

## **Fighting Rising Gas Prices**

*Alternative Fuels → Ethanol and Biodiesel*

The United States is the world's largest consumer of oil, but we depend on some of the most politically and economically unstable countries to supply us with roughly 60 percent of our crude oil. If nothing changes, that import figure will rise to 68 percent by 2025. With gas prices rising and relief at the pump nowhere in sight, it is apparent that we need to look to other energy resources. If we boost our domestic production of oil and natural gas, we would strengthen our domestic supplies and reserves, which means that we would pay less to fill our gas tanks.



An additional solution might lie in turning to alternative fuels. The United States is the world's largest producer and exporter of corn and soybeans. The agricultural industry isn't the only sector that can benefit from the surplus of these crops. Recent technological advancements have opened the fuel tank door to corn and soybeans as sources for fuel. Corn can be converted into ethanol, which can be used in gas engines, and soybeans can be changed into biodiesel, which can be used in diesel engines. By shifting the supply for our fuel consumption to a source that is renewable, and less costly, we reduce our reliance on foreign oil, a rare win-win situation.

Such an energy policy will create more jobs for Americans and help out American corn and soybean farmers, all while reducing the need for petroleum. As the technology matures and its popularity grows, consumers will experience lower energy prices. In addition to those benefits, biodiesel and ethanol are also considerably better for the environment because they are cleaner-burning fuels.

On the federal level, U.S. Senator Jim Talent this year sponsored key initiatives in the federal government's Energy Policy Act of 2005 that aims to accelerate the proliferation of these alternative fuels in the marketplace. A key provision adds 7.5 billion gallons of ethanol and biodiesel to the nation's fuel supply by 2010. The legislation would also open up refineries that we do have to more of this production and provide incentives for the use of alternative fuels of all types. The federal legislation would also direct exploratory

efforts in the American West and the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge. This is all encouraging news for farmers in Southeast Missouri. Embracing alternative, renewable fuel resources is something that state and federal lawmakers *can and should* support.

## **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com> and <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

Thank you for your time.

*Senator Jason Crowell represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.*