



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

District 8 – Capitol Building, Room 319 Jefferson City, MO 65101

Column for Week of:  
October 6, 2008

Contact: Todd Scott  
(573) 751-1464 / (888) 711-9278

## Energy Independence Within Reach

We have known for some time now, that as a country and state, we would need to seek other sources of energy to reduce our dependency on foreign oil. Rising gas prices and the knowledge that many sources of energy are located in regions of the world that are at best, unstable, and at worst, openly hostile to the United States, have pointed us in this direction for years. In these uncertain and economically shaky times, it is important for us to aggressively expand our capacity to drill for domestic oil and to pursue renewable and alternative forms of energy.

All of this is very possible if we remove the obstacles that are often put in the way of the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the American people. Too many times, government interference has been at the root of this problem. When bureaucratic 'red tape' and other restrictions make it nearly impossible to build new power plants or to explore for domestic oil reserves, it becomes clear that government intrusion (in this case by federal government) has become a hindrance.

The best thing our government can do is to remove the obstacles and bureaucratic restrictions that can impede entrepreneurs and investors. Unnecessary intrusion into the free market can slow or prevent the creation of new and innovative methods of harnessing the tremendous natural resources this country has to offer.

A good example of government intrusion is Missouri's recent ill-advised entry into the private energy market. In 2006 (over my objections), the state law was changed to require that gasoline contain a certain percentage of ethanol, typically made from corn. While this was good news for corn farmers, it will have the effect of driving up food prices for consumers who purchase corn-based products and for other farmers, such as cattle farmers, who must now buy more expensive corn to feed to their livestock.

American ingenuity and the hope of making a profit are a powerful combination. With the demand for energy increasing, the private market will certainly devise ways to keep up and to find new and cheaper ways of meeting the need. This will likely include more drilling for domestic oil (some of which is located right here in the Show-Me State), as well as the development of other sources of energy, whether it be nuclear, wind, hydroelectric, solar or some source yet to be discovered. The best way for government to help facilitate the development of these new sources of energy and to lower costs is to create an environment where the free market can function unencumbered and American innovation can take the wheel.

If you have any comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.

-END-