP,  
The best little scorer you ever did see.

No one can guard him, he's just too quick,  
No team of five can do the trick.

We have the Coach of the Year, the great Larry Brown,  
A man who has been around many a town.

A strategist, a motivator, a leader of men,  
He's the best coach since . . . I don't know when.

Big Dikembe Motumbo is the Defensive Player of the Year,  
His swats in the paint make grown men fear.

Aaron McKie, the league's best super sub,  
Has joined the NBA's Best Sixth Man Club.

Short-handed, banged-up, backs against the wall,  
The Sixers bandwagon refuses to stall.

Owner Pat Croce is on the edge of the seat,