

Energy

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Higher energy prices are posing significant challenges for Kansas. The burden of higher gas prices is particularly troubling in rural Kansas where we often travel long distances for necessary activities such as work and school. These higher prices have also increased the operating costs for many businesses, including our truck drivers, farmers, and ranchers. Whether you're heating your home in the winter months, using irrigation to water crops, or you are a company trying to produce fertilizer or a farmer trying to purchase it for application, these higher natural gas prices have also been detrimental to Kansans.

For the U.S. to remain competitive in a global market, we must have an ample energy supply that is affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible. As our population demands greater amounts of energy, it is time that Congress makes a strong commitment in developing a long-term energy policy. More than 60 percent of our oil is imported from foreign countries. While oil provides our country with many economic benefits, it is important that we continue to advance technologies to help reduce our dependence on domestic and foreign sources of oil.

In 2005, I supported H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act. This new law is a positive step forward in meeting the long-term energy needs of our country. I am encouraged that this legislation includes incentives for renewable energy such as ethanol and biodiesel. This energy bill contains a Renewable Fuels Standard that will double America's demand for ethanol to at least 7.5 billion gallons annually by 2012. A Renewable Fuels Standard would require that a certain percentage of motor fuel in the U.S. must be obtained from renewable sources, such as ethanol or biodiesel. Increasing the use of renewable fuel is not only good for our farm economy, but for our entire state. This law also includes incentives for domestic oil production, solar and biomass energy, hydrogen fuel, clean coal technology, and critical upgrades to our nation's power grids to prevent shortages and blackouts.

