



## Senate approves sweeping energy package

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Shortly before midnight, the Senate passed the CLEAN Energy Act by a 65-27 vote. The package would **require the use of biofuels to climb to 36 billion gallons by 2022**, increase vehicle fuel efficiency standards to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, set penalties for gasoline price-gouging and give the government new powers to investigate oil companies' pricing.

The energy legislation, which is expected to be considered by the House before the Fourth of July, would also provide federal grants and loan guarantees to promote research into fuel-efficient vehicles and would support test projects to capture carbon dioxide from coal-burning power plants.

Earlier yesterday the Senate came three votes short of the number needed to cut off a filibuster on a \$32 billion package of energy related tax measures, that had been approved by the Senate Finance Committee with strong support from Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) and Ranking Minority Member Chuck Grassley (R-IA). Opponents of the package argued that tax increases on oil companies would reduce exploration for oil and lead to higher prices on gasoline. Republicans were divided on the issue, with ten voting alongside Democrats to limit debate and prevent a filibuster. Only one Democrat, Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, a major oil-producing state, voted to allow the filibuster.

President Bush had urged Congress yesterday to pass an energy bill, though he said the Senate measure fell far short of his goals. Earlier in the week, the Senate rejected additions to the bill that would have pumped billions of federal dollars into efforts to ramp up production of a coal-based fuel for cars and trucks and blocked an effort to require that more of the nation's electricity come from renewable sources.

“The U.S. Senate has taken yet another big step toward a more sustainable and stable energy future,” said Renewable Fuels Association President Bob Dinneen in a statement. “This forward-looking bill capitalizes on the progress the U.S. ethanol industry has made since enactment of the 2005 energy bill...and promises to be for cellulosic ethanol what the 2005 bill was to today’s grain-based ethanol – a catalyst for growth.”

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