



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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SENATOR BOB DOLE COMMENTS ON THE ENERGY CRISIS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The availability of future supplies of energy producing fuels can no longer be taken for granted: Personally, economically or internationally. There are many different sides of the various energy-related issues, but one point of agreement stands out. Most knowledgeable and concerned observers share the belief that the energy policy has too long been the subject of piecemeal planning, regulation, legislative, administrative control. The time has come to draw the scattered branches of this subject together under a comprehensive national energy policy.

For this reason I have requested the Interior Committee to hold special hearings on the energy crisis as it relates to agriculture before the problem becomes even more crucial. Hopefully, the hearings will be completed before adjournment for the Memorial Day recess.

I have been deeply concerned with the inability of many independent Midwestern refineries to obtain sufficient supplies of crude oil to maintain their production level. Not only do these refineries contribute significantly to the supplies of many small jobbers and independent retail outlets which are facing reductions and cut-offs by major refineries, but they are also a major source of supply for fuels used in agriculture. If farmers are unable to obtain sufficient fuel for their

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spring plowing and planting, the results will be felt in every American household as food supplies decrease and costs rise even further.

President Nixon's April 18 Energy Message to the Congress demonstrates a sound, constructive approach to formulating an effective long-range policy while taking decisive action to deal with the pressing problems which confront us at the present time.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of increased domestic production. The reserves are there; it is simply a matter of making it worthwhile for explorers to go out and locate them.

In recent years, as the real-dollar price of crude oil has decline and natural gas prices have been held at artificial levels, costs of drilling have grown significantly with a major impact on exploration for new wells. This point was brought close to home early last month when it was reported that well completions in Kansas had dropped to a new low for the year and drilling starts are now down to little more than half of last year's pace.

So I believe the decision to end the current import tariffs will bring major improvements in the crude oil supply both for the independent and major refiners, and it will provide far reaching benefits for the small businessman -- and particularly for the farmers and consumers who depend on them.

The President has provided a constructive start toward setting a sound and long-overdue national energy policy. However, there are many considerations involved in this area. Environmental protection, consumer costs, economic side-effects, national security and other national concerns must all be weighed and evaluated as our energy policy is formulated.