

EDITORIAL

Invest in alternatives

Our position: U.S. energy strategy can be revolutionized by approval of new measure.

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They're strange political bedfellows, this bipartisan group of U.S. senators. But in truth, their common legislative agenda defies ideological definition.

Breaking this nation's unsustainable dependence on foreign oil imports isn't a Republican or Democratic issue. It's about balancing the budget, securing our borders from terrorist attacks, reducing pollutants and improving every individual's quality of life.

Republican Sens. Sam Brownback of Kansas, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Norm Coleman of Minnesota and Jeff Sessions of Alabama, along with Democrats Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, Evan Bayh of Indiana and Ken Salazar of Colorado get that much.

That's why they jointly introduced landmark legislation last week to revolutionize America's energy strategy, reducing oil consumption in 20 years by roughly a third of what the nation now consumes. Automakers would get tax breaks to produce gas-electric hybrids and other mixed-use vehicles. The bill sets fuel efficiency standards for trucks and buses, encourages businesses and individuals to invest in fuel-efficient vehicles, and establishes a grant program for more mass-transit projects -- among many other worthwhile provisions. It's about time.

America can't drill its way to energy independence. Congress needs to radically shift its thinking, revisit some \$7.1 billion in tax subsidies for oil and gas production approved in a recent energy bill, and reinvest that money in sustainable alternatives. A bipartisan solution now is on the table. And it deserves to be made law.

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