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July 13, 2011

Racine, MN.

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GREETINGS

From Your
PRESIDENT

First of all I'd like to start my report by thanking everyone who helped with or attended the "Mini-Expo" and/or National Summer Meeting in Rochester. Everything was a success thanks to your participation and generosity. To all the associates that participated and exhibited at the "Mini-Expo" a special thank you. Thank you, David Gustafson from the university of Minnesota for donating the time to talk about Septic Systems in Minnesota. We would like to thank McNeilus Steel and Century Plastics for the tours. There was a lot of equipment down in the pit to try out and look at and booths with product information. Thanks for your support. Thank you to Eldon Ellingson and his gang for the donated tent. Special thanks to Mark Morreim and James Becvar, "The Tour Guides". Bruce and Linda Bucknell and Company for the site and much more, thank you. Harla and Crew—Great job on the food. The list goes on and on. Nordis lined up some very interesting tours. I toured the silica sand mine by Maiden Rock. Amazing, miles of tunnels 250 feet below the hill. The paddle boat by Lake City was very enjoyable. A lot of good meetings at the convention.

The Golf Outing is on September 16th, 2011 to raise money for the scholarships. This will be in Kenyon and is a best ball game.

Respectfully submitted.
Kevin Bakken
President

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Congressional Home Work Sessions, what do they learn?
John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations. 01 JUN 2011/jwp

With our lawmakers squabbling over the federal budget, do you ever wonder if they talk to real people? According to the House of Representatives calendar they do. The House calendar shows Representatives are “back in the district that elected them” about one-third of the time. That is not time off, staff remains on the job, and much “district time” is spent listening to constituents of all political persuasions, often in one-on-one talks about whatever is on their mind. Some of that time is spent trying to detect district problems before they become national disasters.

The week of May 16th, a roundtable discussion in the state of Washington got my attention. This was a price-of-food discussion held by two Representatives from widely separated states. Spokane, WA Rep. Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (R-5th), member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and Jack Kingston from GA (R-1st), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. Why was Kingston there in WA? He mentioned to McMorris-Rodgers that he would be in Spokane for a wedding and it didn't take long for him to add this roundtable discussion to his plans. Politicians like the visibility of such work sessions.

The economic mainstay of McMorris-Rodgers Eastern Washington district, second only to Fairchild Air Force Base, is more than 325 agricultural commodities including forest products, barley, corn, potatoes, asparagus, peas, apples, wine grapes, sweet Walla Walla onions, plus the scientific research that keeps America's food production abundant, cheap, safe and reliable. This roundtable gave two dozen eastern Washington farmers, packers, suppliers and research leaders from Washington State University (WSU) the chance to tell two important elected officials about impending train wrecks and emerging technical triumphs.

Everyone at the roundtable was concerned about increased Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intervention, with duplicate pesticide permit regulations and near-impossible dust control regulations. This is the impending train wreck. EPA is at it again. Don't those folks want any humans on this earth?

Kingston, a congressional appropriator, noted that next year the Farm Bill is up for revision, and the whole government is up for budget cuts. The last Farm Bill cost taxpayers about \$100 billion, with only \$12 billion supporting production agriculture. Most went to programs that help families buy food. All that will be reduced. Professor Howard Grimes, WSU vice president of research and dean of the graduate school, pointed out that most government agencies are set to lose about 7% of their budget, but USDA is slated for a 12% cut. “We understand the need for cuts,” Grimes said, “but there is also a need for equity in those cuts.” Amen to that Prof. Grimes, equity and some sense of real priorities, not across-the-board cuts!

WSU already has a big money saver in place. It is a close integration with the federal USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in shared building on campus and its scientists actually collaborate. This arrangement has produced an astonishing breakthrough. It is a successful aviation biofuel for military and commercial aircraft. Their experimental fuels don't freeze at cruising altitude, and they don't need food crops for their production. They use woody biomass, oilseeds, industrial and municipal solid waste, and algae. Development comes next. This is the technical triumph. Will it be continued? Kingston's subcommittee cut \$354 million from last years \$2.8 billion funding for agricultural research on Wednesday, May 25th. It now goes to the full House.

What does all this mean? Once again I wish our Congress had some real way to set priorities and make cuts equitable. The next year or two are going to be tough budget times, and I fear these across-the-board cuts will do significant damage to what is important. Is Congress listening? I suspect they are, but they don't know what else to do. I also don't think our current Congressional Committee structure helps. Each committee oversees certain aspects of the budget such as agriculture. And they all must reduce a certain percentage of funds from among the programs they say grace over. I would have some committees, say those that deal with foreign aid, take much larger cuts. But we never do that. This isn't a diatribe against one political party, these are tough times and solutions are not easy. Both major parties will at some point have to work together. As of today I don't see that happening. Many of the federal programs that fund work that LICA contractors are best at doing, will be cut or lost entirely. LICA will be vocal when we see this happening. LICA members should be vocal also.

Reference: Arnold, Ron, *Congress outside the Beltway*, The Washington Examiner, May 27, 2011, Commentary, p32. Mr. Arnold is executive vice president of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise

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Scholarship Winner Nicholas Miner Receives award from Grandfather Jim Walker of Barnett Brothers, Inc.



Hugh Win for Small Business as 1099 Repeal Passes

June, 2011 My Business

In a major victory for small business, the U.S. Senate passed a long-awaited bill to repeal the onerous 1099 reporting requirement, which was part of the federal healthcare law. President Obama signed the repeal legislation, which overturns the requirement that business owners must submit a 1099 form to the Internal Revenue Service for each business-to-business transaction of \$600 or more. The same bill passed the House in March.

NFIB led the repeal effort on behalf of more than 350,000 member businesses. "Small businesses have been struggling to come up with a way to account for this burdensome tax reporting mandate, and it has been the top priority of NFIB to see it repealed," said Susan Eckerly, NFIB's senior vice president of federal public policy. "NFIB and its members are glad to finally see this ill-conceived rule removed from the books by Congress.

The requirement, intended to capture lost tax revenue, would have placed the burdensome requirement on small businesses to not only report on their own income, but also the income of their vendors.

The push to repeal—which enjoyed bipartisan support—was stymied by a kerfuffle over how to pay for it. The new bill covers the shortfall by forcing repayment of health insurance subsidies by certain families who receive more funding than they should. Senators Mike Johanns (Neb.) and Joe Manchin (W. Va.) introduced the repeal bill in the Senate. It mirrors legislation that passes the house on March 3 to repeal the 1099 tax reporting rule, H.R. 4. "NFIB thanks Sen. Johanns for bringing this repeal to the Senate floor for a vote," said Eckerly. "No other rule or regulation has been as widely unpopular as the 1099 mandate, and it was past time to see it go."

The 1099 tax reporting rule was included in the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act last year. It was criticized by lawmakers from both parties, in both chambers of Congress, and by the White House as an overly burdensome paperwork mandate placed on small businesses. President Obama first signaled his support of repeal during his State of the Union Address in January, when he said the planned rule "placed an unnecessary bookkeeping burden on small businesses."



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DEMO DANGERS

Safety Watch, June, 2011

Knowledge is the key to staying safe during demolition.

Know what your getting into—When performing demolition on a structure, it's critical to have access to the building's design plans before beginning work. Employers should have a demolition plan on hand; make sure the actions you are performing are compatible with the plan.

Note inconsistencies—If you see something you don't expect on the site—don't try to figure out the situation yourself. Although any temporary shoring system should be approved and marked, don't assume it always will be. Contact the foreman or call the office before you do something that cannot be undone.

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Peterson's Potomac Palaver
Bu

John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations

On this Flag Day, I thought it would be a good time to take a look at some legislation working its way through the Halls of Congress. These bills should be of interest to Many LICA members.

S. 299; H.R. 10, Regulations from the Executive in need of Scrutiny (REINS). Talk about an aptly named bill. The REINS Act would require both houses of Congress to affirmatively approve, and the president to sign, any new “major rule” – i.e., a rule with a projected impact to the economy of more than \$100 million – before it could become effective. The Chamber of Commerce, which I belong to on LICA’s behalf, supports this Act because it would rightfully restore congressional oversight of regulations stemming from laws Congress has passed. The House bill was subject to a subcommittee hearing on 8 MAR. The Senate bill was referred to committee on 7 FEB. I’ll keep my eyes on this bill’s status.

S. 217; H.R. 972, Secret Ballot Protection Act. These bills would ensure that employees have the right to make their decision regarding unionization in private, free from coercion by employers, unions, or other employees by requiring a secret ballot election for union recognition. While secret ballot elections are the best method for determining representation, they are not always required under current interpretations of law. Since LICA opposed card check, I would think most LICA members would support this bill. The House bill was referred to committee on 27 JAN. The Senate bill was referred to subcommittee on 21 MAR. Another bill to watch.

H.R. 910; S 482, Energy Tax Prevention Act. These bills would block the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from imposing an unprecedented, uncontrollable new set of regulations on emitters of greenhouse gases – regulations with significant costs but negligible impact on global temperatures. These EPA regulations would impose a heavy burden across the U.S. economy, including sectors that create jobs and lead us in our attempt at economic recovery. The Chamber of Commerce believes Congress is the appropriate decider of the nation’s climate policy. The Senate bill was referred to committee on 8 APR. I have written a number of articles on how EPA was trying to enforce cap and trade without benefit of the legislation having been passed by Congress. Should these bills pass, it might put a halt to that tactic.

S. 848, Consumer Information Enhancement Act dealing with health care transparency. This bill would create Consumer Information Organizations (CIO’s) to develop reports for consumers and businesses on the quality and efficiency of health care providers in a way that protects patient privacy. This bill is supposed to enhance the ability of employers to design high-value benefit plans and empower consumers to shop smart and make confident, informed, health care decisions. I’m not sure how I feel about more government agencies if these CIO’s would be federal. It was referred to Committee on 14 APR.

H.R. 1229; H.R. 1230: H.R. 1231, Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act; Offshore Leasing Now Act; Reversing President Obama’s Offshore Moratorium Act. This suite of bills would bring a much needed end to the de facto moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration and could create tens of thousands of jobs by ensuring that offshore exploration permit decisions are made more quickly and transparently, that legal challenges are heard fairly and expeditiously, and that the Interior Department no longer be allowed to slow-walk the offshore leasing process. The Chamber supports these bills. I suspect most in our energy consuming industry would also. H.R. 1230 passed the House on 5 MAY; H.R. 1229 on 11 MAY; and H.R. 1231 on 12 MAY.

There is another interesting energy development taking place today as the Senate votes to eliminate government subsidies for ethanol producers. I wrote an article on that topic some time ago, and that article generated quite a bit of comment from members. This vote is really the first skirmish in what is expected to be a much bigger war over tax breaks, carve-outs, and other taxpayer funding that boosts businesses and can fund jobs. And at stake are competing views within the Republican Party over the extent of government authority. Business oriented Republicans would say that federal power should be used to correct markets and support key industries. Free-market conservatives would argue that government can’t pick winners and losers and that the party needs to reject the federal expansion that took place when the Republicans controlled Congress and the White House under President George W. Bush. Momentum has been growing for a major re-evaluation of tax policies since last year and got a big boost when President Obama’s deficit reduction commission called for trimming tax credits and splitting the money between lowering tax rates and funding government spending. There is a lot going on behind the scenes in this vote today, including things pushed by T. Boone Pickens, and Senators Tom Coburn and Jim DeMint’s amendments. While this will be something to watch, and may portend things for the future, right now I’m betting on “big ethanol’s” subsidies to survive. They have politicians from both parties in their corner. As I write this I do not know how that Senate vote went.



HEAT STRESS

More than 175 people per year die of heat-related illnesses in the United States, and landscapers and construction workers are particularly at risk. Working outside increases your chances to suffering heat-related illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and, the most life threatening, heat stroke. In most cases temperatures are in the high 80's and above, plus the humidity is high. Doing heavy labor on these days without staying properly hydrated can cause illness.

Heat stress can put not only you but fellow workers at risk. It may impair your ability to operate safely around equipment. Lack of good judgment, nausea, reaction time, dizziness, blurred vision, and sweaty hands are some of the symptoms of heat stress.

Protect yourself from heat-related illness.

Dress for summer. Lightweight, light colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight and helps protect your body maintain normal temperatures.

Wear a sun visor or hat.

Eat small meals and salty snacks throughout the day. Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated fluids. Drink even when you are not thirsty. Drink one-pint every 20 minutes in extreme heat. Urine should be clear. If it is dark, you are probably dehydrated.

Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a Dr. Take frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.

Use buddy system to keep an eye on your co-workers.

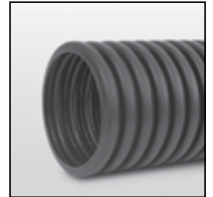
Some medications can make you more susceptible to heat illnesses. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out if any medicine you are taking could affect you while working in the heat.

Do the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day. This is usually between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.

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POTATO CHIP COOKIES

Judy Miller-Hadfield

- 1 cup shortening
 - 1 cup brown sugar
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 2 eggs –beaten
 - 1 tablespoon vanilla
 - 2 cups flour
 - 1/2 cup nuts
 - 1 cup crushed potato chips
- Mix all ingredients in order above.
Drop by teaspoon onto greased cookie sheet.
Bake at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes.

CUCUMBERS

Interesting facts about cucumbers

1. Looking for a Green way to clean your faucets or stainless steel sinks? Take a slice of cucumber & rub it on the surface you want to clean. Not only will it remove years of tarnish & bring back the shine, it won't leave streaks.
2. Rub a cucumber slice along the mirror, it will eliminate the fog & provide a soothing, spa-like fragrance.
3. Out of WD-40 & need to fix a squeaky hinge? Take a cucumber slice & rub it along the problem hinge, & the squeak will be gone.
4. Are grubs & slugs ruining your planting beds? Place a few slices of cucumbers in a pit tin & the pests will be gone. The chemicals in the cucumber react with the aluminum to give off a scent undetectable to humans but drive garden pests crazy.

The 2011-2012 Federal Funding Climate is not bright.

By John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations.

Since returning from a busman's holiday in New Zealand and Australia, where I visited a number of farms and ranches and went out on jobs with two Australian contractors (both hydroseeders), I have come back to the US to some rather dour words on what we might expect in the way of federal funding for things of interest to LICA members in the next year or so. And it is all driven by our nation's real need to deal with a federal budget that needs serious trimming. This past week I visited with NRCS Chief Dave White, and Rep. Frank Lucas of OK, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture and principal drafter of the Farm Bill which addresses programs many of you service. While both men are very supportive of those things many of our LICA members do, their thoughts on how much federal funding might be available to assist wasn't the best news. However, given the current economy and federal budget climate, it is understandable.

During this last year, and particularly after the last election, I wrote some articles on the budget climate and the pressure that would be on some of the newly elected members of Congress when they took their seats. Particularly those new Members from the heartland, many of whom are farmers or own equipment dealerships, will feel the pressure as they deal with cutting programs and dollars. And I would have to say that I personally believe that the federal government budget must be cut. We simply do not have the money to spend as we have been.

My problem, and I think it is Rep. Lucas's problem also, is how and where that cutting occurs. Like it or not, there are some things that the federal government should still be involved in, particularly with regard to public health and safety in areas such as all infrastructure, roads, bridges, railroads, airports, national defense, and our food and fiber. And as much as I personally favor cutting the federal budget, to me it makes sense to not tinker with those programs that have an established track record of sound science resulting in production, profitability, environmental protection, and net societal benefits. Those things that can actually demonstrate they accomplish those things should not be lost in our efforts to cut spending. I think the Tea Party folks need to have some means test along those lines to help them reduce budgets and not gut the truly beneficial programs. And now I know I am demonstrating my own biases. Cut other people's programs, but not mine. To that charge I am guilty. But when I see all the money our government has poured into foreign governments that hate us, I could easily eliminate funding many of them. And we are not talking millions of dollars, but billions. That won't happen.

Rep. Lucas is dealing with many new Members on his House Ag Committee, on both sides of the aisle. Many are newly elected, have never served on any committee, don't know what the Farm Bill is, and only know they were sent to Washington to cut funds. In my opinion he has delayed work on the Farm Bill until 2012 to give the new people time to settle in and not make some bad judgments. He is very supportive of programs our members have serviced, and is doing all he can to make sure they are not lost. However, as I read the Washington Tea Leaves, many programs, even the good ones, will be dealing with some cuts in the next year or so.

One thing we all can and should do. If there are some programs that you personally feel strongly about, and that you believe should not be lost, make sure your 2 Senators and your Representative know. LICA will be weighing in when we think something will affect our members, but individual LICA members and chapters should also. This next year it will be particularly important for us to be vocal. LICA will provide information on what is happening, but you members will wield the personal influence we will need.

I have always been among those who believed that the greatest freedom of speech was the greatest safety, because if a man is a fool, the best thing to do is to encourage him to advertise the fact by speaking.—Woodrow T. Wilson

I know you believe you understand what you think I said. But I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant. Tony Parsons

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EPA's "green tyranny" is stifling America. John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations.

When cap and trade legislation died in Congress last year many environmentalists lamented defeat while coal proponents and those of us in LICA celebrated victory. Rich Trzupke, a chemist and principal consultant at Mostardi Platt Environmental, thought both reactions were misguided. Recent events have proven him right (1). Thanks to the most aggressive and radicalized Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in our nation's history, the administration is strangling America's energy sector in the name of greenhouse gas reduction. They are enforcing cap and trade without the legislation.

Cap and trade was never about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Much like the current inspections some LICA members are experiencing with the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), it was about raising revenue. The U.S. has long had multiple emission reduction programs in place, and those will continue to grow. Thirty-three states have renewable Portfolio Standards programs, which force gradual declines in fossil fuel power generation. Energy conservation mandates abound.

All of these efforts have been successful. Recently released EPA data shows that America is back down to mid-1990's levels of emissions. On a per capita basis, greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. declined by 16% over the last decade. That reduction is almost 50% better than what the 15 richest nations in Europe (the EU-15) achieved in the same time frame, even though Europe had a cap-and-trade program in place.

So, have the administration and EPA seen fit to celebrate our remarkable achievement? Absolutely not. They despise hydrocarbons in any form be it oil, coal, or natural gas. Under EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, they have issued a plethora of new rules designed to ensure that:

No new coal-fired power plant of any substantial size can ever be built again in the U.S.

Existing coal-fired plants will slowly be crushed under the weight of multiple, ludicrously stringent new regulations.


All this is happening under Congress' nose simply because the Clean Air Act (CAA) mechanisms that the EPA is using to achieve these ends are too complex for most everyone on Capitol Hill to understand. What do new clean air standards for nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide have to do with burning coal and greenhouse gas emissions for example? Well, if you set those standards low enough, there is no way that a big, new coal-fired power plant can meet them, no matter how advanced the technology employed. Similarly, if the EPA develops complex and overly stringent new emissions standards of so-called "air toxics" from coal-fired power plants, new plants become untenable. All if this has happened and is continuing to happen.

These regulations come on top of EPA's efforts to directly regulate emissions of greenhouse gas through the CAA and its permit processes. Beginning July 1, every new facility over a certain size will have to prove that it is "state of the art" when it comes to reducing emissions. Coal and oil-fired plants need not apply. Some natural gas-fired projects might sneak through (See my recent article on the Marcellus Shale.)

So, EPA has effectively banned any substantial further use of the cheapest, most abundant energy source available. No, it's not cap and trade, but the effect on the nation's energy sector and energy price is everything that the most ardent cap and trade fan could have ever wished for. And our elected Members of Congress, who are supposed to be looking out for our interests, are letting all this happen. Or do they want it to happen? With all LICA members essentially in the business of energy, have you told your Members of Congress what these EPA regulations are doing to your business?

Note 1: Trzupke, Rich, Book, *Regulators gone wild: How the EPA is ruining American Industry*, Encounter Books.

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DIRECTORS REPORT


MNLICA would like to **THANK** each **MEMBER** who took the time from their busy work schedule to attend part or all of the Summer LICA Pre-Tours and Convention in Rochester. We appreciate **YOU!**

Next on our agenda is the Scholarship Best Ball Golf outing. MNLICA has selected a great site with a wonderful lunch and a great deal of fun for your afternoon. **The children who receive the two \$1000.00 scholarship appreciate your time and support!** We hope to see you there! Remember you do NOT need to know how to play golf or be a good player—it's fun, fellowship and the best of the four balls gets played each time.

We have started getting the MNLICA State Convention trainings scheduled with trainers. If you would like a particular topic placed on the schedule please call or Nordis Estrem 507-649-1771 or e-mail ndnestrem@frontiernet.net.

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Grilled Basil Mustard Chicken American Dairy Association

- 3/4 cup buttermilk
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- 1/4 cup honey
- 3 Tablespoons Dijon-style Mustard
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh Basil or 2 teaspoons dried Basil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 6-boned and skinned chicken breast halves (1-1/2 pounds)

Combine buttermilk, yogurt, honey, mustard, basil, salt, pepper and mix well. Reserve 1/4 cup of marinade; cover & refrigerate. Place chicken in large food-safe plastic bag; add marinade, turning to coat. Close bag securely. Refrigerate several hours or overnight, turning bag occasionally.

To grill, spray grid with cooking spray. Remove chicken from marinade. Place chicken on grid over medium-hot coals. Grill covered 12-16 minutes, turning frequently & brushing with reserved marinade, until juices run clear when chicken is pierced with a fork.

Serve immediately. Serves 6

To broil, arrange chicken on rack in a broiler pan sprayed with cooking spray. Broil 4-5 inches from heat 5-8 minutes on each side or until juices run clear when chicken is pierced with a fork. Brush several times with reserved marinade.

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Our federal government “takes” more gasoline profits than Exxon.

John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations.

How many of you have heard the media and some politician’s rail against “big oil” and their obscene profits? I surely have and I’ll bet you have also. And with LICA members also in business to make a profit, costs of your petroleum needs, which is a big part of your cost of doing business, are critical. I have long thought the charge that oil companies were gouging the public and making such huge profits was a phony charge. We have a congressman here in Northern Virginia, James P. Moran (D-8th, Alexandria) who regularly makes the charge that big oil is making obscene profits. This last weekend, while at the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) basketball tournament in Richmond (Our favored George Mason U team lost, ouch), I saw a letter to the editor on this topic in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. It was so good I thought you would like to see it. I do not know the author, Lex Lamotte, but in my view his was a brilliant letter.

“Rep. Jim Moran has come out attacking Exxon for its exorbitant profits while Joe six-pack on the street suffers with high gasoline prices. Moran obviously has never run a business because he does not understand profit margin. And in a way, he is gouging the public for huge profits for the government in the form of gasoline taxes.

Not to defend Exxon, but its profits come from labor in producing a product that people are willing to pay for. Exxon’s margin of profit is less than that of most grocery stores. The last information I saw on gasoline profits was that oil companies make about 8 ½ cents on a gallon of gas. Compare that to the 37+ cents that the government ‘takes’ on every gallon. Like a crime syndicate, government just takes its cut off the top. Who is making the windfall profits here? At \$3 a gallon, Exxon is making less than a 3% profit. It looks gigantic because they sell a lot of gasoline. The government does nothing to produce gasoline, yet it “makes” (takes) 435% more than Exxon makes off one gallon. Then it, through people like Moran, turns around and condemns the gasoline manufacturer.

If grocery stores moved as much product as the oil companies do, they would be making the same “obscene profits” as Exxon. But all business owners know that only profits will keep you in business. No one in business reaches into someone else’s pocket and takes profit, they earn it. This concept is foreign to some elected public servants like Moran; they think that profit just happens. Moran should get a real job; then maybe he’ll begin to understand what makes business work, and what has made this country great.”

Reference. Lamotte, Lex, Midlothian, VA, *Feds take more gasoline profits than Exxon*, Richmond Times-Dispatch, letters to the Editor, March 4, 2011, p A8.

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Shining the Light on More Federal Government Idiocy.

John Peterson, LICA Director of Government Relations.

I was angered when Congress passed the ill-named *Energy Independence Act of 2007*, which effectively legislated our Edison incandescent light bulbs out of existence starting in January 2012. To me that was not warranted by science or economy, but was one more example of government taking away a choice we had, and thus taking more of our freedom. On July 1, I saw a great article on this subject written by Matt Patterson, Senior Editor at the Capital Research Center (1). To me this is just another example of a federal government out of control, with the EPA, MSHA, & NLRB, leading the way.

This new law creates new "efficiency standards" for light bulbs. It's for our own good of course. The ruling class demands we replace our beloved Edison incandescent bulbs with more energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps (CFL's) because, you know, maybe the earth is warming. And light bulbs are partly to blame. Or something like that.

The trouble is, CFL's are way more expensive than the old Edison's. They give off a puny, cold light so unlike the brilliant warmth of the old light bulbs, and they also contain mercury, making a broken bulb, once a simple clean up job with a broom and a dustpan, a real chemical waste hazard. Aren't you glad Congress is watching out for us?

And Patterson noted this is a bipartisan travesty: Rep. Fred Upton, MI Republican, hatched the lame idea with then Rep. Jane Harmon, CA Democrat. President George W. Bush then signed it into law as Patterson says "apparently more focused on bringing liberty to Iraq than preserving liberty in America." And then the current Republican House had the audacity to appoint Upton to be the Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, from where he is now making a lot of noise about undoing what he did, while doing very little to actually undo it. I wrote to the new House Speaker opposing Upton's appointment, as did many others. Politics!

Gov. Rick Perry has signed a TX bill exempting TX from the federal law so long as the Edison's are manufactured and sold within TX borders. And there are also some members of Congress talking repeal, as are some Republican presidential candidates. I wish I thought their efforts would bring more "light" to this issue, but I wonder about the prospects. Their first effort last week failed.

It was hoped originally that the CFL's would provide an energy-efficient alternative, but we consumers avoided them like crazy in favor of the old bulbs. So our federal government simply removed our choice, and more of our freedom. And as Patterson notes, "we Americans, whose not very distant kin staged a bloody rebellion over a trifling tea tax, have decided to roll over and take it." Have we really? I certainly hope not. What ever happened to the idea of the federal government (or state or local government's) giving us information on the risks we face with our choices (if they even know), and then letting us decide on taking them?

Notes: Patterson, Matt, *Viva iluminacion! First they came for my light bulbs ...*, The Washington Times, July 1, 2011, p B4.

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Sept. 16	Golf Outing	Kenyon Country Club
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