

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING
H.R. 9524
THE EMERGENCY PETROLEUM
ALLOCATION ACT

THE OVAL OFFICE

3:18 P.M. EDT

I am today signing H.R. 9524, a bill extending until November 15 the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act, which expired on August 31.

This extension of controls on domestic petroleum for 47 days carries out my part of an understanding with the leaders of the House and Senate and will provide more time for the Congress to act on a sound and mutually acceptable plan for phased decontrol or, alternatively, to pass the emergency legislation necessary to cushion the effect of immediate decontrol on certain elements of our domestic economy.

Last week's decision by the OPEC foreign oil cartel to raise their prices to American consumers by 10 percent provides beyond any further argument the urgent need for the United States to reduce its growing dependence on imported fuel at prices arbitrarily set by others.

Since my State of the Union message last January, I have been constantly urging the Congress to move rapidly on a comprehensive energy independence program for this country's future security and prosperity. I have offered to compromise again and again.

A majority of the Members of this Congress thus far have refused to do anything that will increase domestic energy production. Price controls on domestic oil production have been in effect for four years. During that time, our domestic oil production has declined and our expenditures for foreign oil have increased more than 700 percent.

We are now sending more than \$25 billion a year out of the United States to import foreign oil, enrich foreign producers and provide foreign jobs. This dollar outflow will grow larger and larger under the latest OPEC price hike.

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If spent at home, \$25 billion would employ one million American workers and speed our economic growth; letting the OPEC oil cartel dictate America's economic growth is absurd. Yet a majority in the Congress does nothing to reverse our growing oil dependence and increasing vulnerability to this obvious threat.

When the price of gasoline goes up at the service station, I want the American people to know exactly where the blame lies. Until Congress acts, there is nothing this country can do about arbitrary OPEC oil price hikes and there may still be another fuel price increase next June.

The rhetoric of those in the Congress who are delaying action on long-range energy independence asserts that they are trying to hold fuel prices down to protect the American consumer. This is nonsense.

Obviously, the Congress cannot hold OPEC oil prices down. They are going up and we are already dependent on foreign oil for about 40 percent of our total needs in the United States. The only way Congress can really protect the American consumer is to enact a long-range energy program that encourages Americans to produce our own energy with our own workers from our own resources and at our own prices.

By going along with this temporary extension of the expired controls laws, I am giving Congress another 47 days to take its first significant step in solving our energy problem. The Congress has two immediate choices: First, to enact a mutually acceptable plan for phased decontrol of domestic price controls on crude oil; or, two, to pass the cushioning legislation I have recommended.

I propose to protect propane gas users, including farmers and millions of people who live in rural areas and in mobile homes. I propose to protect independent retail service station and heating oil dealers from arbitrary curtailment and cutoffs.

I propose to protect independent refiners from loss of their supplies of crude oil at reasonable prices, and I propose to protect all consumers from undue loss of purchasing power through a windfall profits tax on domestic oil companies with a consumer refund provision.

If your Congressmen and Senators cannot take one or the other of these common sense courses before November 15, then a majority in the Congress will have failed their responsibility to the American people.

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I am serving notice as I sign this temporary extension that a majority in the Congress have already temporized far too long.

If the latest OPEC price increase hasn't awakened them to the peril our country faces, only an aroused citizenry will. Congress must face up to the hard, tough decisions which will restore America's energy independence, reinvigorate America's economy and save American jobs before it is too late. They have failed thus far.

I stand ready to cooperate fully to make this long overdue start in the right direction.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 3:25 P.M. EDT