

it falls woefully short on needed investments in the renewable, nonpolluting energy technologies of the future.

Instead of a national Renewable Portfolio Standard, we have increased reliance on fossil fuels. Instead of improved automobile efficiency, we have a weakening of the Clean Air Act. Instead of aggressive action to curb energy-associated pollution, we have a liability shield for the polluters.

The American people deserve an energy policy worthy of the promise and challenges of the 21st century. We need to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and develop clean, less polluting energy sources. This is not that policy. Let's go back to the drawing board and develop an energy policy that reflects the public interest, rather than the special interests.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, as I communicate with Iowans, they often share their concern about our country's economic vulnerability in regard to its energy supply. Spikes in oil and gas prices, high utility costs and the dangers of a heavy reliance on foreign suppliers have a very real impact on our rural economy and Iowans' family budgets.

I rise today to express my support for the long-awaited, comprehensive energy policy legislation.

America's long-term national energy policies must include a focus on developing the renewable sources of energy that can be produced in this country. This energy bill makes farmers in Iowa and other States part of the solution by moving the Nation toward a common-sense future that is less dependent on fossil-based sources of energy. With the establishment of an overall Renewable Fuels Standard for motor fuels, significant portions of all U.S. gasoline will be required to contain renewable fuel content, including ethanol and biodiesel. This provision alone will create more than 200,000 jobs over the next decade.

The bill goes well beyond previous efforts to promote value-added agriculture by streamlining and making new incentives for ethanol production as well as creating a new tax credit for biodiesel production. This legislation simplifies a very complicated tax system for Iowa's ethanol producers and taxpayers while ensuring these payments are properly credited toward vital transportation priorities. These tax reforms are significant developments for Iowa's future because they promote the development of small ethanol cooperatives, create value-added business opportunities, and ensure the long-term future of Iowa's transportation needs.

The bill also supports enhanced energy efficiency and conservation, environmental protection measures and domestic production. Consumers will be encouraged to purchase more fuel-efficient automobiles and make sensible home improvements. New, advanced environmentally friendly technologies will be promoted. In addition, electricity generation and transmission will be strengthened to help rural electric cooperatives and public and private utilities provide affordable electricity to their customers.

My support for the bill is somewhat tempered by the recognition that it exceeds the spending limits established by the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution. I believe that many of the key objectives of this bill could have been realized within the confines of the budget resolution. By contrast, the tax provisions, while significant in cost, are fully consistent with the

revenue levels established by this year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Energy Policy Act represents impressive progress toward a balanced, long-term energy policy to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, stabilize prices for consumers and stimulate our economy. I am particularly proud of the renewable energy provisions in this bill and urge my colleagues to join me in approving this significant legislation.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 6; the energy bill that America has waited so long for. Like the original House version of this legislation, I intend to support the conference report on the floor today.

I truly believe this legislation provides the proper framework to diversify America's fuel sources. As Ranking Member on the House Agriculture Committee, I'm glad that there are greater incentives for increased production of ethanol. I'm glad to see production tax credits for wind energy, solar, biomass and nuclear electricity generation. Diversification of our nation's energy sources will help us meet our goal of reducing our dependence on foreign sources of fuel.

More importantly, this energy bill provides the right tools for independent oil and gas producers to continue producing from our own fields. I've been fighting for these measures for years, and I'm glad Congress is finally going to implement them. The time is long overdue for Congress to recognize the importance for America to decrease our use of oil and gas from foreign countries and to capitalize on the resources beneath our own soil. And, contrary to what many groups will lead us to conclude, we can drill for oil and gas without doing damage to our environment. Former Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen once said that when America imported more than half of its crude and petroleum products, it would have reached a point of peril. Friends and colleagues, we have reached that point.

Although I intend to support this legislation, I must express my extreme disappointment of the process in which this bill was considered. I have worked for years in Congress to promote equality and bipartisanship in this great institution. However, this bill was written behind closed doors with no input from the public. Unfortunately, my Democratic colleagues were not given the opportunity to offer significant amendments to the legislation. This legislation isn't perfect, and it could have been improved significantly if my colleagues were allowed to bring their ideas to the negotiating table.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals Resources of the Committee on Resources, I rise in disappointed opposition to H.R. 6.

Like my friend and colleague, Mr. DINGELL, I too was a conferee "in name only" on a bill that should have been—and could have been—a comprehensive and balanced plan for our Nation to meet its short and long term energy needs.

The centerpiece of this atrocious energy bill is a multi-billion dollar package of tax breaks and incentives designed to slant the market in favor of fossil fuel industries, and away from meaningful reform through the development of safe, clean and renewable alternatives. Should this bill pass, the Republican leadership will have locked the American economy into the

old energy regime for most of the 21st century, with dire environmental and global security consequences.

Current provisions of the bill offer an inexcusably watered down version of the renewable energy production incentives program for solar, wind and geothermal energy, with meager and uncertain monetary incentives, barely reaching \$5 million per year, providing little impetus for installing new capacity and unlikely to affect investments in renewable energy in any meaningful way. In addition, conservation efforts, such as mandating the reduction of one million barrels of oil per day by the year 2013, as the other body had approved on a vote of 99–1, was simply left out of the Republican planning.

The few good provisions of the bill, like the renewable fuel standards provision and its potential to aid our Nation's struggling family farmers, have been suffocated by the bloated excess and taxpayer-funded subsidies for some of our Nation's largest oil and gas companies.

Mr. Speaker, when the House considered the energy bill this past spring, I led an effort to stop the Federal Government from providing "royalty relief" for multi-billion dollar oil companies such as Exxon Mobil and Chevron Texaco operating on public lands and in coastal waters. This "royalty holiday" was once characterized as "giving major oil companies a huge tax break" by a candidate for the 2000 presidential election . . . No, not Al Gore but George W. Bush.

So what happened to that assessment? How can President Bush now support a bill that not only contains this very same taxpayer funded giveaway to some of the biggest oil companies in the world—already swimming in huge profits—but a bill that actually expands them?

Unfortunately, the House-passed oil and gas incentive provisions were scored by CBO and projected to reduce the Federal revenues by \$20 billion over ten years. The total cost of this bill is \$141 billion and it is not paid for. It will be added to historically larger budget deficits for many years.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is facing huge structural budget deficits, escalating war costs and a sluggish economy. We simply cannot afford to open our checkbook and spend the American taxpayers' money to subsidize industries to do what their business plan would have them do anyway—explore and produce domestic energy sources if it is cost effective to do so.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today we are once again voting to take our Nation further down the path toward a system of centralized Federal planning of our energy supply. The very notion of a national energy policy is collectivist; it assumes that an energy supply would not exist without a government plan. Yet basic economics teaches us that nothing could be further from the truth.

The best energy policy is the free market! Energy is no different than any other commodity—free market, competition produces the most efficient allocation of resources. In a true free market, conservation of scarce energy resources occurs naturally. When coal, natural gas, or other nonrenewable sources are depleted, the price goes up. When alternative energy sources like wind and solar become economically feasible, demand for such sources arises naturally. There is always a

natural market for clean and cheap energy. Only an unregulated free market creates the environment that allows critical technological innovation to flourish, innovation that holds the key to cheaper and cleaner energy.

The approach we take today, however, distorts the market and favors certain industries and companies at the expense of American taxpayers.

It's always the same old story in Washington: instead of allowing the free market to work, Congress regulates, subsidizes, and taxes an industry, and when inevitable problems arise, the free market is blamed! The solution is always more Federal intervention; no one suggests that too much Federal involvement created the problems in the first place.

Let me provide just a few examples of the most egregious, wasteful spending measures and corporate subsidies contained in this legislation: It spends even more than the President requested; it provides \$90 million in subsidies for hydroelectric power plants; it provides \$500 million for research and development of Biomass; it authorizes almost \$2 billion for the Energy Department to do what the private sector would if it was profitable—develop hydrogen cars; it allows FERC to use eminent domain to ride roughshod over State and local governments; it increases failed ethanol subsidies to favored agribusiness companies, while providing liability protection for those companies; it requires States to reduce energy consumption by 25 percent in 2010, including States with growing populations like Texas; it forces taxpayers to guarantee loans for pipeline projects, despite the easy availability of cheap credit; it spends \$20 million for the Labor Department to recruit and train Alaskan employees to build a new pipeline; and it authorizes the Energy Department to create efficiency standards for vending machines!

Mr. Speaker, this conference report represents the usual pork, subsidies, protectionism, and regulations that already distort our energy markets. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this terrible bill.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, in the more than thirteen years that I have been honored to serve in this distinguished institution, I have never seen a piece of legislation less crafted with the public interest in mind than the one we discuss today—the Energy Policy Conference Report (H.R. 6). It consists entirely of subsidies to corporations and rollbacks of environmental protection laws. It is a virtual grab-bag of giveaways to corporate interests.

To say nothing of the severe public health threat posed as a result of the environmental exemptions included in the bill affecting the air we breathe and the water we drink, I would specifically like to raise my strong opposition to two provisions that exemplify the special interest giveaways in this twelve hundred-plus page bill. The first permits a controversial Long Island Sound energy cable, entitled the Cross Sound Cable, to stay activated despite being found in violation of both state and federal permits. The language, listed under Title XIV, Sec. 1441 of Subtitle D, was slipped into the bill by the energy company's newly hired lobbyist, former New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato, and would allow the Cross Sound Cable to remain activated unless rescinded by an act of Congress. It disregards pending litigation by the Connecticut Attorney General pertaining to the safety of the cable and trumping the regulatory authority of Con-

necticut and the Army Corps of Engineers, which together govern the installation of such transmission cables.

Also included in this bill, under Title XIV, Sec. 1442 of Subtitle D, is a provision, which subordinates all state and federal agencies to the authority of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission when it comes to the laying of natural gas pipelines. The language would pave the way for the construction of the Islander East gas pipeline across Long Island Sound, stretching from Branford, Connecticut and Shoreham, New York. As a result of this controversial provision that will have wide implications on the construction and appeals of all natural gas pipelines, the Islander East pipeline will be installed over and above the objections of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

These provisions disregard the needs of our state's economy, our environment and the voices of millions of Connecticut citizens who are directly affected by these provisions. The Republican leadership and high-priced corporate lobbyists have determined that they—and not Connecticut's citizens or elected officials—know what is best for our state.

This is a disgraceful giveaway to special interests at the expense of citizens in my state, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Energy Conference Report. As a Member of the Energy Conference, I am exceedingly disappointed that the Conference was not conducted in a bipartisan fashion. Instead, conference meetings were held behind closed doors with only a select group of Republican House and Senate Members in attendance. As a result of this secretiveness, the Conference squandered an opportunity to craft meaningful, forward-looking energy legislation that could be supported by both sides of the aisle.

House and Senate conferees at long last met yesterday evening, although it was more for show and tell than for a substantive debate on the conference report. Amendments to the report were offered by Democrats and were defeated strictly on party-line votes. The conference meeting was an event patently designed for Republicans to be able to say that they held a meeting of conferees and that they made an attempt—no matter how hollow—at bipartisanship. While the argument that conferees did meet might be persuasive to those unfamiliar with the legislative process, I have served on many conference committees and I know how a true conference is conducted.

A conference of real inclusiveness is one in which Members from both bodies and from both sides of the aisle meet to discuss ideas, exchange views, and make adjustments to their respective positions. Proceeding title-by-title, section-by-section, and line-by-line, conferees adapt the legislation to reflect a broad consensus of views that serve the entire country in ways that neither the House nor Senate bill standing alone would have done. The Energy Bill was never subjected to that test of a true conference. Instead, the bill was crafted by a very small number of partisans in both the House and Senate who, it seems, did not even include a majority of conferees from their own side of the aisle. The result is a bill that tilts egregiously on the side of corporate America and the already privileged.

The number of offensive provisions littered throughout the bill are simply too many to enumerate, so I will highlight just a few examples.

Section 328 of the Conference Report exempts the oil and gas industry from complying with the Clean Water Act's stormwater permitting requirements for construction activities. This provision makes oil and gas exploration the only construction activity not subject to Clean Water Act requirements. It is a complete, unprecedented end-run around one of our Nation's most successful environmental laws, and was written into this legislation without the benefit of public hearings or testimony on the provision.

Section 756(c) of the conference report allows a 250-pound increase in the weight of some heavy trucks, purportedly to provide incentives for trucking companies to utilize a certain type of idle reduction technology. While I support the environmental benefits of reducing truck idling, I cannot support an increase in truck weights that will inflict further damage upon the highway infrastructure and threaten the safety of the driving public. At a time when states are searching for the funds necessary to fix roads that are worn to the point of being unsafe, this provision will increase the stress on our Nation's highway infrastructure, costing taxpayers approximately \$300 million each year in increased highway damage. Further, this exemption is unnecessary. The industry's own figures show that idling reduction technologies pay for themselves in reduced fuel costs in approximately two years.

Section 1502 provides special protection for MTBE (Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether) producers from liability associated with clean up costs and damages caused by MTBE contamination of groundwater. MTBE is a gasoline additive that helps make gas burn cleaner and reduces air pollution, but it also becomes a suspected carcinogen that can contaminate groundwater and surface water. As a result of this special interest provision, taxpayers will be forced to pay the estimated \$29 billion cost of cleaning MTBE-contaminated water across the country.

Section 326 establishes a dangerous precedent under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by authorizing the federal government to reimburse oil and gas companies for the costs of undertaking environmental impact analyses relating to oil and gas leasing. This provision, in combination with a similar provision for geothermal energy, is estimated to cost taxpayers \$165 million over the next ten years.

The Conference Report does nothing to increase the average fuel economy standards. One way to ensure that we decrease our dependence on foreign oil is to increase the number of miles per gallon achieved by our cars, trucks, and sport utility vehicles. However, this massive legislation does nothing to address this issue and simply leaves in place the status quo.

The Conference Report contains tax subsidies of approximately \$23.5 billion to energy industries—over half of that amount (\$119 billion) goes to oil and gas companies. At a time when our country is facing debilitating deficits, there are no offsets to pay for the cost of these enormous tax breaks for energy industries.

These provisions demonstrate the dangers of writing such an expansive bill without allowing participation by all parties. But as we know, not all conferees were allowed to participate in conference meetings. It is a shame