

How about this one? A new digital imaging breast biopsy system images breast tissue more clearly and more efficiently. This nonsurgical system—using technology originally developed by NASA for the Hubble Space Telescope—is less traumatic and greatly reduces the pain, scarring, radiation exposure, time, and money associated with surgical biopsies.

And finally, a flywheel energy storage system. It is derived from two NASA-sponsored energy storage studies. It is a chemical-free, mechanical battery that harnesses the energy of a rapidly spinning wheel, and it stores it as electricity with 50 times the capacity of a lead-acid battery. This system is especially useful in electric vehicles, something that we are trying to perfect to help us wean ourselves from our dependence on foreign oil.

And these are just a few examples.

But I say again about this administration's plan for the space station: The Core Complete or the skeletal structure—not fleshed out—simply taunts the research community, telling them that an orbiting laboratory is there but fails to provide them with real and significant opportunity to use it.

The tag line NASA uses for the International Space Station program says: "It's about life on Earth." That is the tag line. But is there going to be life in space?

This Core Complete concept of the NASA administration falls so short of expectations that our Nation's leading scientists refuse to call it a science program.

And under the administration's plan, our ever-shrinking space station will waste both time and money over the long run while failing to realize the unique potential of this international research facility.

This administration—I am talking about OMB; I am talking about the White House, and I am talking about the administration in NASA—needs to stop pretending that Core Complete is a viable or a desirable goal for our country or our space-faring international partners.

It is neither. Core Complete is the minimum configuration needed for the U.S. to say it has completed a space station, but that is just it—it is the minimum. We can fix this by returning to the original plan. Let's go back to building a fully capable research laboratory. Let's go back to a crew size capable of maintaining the station and conducting a robust research agenda. Let's realize the full potential of this laboratory of the heavens. We must realize the station's full potential. Let's expand the crew size and broaden our research capabilities on board.

Let's develop a crew rescue vehicle so that we don't have to rely on the Soviet vehicle that can only take three, so that we can get seven astronauts on board to do the research, so in the case of a catastrophic failure that we have a rescue vehicle, a lifeboat that can

evacuate the seven crew members. And let's recommit to furthering humankind's understanding of the building blocks of life, recommit to developing advanced materials, reducing fuel emissions, and finding a cure for cancer.

To this administration, I respectfully say, but I very strongly say, we best recommit this Nation to building a fully capable International Space Station. We have delayed long enough. The Nation awaits. There is not an American, there is not a school child whose eyes do not light up when told of the adventures and the successes of America's space program. We need to continue with a great vision.

Right now, we can continue by building out the space station so it can fulfill its scientific research mission.

I see my colleague from Montana. I had the privilege of going in the summer to Montana, and lo and behold, Tribal Industries in his State of Montana, built and conducted by the tribes on tribal lands, were doing great things that are direct spinoffs from America's space program. They had some interest in having me out there to talk to them about some of the successes of the space program. It is just another example of how all of these space accomplishments have spun off into businesses, this Senator, who has had such a great privilege of being a part of the space program, found when I went to the northern part of Montana, near Flat Iron Lake, near Big Fork.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. EDWARDS)

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I thank my good friend from Florida. The tribe he is referring to is the Salish Kootenai Tribe in northwestern Montana. That tribe, along with a couple others in Montana, is proudly doing great work with defense contracts and NASA contracts. The Senator is exactly right. This is a program that is almost all-encompassing for almost the entire country. There are so many different States. We are particularly proud in Montana because of the Native Americans who work at it. It is good work. It is top quality work. I appreciate the Senator coming to Montana, visiting the Salish Kootenai, seeing their good work. I am sure it adds more meaning and context to the Senator's experience in the space program and even new meaning to the Senator's experience of the space program. We are happy to be able to help in that regard.

DROUGHT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to address a natural disaster that is occurring in America. That is the unrelenting drought.

For my State of Montana and many States this year, particularly in Colorado and other Western States, it has brought economic hardship to our agricultural producers and to our rural communities.

In 1996, before the drought began, Montana wheat producers made \$847 million from their wheat sales, close to \$1 billion. In 2001, 4 years into the drought, Montana producers made just \$317 million from wheat sales. That is a 62-percent decline.

Let me add a new context to that figure. Agriculture is more than 50 percent of my State's economy. It is truly the backbone of our State. I ask those who oppose natural disaster assistance one question: How is a State like Montana supposed to survive a loss of that magnitude, 62 percent, without assistance, when half the economy is agriculture? The most efficient, the most effective, the most successful businesses in the world could not absorb that kind of a loss.

That 62-percent decline in sales for Montana wheat farmers—and I might add, the same devastating effect is felt by livestock producers because of lack of pasture and feed—is through absolutely no fault of those producers. These farmers haven't been cooking the books. They haven't been taking exorbitant bonuses at the expense of shareholders. No, our Nation's farmers and ranchers are hard working, dedicated, good, honest people, trying to make a living, trying to make ends meet. They need our help.

The drought is no longer touching only the pockets of our country. The drought has become an epidemic. It has affected a majority of our Nation. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 1,470 counties in 45 States have been designated drought disaster regions in 2002.

As you can tell from this map, dated October 1 of this year, there isn't one State west of the Mississippi that has been receiving the rain they need. Just look west of the Mississippi, and clearly, by the dark brown and the reds, you can see the center of America is experiencing deep drought.

Drought is affecting States up and down the east coast as well, as we can see from this map. That is just part of it. That is just this year. In most regions of the country, certainly in the West, we are now in our fourth or fifth year. It is cumulative. It adds up. This map alone doesn't tell the whole story.

On October 3 of this year, President Bush provided FEMA Federal disaster funds and resources for people victimized by Hurricane Lili. Those people, those small businesses, those rural communities have been devastated by an unpredictable and uncontrollable natural phenomenon—a hurricane. They deserve our assistance, and we, very generously and proudly, support that assistance the President provided for those parts of the country devastated by hurricanes.

But where is the assistance for people suffering from drought?

In reality, the only real difference between a hurricane and a drought is that a majority of people don't understand the impact of 4 consecutive years of drought the same way they understand the impact of a hurricane.

Drought is a silent killer. It is not on TV. It is not headlined in the news. It is a silent killer that slowly builds up and accumulates. The pictures of drought on CNN are not as immediate and terrifying as are the photographs of hurricanes. But the effects can be just as serious for the people in both events. They can both lose their homes and livelihoods.

Our agricultural producers are holding their breath. They are waiting for natural disaster assistance because if they don't receive our help, many will not make it. In Montana, and in other States across the country, small businesses are closing their doors and families are losing their futures because of the drought. It is happening. School districts no longer have enough children to conduct classes, so they have to consolidate schools, forcing kids to travel hours by bus. Why are they losing children? Because of the effect of the drought. Parts of my State are just drying up.

Those people, small businesses, and rural communities have been devastated by unpredictable and uncontrollable natural phenomenon. On September 3 of this year, the Wall Street Journal printed this:

The U.S. may be looking at its most expensive drought in its history, inflicting economic damage far beyond the farm belt.

Think of that, Mr. President. A quote by the Wall Street Journal that the U.S. may be looking at the most expensive drought in our Nation's history, inflicting economic damage far beyond the farm belt.

I will share a few stories that have been shared with me over the last couple of weeks. In north-central Montana, the bread basket of my State, a producer and his family have been living off of their farm for several generations. After 4 years of valiant fighting against the drought, they have been forced to give up. The question is, What do they do now?

Because of the drought, they have no crop and cannot pay off their outstanding operating loans. Don't forget, that is how farmers do business. They get operating loans before they get their crop. If they get no crop, they cannot pay off the loans. More than 3 months ago, this family put their farm, their machinery, everything they have dedicated a lifetime to, up for sale. They have yet to receive a single offer in more than 90 days.

A producer in the same region had five hired hands just 5 years ago. Now he has none. Due to the cost of feed and the condition of his pastures, he has had to cut down his herd to one-fourth of what he used to own. Over the last 3 years, he has lost several hundred thousand dollars because the drought has killed his crops and he cannot afford cattle feed.

He and his family rely on the income from his wife. But to make a bad situation worse, his wife's job is now in jeopardy because of the negative impact of the drought on her employer. She is not sure she can keep her job.

Dale Schuler, past president of Montana Grain Growers Association, and a farmer in Choteau County, had this to say, and I know Dale. He is a rock-solid man. He has been farming for years:

Nearly 2,000 square miles of crop in my area of central Montana went unharvested in 2001. That is an area equal to the size of the State of Rhode Island. Farmers and our families haven't had the means to repay our operating loans, let alone buy inputs to plant the crop for the coming year.

Don't forget, agriculture is 50 percent of the economy in Montana. There is a decline in income over several years of 62 percent. Continuing his quote:

Choteau County is the largest farming county in Montana, and yet our last farm equipment dealer had no choice but to close his doors, our local co-op closed its tire shop, one farm fuel supplier quit, and the fertilizer dealers and grain elevators are laying off workers. I believe that we are about to see a mass exodus from Montana that has not been seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

That is no small statement, Mr. President.

Another farmer from Choteau County, Darin Arganbright, pointed out that enrollment in local schools has decreased by 50 percent in the past few years. Young families are not able to stay in the area because of the lack of work and the lack of opportunity.

It is not only agriculture that is gone; businesses in the community are being devastated.

According to the New York Times, an article of May 3 of this year:

In eastern Montana, more than a thousand wheat farmers have called it quits rather than trying to coax another crop out of the ground that has received less rain over the last 12 months than many deserts get in a year.

That is the fourth year of drought. That is not 1 year; that is 4. I remind colleagues that Federal crop insurance is perverse because, with each year the coverage decreases while premiums increase compared to the prior year. It is a negative vicious cycle.

Don Wilhite, director of the National Drought Mitigation Center, describes drought in the following manner:

Drought is the Rodney Dangerfield of natural disasters. In most cases, it causes the most significant losses, but it is harder to convince policymakers and others to deal with it.

That is what is happening, Mr. President. The White House is turning a deaf ear to this. They put their blinders on. The majority party in the other body is doing the same thing, putting blinders on, closing their ears, not paying attention.

Producers pray every day that they can hang on until the U.S. Congress—all of us elected to represent the people—works together to pass agricultural disaster assistance. Our producers are praying that we act now so their children have the opportunity to continue what they and generations before them have fought so hard to sustain.

We cannot and must not continue to ignore the impact of drought and the effect it has on our agricultural pro-

ducers and our rural communities. Agricultural producers are every bit as deserving of assistance for their suffering from the drought as a small business owner from Louisiana suffering from the hurricane.

In a speech to the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show in Denver in February, President Bush emphasized the need for a strong rural economy:

Our farm economy, our ranchers and farmers provide an incredible part of the Nation's economic vitality.

That is what he said in February. The President continued by saying if the agricultural economy is not vital, the Nation's economy will suffer. Those are the President's own words.

I could not agree more with the President. The Nation's economy is directly tied to our agricultural economy. Unless we take action, the drought will have a permanent impact on our agricultural producers, on our small rural towns, and on our national economy.

I urge my colleagues in the House and the Senate, and the President, to work together to pass natural disaster assistance before it is too late—and in many cases, for thousands of families who have pulled up stakes, it is already too late. I ask the President to live up to the words he spoke in February. If the agricultural economy is vital to the national economy—and it is—then it is vital that we pass agricultural disaster assistance immediately.

Our agricultural producers have never let us down—never. They do not let us down. They continue to fill our tables with safe and abundant supplies of food. Now it is time for us to work together to provide them with immediate assistance so they can continue to fill their own tables.

Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, and I urge my colleagues to pay close attention to my remarks because we have a problem. We have to work this out together. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 347 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand we are in morning business. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.