



JOB ONE: The Energy Bill *by Senator Norm Coleman*

My job description boils down to what the people of Minnesota expect of me: To get things done. At the top of my to do list is the Energy Bill that just passed the Senate on an overwhelmingly bipartisan 85-12 vote and now moves to conference committee with the House, before, hopefully, sending it on to President Bush for his signature.

Any mom or dad knows the need for this Energy Bill when they fill up at the pump along the way to work or to drop their kids off at school, or when they pay their utility bills. Any farmer or manufacturer knows the importance of this bill when they pay to irrigate their crops, or run their milking parlors, or run their plants. While this bill may not bring down the cost of filling up your tank right away, it is expected to help moderate escalating energy bills and the impact they have on families, farms, and industries.

From my vantage point the Energy Bill contains three essential goals and objectives: Jobs, jobs, and jobs. It has been estimated by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) that passage of the Energy Bill will save nearly 2 million American jobs over the next decade. And without it, NAM says we will lose 700,000 manufacturing jobs alone. High energy prices strain our economy and cost America jobs. This bill will help the factory, the farm, and the local store down the street put more of their resources into creating jobs, instead of paying high energy costs, and ultimately better equip the U.S. to compete in the global marketplace.

I am proud to say that Minnesota not only plays a big role in generating the new energy supplies our nation desperately needs right now, but also in saving and creating the jobs we need to revitalize our economy and improve our environment. Here are some of the key provisions I worked on that should literally energize our state's economy and the efforts to improve our environment for years to come.

- **Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS):** This provision which I co-authored will more than double U.S. ethanol and biodiesel use by 2012, reduce crude oil imports by 2 billion barrels and create nearly 235,000 jobs on and off the farm. Minnesota has 16 ethanol plants already today, all but a few being farmer owned. This has created over a half billion dollars in economic activity in the Land of 10,000 lakes at home. Minnesota is the first in the nation to have a 10 percent state requirement, and that requirement will grow to 20 percent under our new state law.

- **Northern Minnesota Clean Coal Gasification Plant:** I fought hard to include loan guarantees for the Mesaba 500 megawatt project expected to generate hundreds of good paying jobs and economic development on the Iron Range. This 500 megawatt project also promises to put Minnesota at the forefront of developing environmentally friendly energy sources through clean coal technology. Inclusion of the loan guarantees and tax credits comes on the heels of the \$36 million grant I announced last year for this project in a region eager for economic encouragement.
- **Biodiesel Tax Credit:** I coauthored the legislation to extend this critical tax credit. We've got three biodiesel plants coming on line in Minnesota, creating construction and plant jobs in towns like Brewster, Minnesota which just completed a \$55 million plant in that town of 502 people! Right now in Minnesota with our ethanol use, we have enjoyed – on average – gas prices of 7 to 8 cents less than the national average. Biodiesel promises to do the same thing for diesel and the truckers in particular who depend on it. Minnesota will also lead the way in biodiesel with the first in the nation 2 percent state requirement that will trigger this year thanks to the federal tax credit and the hard work of Minnesota farm families.
- **Wind Energy:** The incentives I coauthored will produce more than 100,000 new jobs nationwide and also over 5,000 new megawatts of clean and renewable power. Minnesota leads the way in wind energy as well, being the fastest growing wind energy state in the country. I had the privilege of flipping the switch on the largest wind energy turbine in North America near Dodge Center. I've seen the 1.9 cent per kilowatt tax credit in this bill accomplish amazing things, including allowing a Princeton dairy farmer to power his farm and 85 homes on livestock waste! In addition to the tax credits, I am very pleased that my Rural Renaissance proposal to provide wind energy low interest loans and grants through bonding was included as part of this Energy Bill.

I could go on and on about the critical need to put this long overdue new national energy policy in place. It encourages the expansion and modernization of our electricity grid to prevent blackouts, sets first time efficiency standards for many large appliances while raising others, and requires the federal government to establish a plan to save 1 million barrels of oil a day by 2015. And the Renewable Energy Standard which I coauthored requires that 10 percent of U.S. electricity come from renewable resources like wind energy.

So, let me end where I began. This Energy Bill is designed to increase our nation's energy supplies, promote renewable energy use, and step up energy conservation efforts in this country. Over time the Energy Bill will lessen our dependence on foreign energy, give us cleaner water and air, and lower energy prices. But perhaps more than anything else, it is about jobs. And I will continue to do mine in Minnesota and Washington to make sure that we work on and pass important legislation like the Energy Bill that pushes Minnesota to the front of economic growth and development.