

Congressman John J. Duncan Jr.

Refusal to Drill Sending Nation into Needless Economic Crisis (7-17-2008)

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the favorite son of the Volunteer State, Mr. *Duncan*.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. *Sessions*), in his opposition to this rule. Mr. Speaker, let me read just one thing to you. Charles Krauthammer is one of our most respected syndicated columnists and television commentators. A little over 3 weeks ago he wrote this: "Gas is \$4 a gallon. Oil is \$135 a barrel and rising. We import two-thirds of our oil, sending hundreds of billions of dollars to the likes of Russia, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, and yet we voluntarily prohibit ourselves from even exploring huge resources, huge domestic reserves of petroleum and natural gas. At a time when U.S. crude oil production has fallen 40 percent in the past 25 years, 75 billion barrels of oil have been declared off limits according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration."

Still quoting Mr. Krauthammer: "That would be enough to replace every barrel of non-North American imports for 22 years. That is nearly a quarter century of energy independence."

Mr. Krauthammer ended by saying: "The situation is absurd." Robert Samuelson, a couple of months ago in *The Washington Post*, and he is another syndicated columnist, but not a conservative or a Republican by any stretch of the imagination. He wrote this. He said, "The truth is that we are almost powerless to influence today's prices. We are because we didn't take sensible actions 10 or 20 years ago. If we persist, we will be even worse off in a decade or two."

The first thing to do, Mr. Samuelson said: "Start drilling."

And George Will pointed out in a recent column that when we were able to pass drilling in ANWR, 12 1/2 years ago, President Clinton vetoed it. If he hadn't vetoed it, that would have been 27 million barrels of oil, 20 million barrels of gasoline and 7 million barrels of diesel fuel coming down to this country, coming down here every day, and would have had a great, great effect on this problem. And we are certainly in a problem.

A couple of months ago we heard in the Highways and Transit Subcommittee that 935 trucking companies had gone out of business in the first quarter of this year. And that survey only counted trucking companies with five trucks or more.

A couple of weeks ago, in the Aviation Subcommittee we heard that eight airlines had gone out of business in the last year and a half. And this is a needless crisis.

The Minerals Management Service estimates that the quantity of undiscovered, technically recoverable resources ranges from 66 to 115 billion barrels of oil.

One of our leaders has described this DRILL Act as a hoax of a bill, and it is a hoax because it still leaves 85 percent, or 611 million acres of our Outer Continental Shelf off limits for oil production.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Tennessee has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, let me close just simply by saying this. I have noticed over the years that almost all of these environmental radicals come from very wealthy or very upper income families, and perhaps they can afford 5 or \$6 a gallon gasoline. But many hardworking and average Americans cannot afford this. We are sending this country into a needless economic crisis.

We need to start drilling in an environmentally safe way where there is oil, as the gentleman from Texas has pointed out, and not pass a hoax of a bill such as this.