During debate on this bill, we will also consider an amendment to increase fuel efficiency standards for light trucks and sport utility vehicles (SUVs). Currently, the minimum average mileage per gallon (mpg) standard is 20.7 mpg for the fleet of SUV's produced by an automaker in a given year. The amendment would increase this to 26 mpg by 2005 and then to 27.5 mpg by 2007. This standard has not been changed in five years, and it is time that we allow it to be increased. While the underlying bill would decrease gasoline use by 5 billion gallons between the year 2004 and 2010, this amendment would create a savings of 40 billion gallons of gasoline over that same period. The amendment would increase the minimum average fuel efficiency standard of all cars and light trucks by only 1.3 mpg over what the industry actually produced back in 1987.

Opponents of this proposal claim that raising these standards is not feasible and would result in a decrease in safety to SUV passengers. However, this is not the case. In fact, a competition recently sponsored by General Motors and the Department of Energy illustrates this point. Various engineering schools across the country competed to increase the fuel efficiency of one of the larger SUV'S, a Chevrolet Suburban. The winner, University of Wisconsin at Madison, increased the fuel efficiency of this vehicle to 28.05 mpg while maintaining the structural integrity and protections that vehicle affords.

In conclusion, passing H.R. 4 today would be highly imprudent. America's long-term energy needs would be better served with an energy policy that places greater emphasis on energy conservation and renewable fuel technologies.

SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4) to enhance energy conservation, research and development and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 4. The most important action the Federal Government can take to stabilize energy prices for the American consumer is to develop and implement a coordinated, long-range national energy policy. H.R. 4 is the result of the hard work of five congressional Committees, who have incorporated conservation, environmental regulations, alternative energy sources, tax relief, and increased production to produce a comprehensive national energy plan.

In the foreseeable future, domestic exploration, and production of oil and natural gas will have a critical impact on our country's economy, stability, and international relationships. During the last 30 years, we have watched OPEC coalesce, fractionalize, and coalesce again. I do not think we will ever have more than a superficial influence over many of the OPEC nations. Libya, Algeria, Iran, Nigeria, and Iraq are not what I would call our allies. Why then should we place such heavy reliance on them to meet our energy needs?

The answer for the United States to the supply manipulations by the OPEC cartel is sufficient access to the best oil and natural gas fields here at home. That's why I strongly support the lease sale of area 181, and other tracts in the eastern gulf, and why I believe now is the time to open up area 1002 in the Arctic Coastal Plain of Alaska. While we may never be completely self-reliant for oil supply, we can make a dramatic difference by developing the resources domestically in a reasonable and responsible fashion.

Though domestic production is an essential part of the national energy policy, H.R. 4 addresses other variables that are vital to the full implementation of a coherent national energy plan. While most experts acknowledge that natural gas represents an abundant energy resource for the future, we must ensure there will be sufficient transmission capacity for this uniquely North American product 10 years from now. The regulatory obstacles to operating pipelines—much less constructing new lines—are too numerous to count. H.R. 4 recognizes these obstacles and includes incentives for companies to construct new lines and add capacity that will increase the reliability of America's utility infrastructure

H.R. 4 creates a favorable tax climate that encourages increased production while also providing tax incentives for individuals and businesses to increase their conservation efforts.

H.R. 4 is a well balanced piece of legislation that draws upon conservation efforts, increased domestic production, and tax incentives to develop the beginnings of a national energy policy that will help decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources and help stabilize energy prices for the American consumer.

SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4) to enhance energy conservation, research and development and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to oppose H.R. 4, the SAFE Act, which taps the Social Security and Medicare trust funds in order to pay for new energy tax incentives.

Mr. Chairman, I support many of the provisions in the SAFE Act. I am encouraged by a number of initiatives that combine incentives for enhanced production along with sensible conservation measures. I particularly support the investments in clean coal technology and the tax credits for wind electricity production, as North Dakota has an enormous supply of lignite coal and the greatest potential for development of wind powered generation in the country. But I am not willing nor is it necessary to invest in energy at the expense of Social Security and Medicare.

I think it is inexcusable that the Rules Committee refused to allow consideration of an offset amendment to protect Medicare and Social Security. I cannot support legislation that does not contain ''pay for'' provisions when the result is a direct raid of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. That is unacceptable and I see no other choice but to oppose this bill.

I am also extremely disappointed that this bill leaves out an important segment of energy suppliers—public power suppliers and rural electric cooperatives, which serve 25 percent of the nation's power consumers. It is only logical that by including the maximum number of market participants in generation of renewable and clean energy production, we best equip ourselves to meet these goals.

I strongly support meaningful energy legislation that will offer more options and better solutions for my constituents and for all Americans. But I will not rob Peter to pay Paul and I oppose this raid on Medicare and Social Security. I am voting against the SAFE Act and I encourage my colleagues to join me.

SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4) to enhance energy conservation, research and development and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer comments on H.R. 4, the Securing America's Future Energy Act of 2001. However, first I would like to thank House Science Committee Chairman BOEHLERT and Ranking Member HALL for their leadership in producing a bipartisan energy bill from the Committee.

The first hearing held by the Full Science Committee in the 107th Congress was on the issue of our nation's energy future. It was appropriate that the Committee review closely all portions of the Administration's energy plan in light of the heavy burden placed on the fiscal resources of the federal government because of the $1.2 Trillion tax cut.

We can all agree that the United States does need to develop a long-term national energy policy. Our nation's energy priorities should remain constant regardless of the changing dynamics of energy supply. However, there are many facets to our nation's energy needs.

This nation is comprised of producer states and consumer states who must work together in order to resolve future energy needs. The energy portfolio for our nation must include fossil fuels, renewables, and nuclear power.

The bill that is before us today is a compilation of several efforts on the part of four separate House Committees to craft a national energy plan. The Science Committee contributed