



NORM COLEMAN

UNITED STATES SENATOR • MINNESOTA



Making Strides in Curbing Our Addiction to Oil

by Senator Norm Coleman

The United States Senate has just begun to debate a new Energy Bill, legislation aimed at solving many of our nation's energy woes - one of my top priorities throughout my time in the Senate. Recently, my colleagues and I passed an amendment important to preserving the freedom, safety and economic prosperity of all Americans. Our amendment, a key component of the bipartisan act Dependence Reduction through Innovation and Energy (DRIVE) Act of which I am a co-sponsor, will create an oil savings plan and help curb America's addiction to foreign oil.

The numbers behind America's oil addiction are troubling. 97 percent of transportation in the United States is fueled by oil purchased from a unified global oil market. Saudi Arabia holds 20 percent of the world's oil reserves. Iran has 10 percent and Venezuela holds six percent. It is time to stop putting oil dollars into the pockets of thugs and tyrants like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hugo Chavez, and instead invest that money in homegrown energy sources created by America's farmers and entrepreneurs.

However, we should not be motivated by fear alone. We, as Americans, must dream of the better country we can build. We must dream of the future we want to provide for our children. Failure to address our energy dependence will mean a future for our kids that is less prosperous, less safe and less free.

For well over a year, I've been working with a bipartisan group of Senators including Bayh, Lieberman, Brownback, and Salazar to establish an aggressive oil

savings plan for the nation. Our DRIVE Act amendment will achieve a 2.5 million barrel-per-day reduction in U.S. oil consumption by 2016 – equal to the entire amount of oil we currently import from the Middle East. The amendment goes on to achieve a 7 million barrel-per-day reduction by 2026, and a 10 million barrel-per-day reduction by 2031. Those steps result in a 35 percent cut in oil consumption by 2030.

Our amendment will make considerable strides towards reducing America's oil addiction, strides so great that, even with Minnesotan and American ingenuity, some may ask: can we do this? Is America up to this challenge? Can we summon the leadership and resources for a task of this magnitude?

The simple answer for all of us as Americans is: we can because we must.

To answer this challenge, all we have to do is look to Minnesota, where entrepreneurs are already inventing new renewable fuel processes, hydraulic-powered vehicles, and revolutionary energy-saving technologies. We know renewables work in Minnesota. We've proven it for years and we will undoubtedly lead this charge going forward.

While our amendment passed the Senate, the larger debate on the Energy Bill is far from over. However, it is important to remember that this crucial amendment is about more than just cutting our oil habit. It is a reflection of our most basic responsibilities as members of Congress: to preserve the national and economic security of the American people.