

Frank Murkowski – Senate Floor Speech – April 18, 2002

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I will take a few minutes at this time, and I would appreciate the Chair reminding me when half my time is up. My understanding is that is in 5 minutes.

I want to show a chart. We had the Senator from California talk a little bit about refuges. This happens to be a producing well in a refuge in California. It is near San Francisco. The point is, there are refuges in many States, as additional charts will show.

Be that as it may, I am not going to belabor that point because there are a few other issues on which we need to reflect.

Today we are seeing headlines: "Summer Gasoline Prices Again Headed Higher."

We also see information coming at us from the Mideast relative to the crisis, and Saddam Hussein advises that oil is going to be used as a weapon.

Oil as a weapon. We remember the last time we saw a weapon in this country, it was an aircraft being used as a weapon--two aircraft, three aircraft. There was the Pentagon, there was the New York Twin Towers, and there was the terrible crash in Pennsylvania.

This is as a consequence, to some degree, of our continued reliance on imported oil. We have heard a lot on the other side relative to ANWR and what it would contribute. Let me identify for the record--and this is from the Energy Institute--crude oil imports relative to the annual report for the year 2002. Opening ANWR would reduce oil dependence from 66 percent in 2020 to 62 percent by 2024; 58 percent by 2020 in a high case. So we have a low case, a mean, and a high.

The significance is what it does relative to domestic production. Assuming the USGS mean case for oil in ANWR, there would be an increase of domestic production by 13.9 percent; assuming a higher case for oil--and this is USGS figures--25 percent of total domestic production, an increase--well, the increase is clearly substantial.

I think what a lot of people have forgotten in this debate is what we are debating. This second degree amendment, of course, provides funding for the rejuvenation of the American steel industry, with the

proceeds from ANWR. But for a moment, let us reflect on the fact that passing the underlying amendment does not automatically open ANWR. In this amendment, we have given the President the authority to open ANWR. The President has to certify to Congress that the exploration, development, and production of the oil and gas resources in the ANWR Coastal Plain are in the U.S. national, economic, and security interests. I think we should trust our President to make that decision. Clearly, at a time when the Mideast is in an inferno and we are 58 percent dependent, we should trust our President to make this decision.

Further, there is a 2,000-acre limitation on surface disturbance. That is in the House bill. There is an export ban, with the exception of exports to Israel. Under the Israeli oil supply agreement, we are extending it through the year 2014. There are 1.5 million acres of wilderness in ANWR, in exchange for opening approximately the 1.5 million acres of the Coastal Plain. We believe that is a responsible exchange.

We talk about a process. This is what I find totally unacceptable. One might say we were defeated before we even started on this project. Why? Well, because the majority leader basically pulled away from the committee of jurisdiction the process of developing out of that committee an orderly transition and development of a bill that could be brought to the floor and voted on by 50 votes.

We had 50 votes. We were victorious, and the Democratic leader knew it, but

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he pulled the bill from the Energy Committee and put us in a position of having to come up with 60 votes, and that is where we are today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I guess one could say when we had control of the Senate the last time, 55 to 45 in 1995, we passed ANWR. President Clinton vetoed it. Now it is a different story in the Senate. We have 50/49/1. That is the reality associated with this issue.

The final point I want to make relative to the majority leader and his handling of this bill is one that I think bears consideration by all Members of this body. He said, even if we

get 60 votes, we are not going to get ANWR because he will pull the energy bill.

(SENATE DEBATE)

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I yield myself the remaining time.

I want my colleagues to note there is not one single thing in here that increases domestic oil production in this energy bill. I find that unconscionable at a time when energy prices are increasing. We face continued crisis in the Middle East, and the intention of Saddam Hussein is, in his words, "use oil as a weapon." We have seen that.

I am very pleased to stand with Senator Stevens and recognize the support on this issue, from seafarers, teamsters, ironworkers, laborers, operating engineers, plumbers, pipefitters and many other unions in America that recognize this legislation as good for the American worker. A vote on the second degree which Senator Rockefeller just talked about is a vote for America's steel industry.

He didn't talk about rejuvenating the industry. This is money that could come from opening ANWR, some \$12 billion. It is unconscionable that they are not giving serious consideration to this because we are talking about passing a law; the conference is something else.

Finally, a vote for this amendment is a vote for the Native people of my State of Alaska . They were promised they would have access to their lands. The underlying amendment would give them that.

We talk about truth today. I am going to close with one reference from the New York Times.

A Democrat from the northeast who considers himself a strong environmentalist also said he once tried quietly to see if he could broker a deal in which Democrats would back limited exploration in the wildlife reserve and Republicans would support much tougher fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks.

The Democrat said he quickly gave up when it became apparent that the environmental organizations would not budge in their opposition to new drilling.

"If you told the environmentalists we would end global warming once and for all in return for ANWR," he said, "they'd still say no."

The truth is, what is going on here is simply the word ``greed." The so-called environmentalists are not interested in science; they are not interested in the health of this planet; they are not interested in the welfare of the people of my State; they are interested in only one thing--fundraising and keeping their high-paid jobs.

They know that we can explore Alaska safely; and that the wildlife will not be hurt. But they know that if we win ANWR, and we will, their chief fundraising tool goes away. That's what this entire debate is about--it is about raising money and keeping jobs for people who call themselves environmentalists.

That is the bottom line. We could pull this bill but the people of Alaska are entitled to a vote and Members are entitled to stand and be heard. They are going to be held accountable, and that is the way it should be.

I urge my colleagues to do what is right, what is right for America, not

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what is right for America's environmental community that has lobbied this issue hell-bent for election.

I yield the floor.

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