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Senate

TIME TO CLEAN UP AMERICA'S COAL-FIRED POWERPLANTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate will soon recess until the beginning of this Congress' second Session in January of 1998. That provides time to develop a thoughtful proposal on one of the most pressing environmental threats confronting the United States as a whole, and especially the Midwest and the Northeast: namely, the rivers of pollution that stream from the smokestacks of hundreds of old coal-fired powerplants, especially in the Midwest.

These powerplants are collectively the source of enormous amounts of air pollution. Mercury poisons lakes and streams, as well as the fish that swim in them. Oxides of nitrogen not only create groundlevel ozone that chokes

almost every major America city, but are transformed into acids that contribute to both acid rain and fine particulate matter. Together with the fine particles formed by sulfur dioxide emissions, they contribute to tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths. Finally, carbon-rich coal adds to global warming, which has increased the temperatures of Earth's air, oceans, and soils, while raising sea levels and triggering meltdowns of glaciers and ice-caps. If you want to see the effects of this pollution, you need only to hike to the top of Camel's Hump in the Green Mountains, or talk to the fishermen in Missisquoi Bay who catch fish contaminated with mercury, or measure the increasing acid deposition in pristine lakes within Vermont wilderness areas.

Mr. President, none of this is necessary and eliminating these problems need not trigger the sort of regional conflicts that characterized the sometimes bitter ten year struggle to enact a federal program to control acid rain. There are ways of burning coal so that it produces only a tiny fraction of the air pollution now being emitted by these powerplants. And, since virtually all of these powerplants are reaching the age at which significant investment is required to keep them on line, the nation has a unique and valuable opportunity to address the problem.

Steps should be taken not only to prevent further degradation of our environment, but also to ensure fairness in retail electricity competition. When Congress passed the Clean Air Act in

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JOHN WARNER, *Chairman.*

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1970, many of the old, dirty power-plants that were expected to close down were granted exemptions to the strict air pollution control requirements that applied to new facilities. Yet, twenty years later, these old plants continue to operate and enjoy a substantial, unfair competitive economic advantage over electric generators with pollution control technology.

If ways can be found to assure that investments are made in clean technologies, pollution of almost every sort can be sharply reduced and, in likelihood, so can electricity rates. Contrary to the recent wave of doomsday advertising paid for by multi-million dollar electric utility companies, this can be done without jeopardizing our economy. Vermont has shown how jobs can be created through renewable energy and energy efficient technology.

It is clear, Mr. President, that these new technologies and the expertise in building and operating them, will be needed by every nation in the world. If the United States can be the first to master these new engines of the future, we can also be the first to build and export them.

The challenge, Mr. President, is to find the proper combination of measures. During the coming winter, I hope and intend to work with my colleagues and others to identify those measures.

AMENDING THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to discuss a very important bill that I first introduced on October 31, 1997. The bill, S. 1354, which is cosponsored by Senators CAMPBELL, STEVENS, INOUE, DASCHLE, and DORGAN, is an amendment to the Communications Act of 1934. The amendment enables the Federal Communications Commission [FCC] to designate common carriers not under the jurisdiction of a State commission as eligible recipients of universal service support.

Universal Service provides intercarrier support for the provision of telecommunications services in rural and high-cost areas throughout the United States. However, section 254(e) of the Communications Act states that only an eligible carrier designated under section 214(e) of the Communications Act, shall be eligible to receive specific Federal universal support after the FCC issues regulations implementing the new universal service provisions into the law. Section 214(e) does not account for the fact that State commissions in a few States have no jurisdiction over certain carriers. Typically, States also have no jurisdiction over tribally owned common carriers which may or may not be regulated by a tribal authority that is not a State commission per se.

The failure to account for these situations means that carriers not subject to the jurisdiction of a State commission have no way of becoming an eligible carrier that can receive universal

service support. This would be the case whether these carriers are traditional local exchange carriers that provide services otherwise included in the program, have previously obtained universal service support, or will likely be the carrier that continues to be the carrier of last resort for customers in the area.

This simple amendment will address this oversight within the amendments made by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and prevent the unintentional consequences it will have on common carriers which Congress intended to be covered under the umbrella of universal service support.

Mr. DASCHLE. Would this bill have any effect on the existing jurisdiction of State commissions over new or incumbent local exchange carriers, or providers of commercial mobile radio services?

Mr. MCCAIN. No, this bill does nothing to alter the existing jurisdiction that State commissions already have over local exchange carriers or providers of commercial mobile radio services as set forth in section 332(c)(3) of the Communications Act. Nor will this bill have any effect on litigation that may be pending regarding jurisdictional issues between the States and federally recognized tribal governments. I thank the Democratic leader for his interest in this matter.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Senator for his clarification of this matter.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Veterans Day, that day on which all of us are called on to honor the sacrifices made for our country by those who serve in her armed forces and those who risked or gave their lives defending her.

It is only right, Mr. President, that we pay tribute to the brave men and women who put their country before themselves in time of danger. On the beaches of Normandy or in the jungles of Vietnam, in the South Pacific or the Persian Gulf, on the shores of Inchon or the deserts of North Africa, our soldiers and sailors have defended this country around the globe, in the face of bombs, bullets, disease and hunger. Nothing we do can repay the debt we owe them. But we must note that debt, recognize it and make certain our children know how great it is.

As we remember the brave young people who have defended our nation in time of war, we should not forget that many of them put their lives on the line for America even though they were born in a different land. These soldiers and sailors were not born in this country. But they loved her enough to risk their lives to protect her.

Over 60,000 active military personnel are immigrants to this country. More than 20 percent of recipients of our highest military declaration, the Congressional Medal of Honor, have been immigrants. And the most decorated

combat team of World War II was a regiment made up of the sons of Japanese immigrants.

Many immigrants have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. More than once I have told audiences the story of Nicolas Minue, the Polish born soldier who served the United States in World War II. I tell this story because of the inspiring bravery that is its subject, because of the pride it should evoke in every American, native or foreign born.

In Tunisia in 1943, private Minue's company was pinned down by enemy machine gunfire.

According to the official report, "Private Minue voluntarily, alone, and unhesitatingly, with complete disregard of his own welfare, charged the enemy entrenched position with fixed bayonet. Private Minue assaulted the enemy under a withering machine-gun and rifle fire, killing approximately ten enemy machine gunners and riflemen. After completely destroying this position, Private Minue continued forward, routing enemy riflemen from dugout positions until he was fatally wounded. The courage, fearlessness and aggressiveness displayed by Private Minue in the face of inevitable death was unquestionably the factor that gave his company the offensive spirit that was necessary for advancing and driving the enemy from the entire sector."

America remains free because she has been blessed with many American heroes, willing to give their lives in her defense. Nicolas Minue showed that not every American hero was born in America.

Michigan, too, has her share of heroes. More than once, I have related the story of Francisco Vega, a citizen of my state who was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, the son of Mexican immigrants. His father, Naba Lazaro Vega served in the American Army during World War I. I tell Mr. Vega's story because it, too, is one of inspiring bravery and love of country.

Mr. Vega volunteered for the Army in October 1942 and served during the Second World War. He fought for the Americans in five major battles in Europe, including the crucial landing at Omaha Beach in Normandy. He was awarded bronze stars for bravery in each of these five battles. Mr. Vega was discharged in December 1945 and came to Michigan, where he attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and graduated from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids. He retired from his own cemetery business in 1993 and currently resides in Grand Rapids.

In Vietnam, also, immigrants served our nation and became heroes. For example, Alfred Rascon immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. At age 20, while a lawful permanent resident, Mr. Rascon volunteered to serve in Vietnam. During a firefight he twice used his body to shield wounded soldiers. He was nearly killed dashing through heavy enemy fire to get desperately