

improvement of family housing. I send that amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN], for Mrs. CLINTON and Mr. SCHUMER, proposes an amendment numbered 3961.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify leasing authorities under the alternative authority for acquisition and improvement of military housing)

At the end of subtitle A of title XXVIII, add the following:

SEC. 2803. MODIFICATION OF LEASE AUTHORITIES UNDER ALTERNATIVE AUTHORITY FOR ACQUISITION AND IMPROVEMENT OF MILITARY HOUSING.

(a) LEASING OF HOUSING.—Subsection (a) of section 2874 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(a) LEASE AUTHORIZED.—(1) The Secretary concerned may enter into contracts for the lease of housing units that the Secretary determines are suitable for use as military family housing or military unaccompanied housing.

“(2) The Secretary concerned shall utilize housing units leased under paragraph (1) as military family housing or military unaccompanied housing, as appropriate.”.

(b) REPEAL OF INTERIM LEASE AUTHORITY.—Section 2879 of such title is repealed.

(c) CONFORMING AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—(1) The heading for section 2874 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“§ 2874. Leasing of housing”.

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of such title is amended—

(A) by striking the item relating to section 2874 and inserting the following new item:

“2874. Leasing of housing.”; and

(B) by striking the item relating to section 2879.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the amendment has been cleared on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3961) was agreed to.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. WARNER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I intend to remain for a period of time in case any Senator comes to the floor. Then we will consult on such time as we recommend to the leadership if this bill is laid aside, and such morning business time as may be, in the leader's judgment, appropriate.

In a few minutes I hope to address the Senate with regard to the NATO forthcoming enlargement issue, as well as those issues relating to other matters which are important. I have some visitors at this moment, so I will have to absent myself from the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia. I will also be available in the event someone with an amendment does come to the floor. I have to leave also for a few minutes, but I will be available for some time to join you and welcome anybody who

does come to the floor with an amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go into a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI, is recognized.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN RESOLUTION

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues the development on the Yucca Mountain resolution, specifically what it means, and share a few realistic observations on just what we are talking about as we reflect on our obligation to address the waste in this country.

In the past 2 days, I have come to the Senate floor to speak in morning business on S.J. Res. 34. I have spoken generally on the need to move this resolution and the procedure under which the resolution will move. I was pleased to see that the two leaders had an opportunity to discuss this earlier in the day. I think it is fair to say that, clearly, we are left with the appropriate procedure, which simply mandates that any Member may bring this up upon recognition of the Chair at any time. So it is quite appropriate that the leaders related the parliamentary procedure.

I want to speak specifically about what the resolution does and does not do. This seems to be a point of contention in the minds of some. The resolution merely reaffirms the present recommendation of Yucca Mountain as a suitable site for this Nation's permanent geologic repository. That is simply all there is to it. It does not license the repository. It does not build a repository. It does not start the transportation of spent fuel from reactors tomorrow or the next day. It does not start transportation of high-level nuclear waste from the Department of Energy weapon sites. It does none of those things.

The resolution gives the Department of Energy the go ahead to begin the licensing process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and that is simply all there is to it.

Now, I have already given, in a series of presentations, a little background of the fact that we have collected some \$17 billion from ratepayers in this country, and that the Federal Government signed a solemn contractual commitment to take the waste in 1998. The Federal Government has breached the sanctity of that contract. It is estimated that the damages and suits against the Federal Government are somewhere in the area of \$40 billion to \$70 billion. That is an obligation to the U.S. taxpayers because the Congress of

the United States has not forced, if you will, compliance of that contractual commitment.

A lot of people simply dismiss this as something we can put off. You can put it off all right, but you are going to do it at the expense of the taxpayers. This was a contract. The ratepayers that use nuclear energy paid into a fund. The Federal Government has held that money to take the waste in 1998. The Federal Government is in violation of that contract. It is just that simple.

We have an opportunity and obligation to move. The House has moved, the Senate has not because the licensing process is a first of its kind. No one anticipates it is going to move quickly or smoothly. Both the DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission indicated a great deal of work needs to be done before any repository is licensed to construct. The resolution is no real guarantee that Yucca will be built, but it certainly moves the process along. I know that is what some don't want to hear. I certainly hope it is not the case, but the reality is that we have no guarantee that the Department of Energy will be able to meet the licensing requirements imposed by the NRC.

We have an obligation to move this process along under the structure that was agreed to many years ago. Now, it is true the NRC has issued a sufficiency letter that indicates the Commission believes the DOE will, at the appropriate time, have sufficient information to apply for and receive the license, but only time and additional work will tell. Opponents of Yucca Mountain have indicated, for instance, that we should not pass this resolution because there are a number of unresolved technical issues. As a matter of fact, there are issues that both DOE and NRC have agreed will be resolved in the licensing process.

There are a number of other issues that should have been raised, such as transportation, that cannot and should not be resolved prior to making the decision regarding licensing of Yucca Mountain. Transportation to and from Yucca will be resolved in the licensing process. To use it now is as a scare tactic—which some have suggested—or a reason to vote no on the resolution is irresponsible.

I want to point out that, for the past 30 years, the United States has seen close to 3,000 shipments of spent fuel and high-level waste go across the surface of our country—the railroads and the highways—and not one of these shipments has resulted in a harmful release of radiation. We are doing this now and we are doing it safely. These are the existing transportation routes on this chart—the interstate highways from the State of Washington through Idaho. It goes from Hanford, and you pick up the National Laboratories, you pick up Rocky Flats, Los Alamos, and the Livermore Lab in San Francisco. This is the route of movement of waste. It moves over to South Carolina and up and down the east coast. It

moves to Savannah. It moves to the Waste Isolation Plant, WIPP, where most of this is concentrated, but certainly not all of them.

The point is, the waste has been moving around the country—military waste—for a long period of time. There are no demonstrations, there are no particularly extraordinary methods.

In this photo, you can see the truck hauling the waste. It is in canisters that can withstand fire. At one time, we had the capability of designing a cask that could stand a free fall of 30,000 feet and it would not penetrate the interior. So we have built these casks adequately and safely.

Some have indicated that these waste shipments are only a few. I think it is to the contrary. This chart shows spent fuel shipments regulated by the NRC from 1964 through the year 2000. We have had almost 3,000 shipments. We shipped over 1.7 million miles and we have had zero radiation releases. For low-level radiant waste shipments to WIPP from 1997 to 2001, we have had 896 shipments, and we shipped about 900,000 miles. So we have a total of 3,800 shipments total, 2.6 million miles, with no harmful radiation releases.

We have the technology and, obviously, if we can build reactors to generate power, we certainly have the capability to transfer and transport the energy, the rods that go in the reactors. Nobody seems to say anything or have any great concern about the reactor fueling process itself or how the fuel is shipped across the country. But we have this hue and cry that somehow it is dangerous to move this waste on our highways and railroads. We have that capability. We have responsible people—scientists, engineers—who are competent to move this. Some suggest we should resolve this in a town hall meeting atmosphere. We need experts, engineers, technicians. They are staking their reputation—just as those who develop the nuclear energy industry in this country—on their capability to move this safely.

My point is that it has been done. It is proven. This is military waste, but now we are talking about private waste from our reactors. Some have also said this is a decision being made in haste; that we ought to put it off for more resolve. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have spent 20 years in this process. We have expended over \$4 billion at Yucca drilling into the mountain—I have been there; I have gone in—to determine whether the site is scientifically and technically suitable for development of the repository. This is not a decision that was made in haste. This is a decision that has been made actually over 24 years of extensive study by the world's best scientists.

As a consequence, I am confident in the work done to date by the Department of Energy. But this work will not cease with this recommendation on the resolution. On the contrary, scientific investigation and analysis will con-

tinue for the life of the repository. In sum, I cannot think of any reason except perhaps plain old opposition, which we have a little bit of here, to the fact of the repository itself and the realization of putting off a vote on the resolution, which is the business at hand.

The science is going to continue through the licensing process and well beyond. Transportation matters will be addressed thoroughly in the licensing process by the appropriate agencies. Plus, we already have an excellent record in that area upon which to build. The decision is not being rushed. It is something that has been in the works for over two decades.

As we look at the competence of our nuclear program development, whether it be military, whether it be nuclear submarines that are on patrol constantly, whether it be under our agreement to reduce our nuclear capability by cutting up some of the old submarines, by removing, if you will, the reactors, we have competent people in charge of this operation. Anything less that would suggest we cannot move this waste is simply an excuse for inaction.

Every Member has to reflect on an obligation that after we set up a procedure to take the waste in 1998, certainly the Federal Government should honor the terms and conditions of that contract, and Members should not look for an excuse to simply punt on this issue.

The bottom line is, let's face it, I say to my colleagues, and the simple reality is, nobody wants this waste. Politically, it is dynamite. We have waste stored in Hanford, the State of Washington, Savannah, we have waste stored up and down the east coast. Do we want to leave it there, where it is unprotected, or do we want to move it to one place on which we can agree? Let's recognize the reality. We have expended the funds. We made the commitments. Now it is time to move. We cannot dodge this for another Congress.

I thank the Presiding Officer for recognition and wish him a good day. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

AMTRAK

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it is Friday. The weekend starts for most people today. It looks as if it is going to be a great weekend whether at the Delaware beaches or the New Jersey shore. Next weekend might start a little early for a lot of people in this country, for hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of commuters from Trenton, NJ, to New York, Connecticut, Philadelphia, Wilmington,

Baltimore, Washington, Chicago, and out on the west coast, L.A., and a lot of other places as well because right now it looks as if, starting in the latter part of next week, Amtrak will begin an orderly shutdown of its operations, and there will be a cascading effect that will also lead to disruption of commuter operations in all those cities and many others I did not mention.

Amtrak is running out of operating funds for this fiscal year. They expect to run out of operating funds sometime in early July. The new president of Amtrak has announced his intention to try to negotiate a loan for Amtrak from a consortium of commercial banks, which Amtrak has done any number of times in the past, for operating moneys to bridge a period of time until the new Federal grant comes through or to negotiate money for capital improvements to Amtrak.

Those negotiations were underway in earnest early this week. I understand the auditors for Amtrak were not able to say with conviction that Amtrak was a going concern because, in part, of the announcement of the administration yesterday for the Amtrak restructuring plan, which is really, in my judgment, an Amtrak dismantling plan.

Rather than Amtrak being able to negotiate the bridge loan with private lenders to carry them through the end of the year when our new appropriation might be available, Amtrak faces a cutoff of its operations, again, the impending effect on commuters throughout this country late next week.

The Presiding Officer and I have discussed this situation any number of times in the year and a half we have been here, and we have discussed it more earnestly in the last week or two. I am mindful of the efforts he is making to avert what could be a disaster. They are efforts that are supported by any number of our colleagues.

A week or so ago, 52 of us finished putting our signatures on a letter to the ranking members of the Senate Appropriations Committee voicing our support for a \$1.2 billion appropriation for Amtrak in the next fiscal year. A week or so prior to that, the Senate voted to accept a provision included in the Senate appropriations bill for another \$55 million as part of an emergency supplemental to enable repair work to begin on Amtrak locomotives, passenger cars, and sleeping cars that had been damaged in wrecks around the country, wrecks, frankly, not caused by Amtrak or Amtrak's neglect, but because of trucks that were on the tracks in some places and because of problems with track bed outside the Northeast corridor that led to a derailling.

That money is in the emergency appropriations bill passed by the Senate and is one of the items at issue in the conference. I have been led to believe the President has threatened to veto even those moneys as part of the emergency supplemental if they remain in the bill.