

attention to our letter and is now exercising, as I understand, its jurisdiction under the legislation that we passed to look at prices.

In addition, we have numerous hearings scheduled. We've had some this week, next week, and the week after looking at various different aspects of this. Clearly, our consuming public, whether they be commercial, which are probably having the most critical problem because that's their livelihood, as well as those of us who are not driving for commercial sake but for important sake, to get to school, to get to work, to get to hospitals, to do all those things, we are very cognizant, as I know all of us are, of the strain that is being put on the consumers of our country.

□ 1700

Not only are they seeing an economic downturn, but at the same time that they are having reduced capacity to purchase things critical to them, gasoline and home heating oil are going up almost every week 5 to 10 cents. And so we are addressing that. We met with all the chairmen who reported out the energy bill last year and asked them to address this issue short term, medium term and long term.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that.

I would like to find something to do that would have this impact as we get into this driving season. I know that Mr. RYAN introduced a bill today that would take the money that otherwise would have been used for earmarks on both sides of the aisle and use that to offset the loss of revenue to the highway trust fund of a gas tax holiday. That would be one of the things that we could do in the next 2 weeks that should have immediate impact at the pump by Memorial Day if we did it before that Memorial Day break. But if we could do something to reduce gas prices, that would be a major thing.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield on that?

Mr. BLUNT. I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. One of the things I know I am personally for, and I think the Speaker is for that, as well, and we have urged the administration to take action, is not purchase additional oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at this time. I would be opposed to taking oil out of the reserve. But if we stop purchasing oil for a period of time, reduce our demand as we fill the SPR, not only will we reduce demand, economists tell us that would have an effect on price, perhaps about the same as the gasoline tax holiday that you refer to.

There are a number of pieces of legislation. Mr. WELCH has a bill. Mr. LAMPSON has a bill. And many, many other Members have a bill. The administration, we believe, can do this on its own. We think that would be good policy while we have this crisis to stop filling up, not reducing, but to stop filling up our own reserve and reduce demand. Economists tell us that would

have a positive effect on bringing prices down as well.

Mr. BLUNT. Based on the increase in prices, if in fact that would have the same impact as a gas tax holiday, maybe we should do both. I suspect there would be substantial support on the floor to do both.

The only other item I am going to mention today is the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. It was 1 year ago tomorrow that the House, the Senate and the administration made an agreement on trade. That was about a year after the Colombia Free Trade Agreement had been negotiated. We have not passed that agreement yet and don't have any schedule on the floor. I would hope that we will continue work to get the Colombia Free Trade Agreement and the other trade agreements but particularly the Colombia agreement to the floor and do that in the spirit of the agreement that the Speaker and administration and Senate negotiators announced a year ago.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to say that both the Speaker and I believe that the administration, in reaching an agreement that you refer to, made a positive step in terms of incorporating within trade agreements a consideration of workers' rights and environmental concerns so that our manufacturers and our job producers in the United States had a fair, more level playing field in which to compete and that our workers were competing with workers who had the right to organize and were getting decent wages.

The Colombia agreement, as you know, was not sent down here after agreement between the administration and the House leadership. The response was to simply not take it off the agenda but take the time limit during which we might consider that. That was an interim step which did not, as the Speaker has pointed out, take Colombia off the agenda. It simply didn't put it on the agenda for immediate consideration. But that is still on the agenda. It is still available, a force, and it is still under discussion.

Mr. BLUNT. I hope we can get it done.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MAY 12, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, that when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN EN- GROSSMENT OF H.R. 5818, NEIGH- BORHOOD STABILIZATION ACT OF 2008

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 5818 and amendments to H.R. 3221, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section numbering and cross-referencing, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2419, FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Upton moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2419 (an Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012) be instructed to recede to the provisions proposed to be added to Section 9001 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 in the form of a definition of "Renewable Biomass."

Mr. UPTON (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) will be recognized for 30 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I will say I know that the hour is late. Many of us are trying to get home for the weekend, and there is business after me. So I don't at all intend to take too much of my 30 minutes that I have. But let me yield myself as much time as I may consume now.

Mr. Speaker, we are woefully unprepared to meet our energy needs for the next 30 years. Some estimates say that our needs in this country are going to increase as much as 50 percent by the year 2030. So we are going to have to do a much better job on not only looking at alternative forms of energy, we are also going to need to do much more on conservation, nuclear and a whole host of things. And as the majority leader indicated a short time ago, we are looking for some long-term strategies.

What this instruction to the conferees does is it takes, in essence, a piece of legislation, a bipartisan piece

of legislation that the Energy Subcommittee held hearings on earlier this week, a bill offered by the gentlelady, STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN, which is bipartisan, and it expands the definition of renewable fuel and biomass to include wood removed as byproducts from National Forest System land or any organic matter that is available on a renewable basis from non-Federal land, including renewable plant material which includes feed grain, other agricultural commodities, other plants and trees, waste material, including crop residue, et cetera, food and yard waste. And it would instruct the conferees to include this on the farm bill.

Of course, the farm bill is a bill that is moving along. The farm legislation is a bill that is going to be on the President's desk we hope in the not too distant future. So this is a bill that is going to move.

Why not take a piece of bipartisan legislation that deals with alternative fuels like ethanol, expand that, and actually get it to the President's desk so we can do it right away rather than wait for more hearings, markups and dealing with the Senate? Who knows what happens over there. We can actually get this thing done and then address part of the needs that we have in this country to expand our alternative fuel base.

So I would like to think that we could adopt this. I know that there is quite a bit of support on it based on the hearing that we held earlier this week.

Madam Speaker, I would reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, it appears that my friend from Michigan's motion is to instruct the House to recede to the Senate's definition of renewable biomass. The House conferees have receded to the Senate on their definition of renewable biomass. That definition of renewable biomass that is included in the farm bill applies only to farm bill programs. This definition does not apply to H.R. 6.

The farm bill conferees report does not amend H.R. 6, that despite the fact that several members of the Agriculture Committee, including myself, are supporting efforts to amend the shortcomings we see in that bill. And I say to my friend from Michigan that I am going to have to oppose this motion to instruct at this time. And I agree with your position on this. But yet you know there are multijurisdictional concerns that have to be addressed with the Energy and Commerce Committee. And we are trying to work through all of these.

The farm bill conference is all but done. Over the last few weeks, I have been saying we need to dot our I's and cross our T's. The I's are dotted and we are crossing our T's. So even though I agree that the argument that my friend is making on the problems of

H.R. 6 are correct and on target, we cannot do it on this farm bill. The hour is too late. So I would oppose my good friend's amendment at this time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close if the gentleman yields back his time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Again, the argument that my friend makes is credible. But at this time, we just cannot accept it. The conference is all but over. And I would oppose my friend's motion.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I just might say in closing as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, we had what I thought was a very favorable hearing earlier this week. I would like to think this is a vehicle we can move this legislation on very quickly rather than resort to the normal process, particularly as we look long term. We can do this in the short term. It makes a lot of sense.

I would urge a "yes" vote on the motion to instruct the conferees to include this in the farm bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 2419, FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I have a motion to instruct at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Shimkus moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2419 (an Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2012) be instructed to recede to the provisions contained in section 9021 of the Senate amendment (relating to the E 85 Fuel Program).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) will be recognized for 30 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, as many people who have observed the House floor over the past month, I have continuously come down to address the high cost of energy and the importance of bringing the supply issue to this debate.

One of the things that we have been successful with, which is now under attack, it was once a success story, was E-85, ethanol and the entire debate of bringing more supply to this debate.

This motion to instruct highlights the importance of E-85 fueling stations and developing that. For example, in my home State of Illinois, I am very fortunate. We have 171 E-85 fueling stations. In my congressional district, I can go all throughout my 30 counties and fuel up with my flex-fuel vehicle E-85.

□ 1715

There are States in the Union that cannot. An example, Maine, we couldn't get any information on. Rhode Island has zero, Vermont has zero, Delaware has one, where other States, like Minnesota, has 346.

One of the issues of more supply is also more supply locations. When we move to new fuels, as other people talk about, if we move to a hydrogen economy, we are going to need hydrogen-fueling stations, and that's all part of the importance.

This motion to instruct says let's do what the Senate did on the farm bill, and let's talk about developing an E-85 infrastructure around this country so we can help decrease our reliance on imported crude oil. Why? Because everything we talk about on this floor revolves around energy and the high cost of energy, especially for the producers of our food.

For example, manufacturer inputs have increased 14 percent in 2008 on top of a 12 percent increase last year. That's inputs to grow our food. Corn fertilizer costs \$140 per acre for 2008, compared to \$115 price in 2007, contrasted to \$63 per acre from 2001-2005.

What is driving up high farmers' input costs? No additional supply. A lot of fertilizers are affected, all buy natural gas. As we continue to restrict our ability to go after more supply, we push up the input costs, which drives up the price for food and this whole debate.

I can go through all the huge increases that our farmers have had to do. DAP, prices rose from \$252 per ton in January, 2007, to \$752 gulf price. Urea rose from \$272 to \$415, muriate of potash rose from \$173 to \$252. We can just go on. It's a huge, huge increase.

Now we don't want to come down to the floor without bringing alternatives and solutions. What's the solution? The solution is more supply.

Look at what's happened. It's not disputable. Under this majority, crude oil has gone from \$58 a barrel to \$123. I come down almost every day. This price has not gone down. This price continues to go up.