

FAMILY FARMS NEED ASSISTANCE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, before leaving for the recess, I, too, wanted to address a couple of points on my mind and I am sure on the minds of the people of Louisiana. We have enjoyed, as a State, some success this session on many different issues. Of course, some of them are not resolved.

Senator BREAUX and I have been very involved with the issue of education and health care. As we wind down this particular part of our session, I wish to speak for a moment on the area of agriculture.

The Senator from Washington just spoke. She says she is leaving town with some disappointment. I add my voice to say I, too, am disappointed in the outcome of our Agriculture supplemental appropriations bill. We seem to have room in the budget for many other items, but sometimes when it comes to our farmers and agriculture, they are cut short or draw the short straw.

That is very unfortunate because, according to the budget outline, there was money available to allocate in an emergency and supplemental way to meet the needs of farmers, not only in Louisiana and throughout the South but, as the Senator from Washington said, the farmers and agricultural interests in her State and throughout the Nation.

The House adjourned, setting the floor quite low at \$5.5 billion. The Senate, in a bipartisan fashion and with bipartisan support, went on record as supporting a higher number of \$7.5 billion. When \$2 billion is cut out, a lot of farmers in Louisiana are shortchanged.

Our AMTA payments were reduced substantially. The conservation programs, so important to farmers in Louisiana because of our tremendous wetlands conservation efforts, are shortchanged.

The public/private partnerships that farmers and landowners can enter into with the Government to reduce production and help keep prices high, was curtailed because of our lack of commitment to this funding level. In addition, because of the unfortunate timing, we are not going to be able to come back in the fall and recoup the lost ground because we will be past the September deadline.

I have here an interesting letter from the American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers, National Association of Wheat Growers, and, of course, the National Cotton Council.

This letter says: We would rather have \$5.5 billion than nothing, and so would I. But they should not have had to settle for the \$5.5 billion when even settling for \$7.5 billion is not enough to meet the needs and the emergencies being experienced by farmers everywhere who are, frankly, entitled to more.

I most certainly do not blame these associations for saying, listen, we are between a rock and a hard place. They

are saying, "The House has adjourned. It has approved \$5.5 billion. We would just as soon take that." I know if they could stand here and speak their minds, and speak the truth, they would say \$5.5 billion is not enough. It is going to leave a lot of our farmers with higher debts and impact a lot of our rural communities across the Nation.

In Louisiana, we have experienced some of the lowest prices in decades, and a severe drought. This drought has brought about an intrusion of saltwater into many of our marshes and farmland, creating additional problems. It is a very difficult time in agriculture.

I did not want to leave without saying I am extremely disappointed we were not able to get the level of AMTA payments higher. It is very important to our farmers and our conservation programs. I think we will end up paying a higher price in the months and years to come.

In addition, it is of particular disappointment we do not have included in this particular package our voluntary State-supported, State-recommended, and State-endorsed dairy compacts. Compacts are important to dairy farmers all over this Nation and come at no cost to the taxpayer.

We are arguing about an agricultural funding bill because the two Houses cannot decide whether \$5.5 billion is the right amount or \$6.5 billion or \$7.5 billion. I know money does not grow on trees, and we do not want to overspend.

We want to live within budgetary constraints, but what puzzles me so much about this debate is the dairy compact does not cost the taxpayers a penny. We could have added it and not added one penny to the Agriculture supplemental appropriations bill because dairy compacts do not cost the taxpayers any money. They are a voluntary, State-run, State-supported and allow dairy farmers, along with consumers and the retail representatives, to set a price for fluid milk so we can make sure everyone in our districts and our regions have a fresh, steady supply of milk.

It is a system whereby if prices go up, the producers pay out of their profits; if the prices go down, the farmers are paid out of the profits to retailers and others, therefore, leveling the price and allowing the farmers to make plans for their growth and production of dairy products.

It has been proven very successful in the Northeast. The Senators from Vermont have been two of the lead sponsors and advocates. New York has petitioned to join, Pennsylvania has petitioned to join, and the Southern delegates and the Southern Senators want the South to have the same right to organize into compacts and help our farmers.

In Louisiana, we have lost 204 dairy farms since 1995. We have only 468 remaining. If we do not answer in some way to the dairy farms, I am going to be back in 3 years saying: We had 468,

now we are down to 250, and 3 years from now we will be down to 150. Before you know it, we will be in a position where we are importing all of our milk from other parts of the Nation. We will be paying higher prices, because there will be less competition and less of a competitive organization of dairy farmers.

Had Louisiana been a member of the Southern Dairy Compact last year, our 468 dairy farms would have received almost \$12 million in compact payments. That is not a huge amount of money by Washington standards. It is not in the billions, but I can tell my colleagues, \$12 million means a lot to the people of Louisiana and to these farmers who are scratching out a living, trying to operate their enterprises at a profit. It not only means a lot to the farmers and their families, but to the communities in which they buy supplies, pay taxes that provide for vital community services.

When a dairy farmer goes out of business, it does not just collapse that particular dairy farm and bring harm to that particular family, it affects the whole rural economy of many of our States.

Northeast Dairy compact States show the compact had a steadying influence on the support of farms. Without exception, we know, based on the facts and the figures, that the Northeast experiment has been very positive.

When we come back in the fall, I am not sure what we can do to restore the level of funding. As I said, this was an opportunity lost. We now have to operate under new budget constraints. I am not sure how we are going to fill in the gaps, but because the dairy compact does not cost additional funding, I am hopeful. I look forward to joining with my colleagues in building a bipartisan support for State-run, State-supported voluntary dairy compacts that do not cost the taxpayer a dime but help keep a steady, reliable source of fluid milk coming to our consumers and to consumers in every region of this Nation. I am hopeful that when we get back, we will have success.

We have a farm bill to debate. There are many changes that our farmers are going to need so that we can compete more effectively. We need to open up trade opportunities, more risk management tools, and the dairy compact that can help our farmers help themselves and not just rely on a Government handout. That is all they ask. They just want to be met halfway. We can most certainly do a better job.

I am going to fight as hard as I can for the Southern region of this Nation that, in my opinion, has historically been shortchanged when it comes to agriculture. I am going to join with Senators from New York, New Jersey, and Washington, and other States which have, in some way, also been shortchanged because of the lack of emphasis on specialty crops. Although I do not represent New Jersey, New

York, or Washington, I think it is important for us to make sure the agriculture bill is fair and equitable to every region of this Nation.

The South has been shortchanged time and again. We are going to join a coalition to make sure our farmers get their fair share and that we are providing the taxpayers a good return on the money that is invested. We need to create ways to help farmers minimize the cost to the taxpayers and maximize the total benefit.

ELECTION REFORM

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I will take 2 more minutes, if I can, to say a word about the election reform measure that Senator DODD spoke about just a few minutes ago.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of that election reform measure. I thank the Senator from Connecticut for leading this effort, for being such a terrific and articulate spokesperson for improving our election system in this Nation.

It truly is a travesty and really a hypocrisy for us to encourage people to register to vote, urge them to exercise their full rights as citizens, and then not count their votes, or turn them away at the polls.

In the year 2001, that should not be the case. That should not be the case at any time. Unfortunately, there have been dark places in our history where people by the millions were turned away or were not allowed to register. Our country has made great progress.

As the last election showed, and as we need to discuss when we come back, we have a lot of fixing to do. There are improvements that need to be made. We need to proudly stand up to the world and say: Yes, we want our citizens registered, and if they are a legal voter, whether they are in a wheelchair, visually impaired, or have other physical challenges, despite the fact they may be older or not as strong and as able, they have a right to vote and they have a right to have their vote counted, and they have a right to the kind of equipment and technology that is available that makes sure those votes are counted and certified.

In conclusion, no system is going to be perfect, but the evidence is in to suggest that the system we have in the United States can and should be perfected. I am proud that in Louisiana we do have standardized voting machines, and we have worked very hard on opening access to those polling places.

Even in Louisiana, where we do have standardized voting machines, and state-of-the-art technology in poor and wealthy districts, rural and urban districts, we can make improvements there.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important subject when we return.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Will the Senator withhold her request for a quorum call?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

ENERGY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I will try to be brief because I am sure there are many who would like to start the recess.

Madam President, I call your attention and that of my colleagues to the activity in the U.S. House of Representatives which occurred the day before yesterday, rather late at night. This involved the reporting out of an energy bill, a very comprehensive bill. As a consequence, the baton now passes to the Senate. There is going to be a great deal of debate in the committee, on which I am the ranking member, along with other members of that committee, including the Senator from Louisiana who just addressed this body. As a consequence of that debate and the development of our own energy bill at this time, I will highlight one of the topical points in that bill that affects my State of Alaska. That is the issue of ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The action by the House is very responsible. It puts the issue in perspective. The issue has been that somehow this huge area called ANWR, an area of 19 million acres, an area that is approximately the size of the State of South Carolina, is at risk by any action by the Congress to initiate authorization for exploration.

What the House has done is extraordinary, mandating a limitation of 2,000 acres to be the footprint associated with any development that might occur in that area. It takes the whole issue and puts it in perspective that, indeed, this is not more than four or five small farms, assuming the rest of the area of the State of South Carolina were a wilderness. That is the perspective.

For those who argue ANWR is at risk, the House action has clearly identified the footprint will be 2,000 acres. What will that do to America's technology, to America's ingenuity? It will challenge it. It will say, we must develop this field, if indeed the oil is there, with this kind of footprint.

This technology has been developed in this country. The exploration phase is three-dimensional. It suggests that you can drill under the U.S. Capitol and come out at gate 8 at Reagan Airport. That is the technology. This gives side views of what lies under the ground and the prospects for oil and gas. It mandates the best technology. It mandates we must develop this technology, and as a consequence puts a challenge to the environmental community, the engineering community, and our Nation. That challenge will help make this the best oilfield in the world, bar none.

What else does it have? It has a project labor agreement. That means there will be a contractual commit-

ment between the unions, the Teamsters, and the AFL-CIO, and it will create thousands of jobs in this country. These are American jobs.

I urge Members to consider for a moment that over half of our deficit balance of payments is the cost of imported oil. Once the Congress speaks on this issue, there will be a reaction from OPEC. That reaction will be very interesting. OPEC is going to increase its supply and the price of oil is going to be reduced in this country. There is no question about it. If OPEC knows we mean business about reducing our dependence on imported oil, they will clearly get the signal.

Furthermore, it is rather interesting what the House did with the disposition of royalties. The anticipated revenue from lease sales for the Federal land in this area is somewhere in the area of \$1.5 to \$2 billion. That money is not just beginning to go in the Federal Treasury; it will go into the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy. So we have the funds to develop the new technologies.

One of the misconceptions in this country that covers energy is that it is all the same. It isn't. We generate electricity from coal. The State of West Virginia is a major supplier of coal. Nearly 51 percent of the energy produced in this country comes from coal. We also have the capability to produce from nuclear. About 22 percent of our energy comes from nuclear. We also use a large amount of natural gas, but our natural gas reserves are going down faster than we are finding new ones.

We have hydro; we have wind; we have solar. These are all important in the mix. The funds from the sale or lease in ANWR are going to go back and develop renewable sources of energy.

The point I make is why these energies are important. America moves on oil. The world moves on oil. There is no alternative. We must find an alternative, perhaps fuel sales, perhaps hydrogen technology, but it is not there. We will be increasingly dependent on sources from overseas.

I know the President pro tempore remembers the issue of the U2 over Russia, Gary Powers, an American pilot in an observation plane that was shot down. At that time, we were contemplating a major meeting of the world leaders to try and relieve tensions. When his plane was shot down, tensions were increased dramatically between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was a time of great tension.

The other day we had a U2 flying over Iraq with an American pilot. We were enforcing a no-fly zone. We were doing an observation. A missile was shot at that aircraft, barely missing it. It blew up behind the tail. It hardly made page 5 in the news.

We are importing a million barrels a day from Iraq. We are enforcing a no-fly zone over Iraq. We have flown 231,000 individual sorties, with men and