gallon since 1988. That is 20 years ago—the lowest number of miles to the gallon since 1988. This has to change.

I would say to all of those who want to fight this because they think it is too strong and because Detroit objects to it that the handwriting has been on the wall for a long time and Detroit has not come in and made a suggestion. All of this scientific evidence indicates that Detroit can meet these standards, that the technology exists to meet these standards, that they are doing it in other countries but for some reason they have buffaloed the Congress of the United States into believing you can do it in China, you can do it in Europe, but you can't do it in the greatest economic power on Earth—the United States of America.

Some also say we can't increase fuel economy without reducing safety, but this also is simply not true. A recent study by groups, including the International Council on Clean Transportation, has concluded that no tradeoff—no tradeoff—is required between fuel economy and vehicle safety. The conclusion of this report is consistent with the conclusion of numerous other studies. Let me quote directly from the report:

> Vehicle fuel economy can be increased without affecting safety, and vice versa.

That is on page 2 of their report.

> Advanced materials allow vehicles to be both bigger and lighter, providing multiple ways to improve safety and fuel economy without sacrificing functionality. Fuel economy can be dramatically improved without compromising safety. Safety can be bolstered without sacrificing fuel economy.

That is on page 17 of their study.

There is technology in place today to be used to increase safety without sacrificing fuel economy. Let me just give my colleagues a few examples: seatbelt reminders, window curtain airbags, lower bumpers, electronic stability control, improved body structure, seatbelts that tighten if a vehicle were to roll over. It seems to me that is such a simple thing, that if automobile manufacturers wanted to improve safety, they would do that.

We saw what happened to a former colleague of ours who was not wearing a seatbelt. Nobody can challenge that seatbelts don't make one of the biggest safety improvements in the history of the automobile. When the Governor's crash took place, everybody else essentially was OK in the car except for Governor Corzine, and he didn't have his seatbelt on. If anything is clear evidence of the safety of seatbelts, this is it. So safety can be improved without an effect on fuel economy.

This legislation includes a provision that will help improve safety. It directs the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration to issue a rule that seeks to reduce incompatibility between SUVs and passenger vehicles. This could be done through measures which ensure that bumpers hit bumpers in the event of an accident. I just saw this coming to work today, where a Sedan had rear-ended an SUV, and you saw the difference because of the inequality of the bumpers. This happened just a few blocks away.

In response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Ford assembly plant in Richmond, CA, switched from making cars to assembling Jeeps, tanks, and armored cars. By July 1942, just 6 months after the bombing, the Richmond Tank Depot and the women who worked there were supplying our Armed Forces with the best military hardware in the world.

Technology, paired with American ingenuity and hard work, helped us prevail in that struggle and has been a key ingredient of America's unprecedented wealth and security.

Today, we face a much different threat. It is the threat of our Nation's addiction to fossil fuels—to oil—and what that will do to our economy, to our environment, and to our foreign policy if we don't change our ways.

These are serious questions and they deserve a serious response. Increasing fuel economy is not a silver bullet. I am the first one to say that. It won't solve problems by itself. However, it is a major piece of the puzzle. We have the best universities in the world, the strongest financial system, and the best workers. We can do this. We can make these improvements. We can lead the way. We have only to find the political will.

I am very proud the bill before us now contains this legislation. I believe, as I have tried to describe—and I apologize for the length of this statement—that it is compatible with the needs of Detroit; that the legislation is drafted to respond to those needs by the class-to-class comparison, to avoid what always has been in every discussion on this floor the greatest threat to Detroit, which is to compare a small car to a large car and, therefore, make it difficult for them to manufacture large cars. This will not do that. I hope it will be voted on.

I very much thank the Chair. I know Senator SNOWE was going to come to the floor and, hopefully, she will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 1505 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1502

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I call up amendment 1505 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE] proposes an amendment numbered 1505.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I want to explain this amendment, but first I will yield to the distinguished ranking member of the committee, the senior Senator from New Mexico.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I thank Senator INHOFE for yielding to me. I am going to take a very few minutes. I have not had a second round on this. I assume both of us will. I have to leave the floor shortly for another meeting. I will stay here up to the last minute. I want to make a couple statements about the bill, as introduced, and what it does in terms of the transportation, gasoline, and diesel consumption in the country.

We have just had the Senator from California explain an amendment that is no longer an amendment; it is in this bill. The Senator expressed in a very profound way, in a very lengthy explanation, this provision which the Senator from California originated. But we must understand that, today, it comes to us from the Commerce Committee, wherein the Feinstein proposal is encapsulated in the bill that was managed in committee by Senator INOUYE and Senator STEVENS.

I believe Senator FEINSTEIN would join us in giving our appreciation and thanks to the Commerce Committee for the courage they showed. They met to try to help us put together a bill that would address the energy problems of our country and, obviously, immediately we ran into provisions of the law, or matters of law, that had to be changed, which were not part of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The big one out there is what do we do about CAFE standards. What happened before is we had a big hoopla on that, and we will probably still have it, so the Senator from California ought to be ready. Obviously, even though she did not amend, it is in the bill. Those who don't like it will offer an amendment to the bill striking or modifying that provision of the CAFE standards of America that is in the bill.

Over all these years, we have been going back and forth, never getting anything done—until this year. Clearly, this bill before us, which took the CAFE standards and finally said we are going to adopt the changes recommended in the Feinstein bill, which have been bantered around—we are going to adopt it in the language of the Commerce Committee and send it over to the leader, and it will be incorporated in the bill. So when the bill comes over, it has whatever was done in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, to save our consumption of gasoline and related products. It has the CAFE standards and a couple of other provisions. I want to say that I believe the bill before us includes the CAFE standards we have spoken of, which were put in the bill by the Commerce Committee, headed by Senators STEVENS and INOUYE.

In addition to that, which is by itself one of the biggest modifications of our