

**\$4/gallon, \$4.50/gallon, \$5/gallon or More:** I was home in California last week and I paid \$4.29 for premium fuel while I was there. And, as I write this, the price of oil is still rising. \$4.50 or \$5.00 per gallon of gas is certainly in sight and possible. And, remember that the price of oil is denominated in dollars, but it is a world market. So, when the value of the dollar drops, as it is doing now due to printing money and deficits and such, the price of oil in dollars will rise even if the world supply/demand equation remains stable. We have seen this movie before. I remember very clearly in August and September of 2008 that Republicans (including this Republican) took to the floor of the House during August recess to talk about the recent rise in gas prices and to send a "drill, baby, drill" message. I also well remember one day in September when I was scheduled to lead that floor effort, but the financial crisis was about to burst and overwhelm the issue of gas prices. I asked to see then minority leader Boehner and was able to convince him that we should not be talking about gas prices when a much bigger crisis was going to be upon us within days. He heeded this advice and we went out and held a short press conference in Statuary Hall where Mr. Boehner announced that we were suspending our energy discussion because there were other problems looming.

Today is almost the reverse of that day. The economic collapse in September of 2008 took gas prices and that entire issue down with it. We are now in the midst of a recovery of sorts and current gas prices threaten to derail that recovery. Now, I understand that the geopolitical forces driving the price of oil right now are largely out of the control of our nation's leaders. But, what drives me nuts is that in the last 3 years, we have not only done nothing to reduce our vulnerability to such forces, we have actually exacerbated them.

I understand that it is a world market for oil. But, we can give ourselves some more control over how it affects us by producing as much domestic oil as possible. I also understand that it takes years to develop oil fields in places like Alaska. But, that's a reason to start right away, not to wait. A couple weeks ago, President Obama said that his Administration is not stopping oil production. That statement is completely false. His Administration has completely halted oil production in the Gulf of Mexico. He has blocked development of the enormous field in ANWR in Alaska. Shell Oil announced a few weeks back that after obtaining 38 or 39 required permits to extract oil from an existing Alaskan field, they have found getting the last one from the Administration too difficult and too costly and abandoned the project. And, Obama's people continue to erect barriers to developing oil sands fields in the Great Plains.

But oil isn't the only story. We have a lot of natural gas in this country, but the Administration is blocking new development of this resource under the guise of environmentalism. We have more coal than any other country, but they continue to try to block its use. And, although the President says he is pro-nuclear, the actions of his Administration are exactly the opposite of his

words, as they have been and are approving nothing in the way of nuclear power. I understand that nuclear energy has become a much more controversial topic in recent days given the crisis at the Fukushima-Daiichi plant in Japan, but it remains cheap, safe, very clean and extremely reliable.

So, what do they do? All they ever talk about are wind and solar, both of which can only ever be supplemental and which are very expensive and require huge government subsidies. The EPA also promotes and subsidizes a lot of ethanol, which can also only be supplemental and has a lot of subsidiary problems, including its affect on food prices. So, we subsidize inadequate, expensive power, and, at the same time, we are penalizing abundant, cheap power. And, because of the deficit, we are borrowing that subsidy money from places like China, which are developing and using all the resources that we are not.

Oh yeah, and now it is a federal crime to make, sell or use incandescent light bulbs. That's an energy policy? This Administration talks a lot about choice. But, somehow a choice that the law will not allow you to make is to use Thomas Edison's creation.

It all makes me so mad! As I said, I understand that we could not have stopped the disruption to the energy markets that is going on. But, we have intentionally left ourselves without preparation, alternatives or a plan. And, there are many, many options available to us. That is the real crime. Just remember when you can't fill your tank at a gas station in June because the \$50 limit on your debit card only buys you 9.7 gallons, you can lay it all at the feet of the President and the eco-radicals he supports, who have become a significant threat to our freedom and prosperity.