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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for the resources You have given to us. You ask us to be good stewards—to invest resources wisely. And we want to do so. But this is hard when others deceive us. We have learned recently how professionals in a few companies took unfair advantage of investors. They lost track of their accountability to truth and their commitment to integrity. As a result, investors lost billions of dollars, tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs, and untold numbers of people lost confidence in the financial markets. Please comfort and help those who were harmed. Bless the many men and women who operate their companies honestly. Help strengthen the integrity of America's financial system so that people can be better stewards of our resources. And give the Senators wisdom to know how to legislate to preserve an effective financial accounting system for the businesses of America. In Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JACK REED led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 9, 2002.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. JACK REED thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in a short time there will be a period of morning business until 10:15 today, with times evenly divided, the first half under the control of the Republicans and the second half under the control of the Democrats. At 10:15, the Senate will resume consideration of the accounting reform bill.

I was advised by my junior colleague from Nevada last evening that he was notified by the Republican leader that this afternoon the Republicans will move to the nuclear waste veto matter which has been hanging around for a while. If that is the case, that will take up most of the afternoon, I am sure, with a 10-hour statutory time available that could go into tomorrow. We have been working since we learned about this yesterday to work something out that would be more definite. We will keep the Senate advised as soon as we know something more.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:15 a.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the first half of the time shall be under the control of the Republican leader or his designee.

The Senator from Nebraska.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR AGRICULTURE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak about the severe drought gripping much of our Nation. The situation is developing into a national problem, a big problem that can no longer be ignored.

Last week in Nebraska, I met with farmers and livestock producers who have witnessed firsthand the devastation caused by this drought. For many agricultural producers in Nebraska and throughout America, hope is again for this growing season. Their crops are wilted and their pastures are scorched and bare. These producers need assistance. For them, there are no options left. Drought is not just a Nebraska problem; it is a national problem.

According to the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska, about 15 percent of the country experiences drought in a typical year. Today, more than 40 percent of the entire country is suffering from drought. The West is bone dry. "Exceptional" and "extreme" drought, as it is termed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, has ravaged the Southwest as well as Wyoming, Montana, and parts of Texas. The Southern States, along with sections of New England, such as represented by the distinguished Presiding Officer, and the Mid-Atlantic States are also reeling from drought.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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This past spring was the driest in 107 years of data reporting in Colorado and the second driest in Arizona and southern California. Keep in mind, it is only July 9. To add to this problem, the drought has brought swarms of grasshoppers which are now infecting many parts of Nebraska as well as the entire Midwest.

The economic effects of drought are often hard to measure. Unlike a hurricane or tornado, droughts are measured in years, sometimes decades. The worst drought in recent memory, in the summer of 1988, covered almost 40 percent of the entire United States. It cost an estimated \$40 billion. Compare that to Hurricane Andrew in 1992, which cost about \$30 billion.

The bad news is the current drought could be much worse than the drought of 1988, considering we still must endure July and August, the hottest months of the year. Already, Nebraska is estimating at least \$307 million damage to its economy, with the loss to crops and pastureland alone estimated at \$150 million. Again, this is only a midyear estimate.

Government action is now necessary. Congress is quick to respond to floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Now we must respond to this national drought. Some of my colleagues may second-guess the need for additional agricultural assistance. After all, Congress, for the past 3 years, has provided billions of dollars for supplemental agricultural spending, mostly due to low commodity prices. Emergency payments were supposed to cease with passage of the new farm bill this year.

Clearly, the new farm bill, which will spend an estimated \$180 billion or more over the next 10 years, provides almost no safety net for farmers and ranchers hurt by drought. That is one of the farm bill's biggest faults, as Senators ROBERTS and LUGAR pointed out often during the farm bill debate on the floor of the Senate. Increased price supports could not help much when there is no crop to be harvested.

During the Senate farm bill debate, Senator LUGAR brought up the idea of expanded crop and livestock revenue insurance. Senator ROBERTS called for more emphasis on direct, decoupled, nonproduction-related payments. Both are solid, sound ideas, but Congress did not listen. Now we must play with the cards we have dealt ourselves.

It is important we do not hold drought-plagued agricultural producers hostage to a shortsighted farm bill. The President said any new agricultural disaster aid must come from the \$73.5 billion in new agricultural funding. I agree with the President. We should find the necessary offsets for this new funding. But we must act quickly to find the necessary disaster aid to help minimize the drought's impact on local economies. America will see a ripple effect on these economies. The economies of many States are directly tied to agriculture and food production.

We are not limited to just an agricultural disaster package. There are other ways in which Washington is helping our agricultural producers this year.

Secretary Veneman has been making disaster declarations for counties across the country, which allows eligible agriculture producers to receive emergency low-interest loans. She has approved grazing and haying on Conservation Reserve Program acres throughout the country, including almost 40 Nebraska counties.

Also, I would like to remind my colleagues of an important bill recently introduced by the senior Senator from New Mexico. Senator DOMENICI's National Drought Preparedness Act S. 2528 would move us away from the costly, ad-hoc, response-oriented approach to droughts to a comprehensive, proactive national drought policy. We need an established program that will allow local, State, and Federal Governments to work together—to coordinate a drought preparedness strategy.

Droughts do not happen overnight, and the damage they cause to the economy and environment do not go away with one measurable rainfall. Government cannot bring an end to the drought or bring pastures and crops back to life. But we can help our agriculture producers survive, weather this crisis, and prepare for the next growing season. With many of my colleagues in the House and Senate, I am working on an emergency drought disaster package to bring before the Congress.

I urge all of my colleagues to help find a responsible way to get America's agriculture producers the help they need—as soon as possible.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, how much time do the Republicans have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republicans have 5 minutes 30 seconds.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Presiding Officer advise me if the time of the Republicans has run out?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of the Republicans has expired.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

What is the order now?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader or his designee has control of the remaining 20 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss a matter that is very related to the whole issue of corporate responsibility. Sometimes the people do not connect the issue of the environment with corporate responsibility, but I am going to do that this morning with the Senator from Illinois, as we touch on some of the policies of this administration, which are really, in my view, putting us in a very dangerous situation in terms of taking a stand with the corporate polluters versus the people of this country who deserve to have protection from environmental hazards. This is not a discussion about ideology, it is really a discussion about the checks and balances that there have to be in this country so we can have robust economic growth along with the sense that there will be responsibility and people will be protected.

I have found out, in my long history in politics, that in fact if you are good to the environment and if you care about the health and safety of people, you will have, actually, development of new businesses to deal with pollution and you will have prosperity.

We go back in the environmental movement to the days when rivers in this country were on fire, they had so many hazards in the waterways, such as in Ohio and other places. That is what started the Clean Air Act. We go back to the days when you could literally see the air in some of our big cities. We turned it around in such a way that the people benefited both from a healthier environment and a robust economy.

So this argument that we should step away and no longer say to corporations that pollute: You have a responsibility to clean up your mess—the fact that this administration seems to take that position is at odds with our history and is at odds with what we ought to be doing.

On Monday, July 1, a report by the Environmental Protection Agency inspector general was released stating that the EPA has designated 33 sites in 18 States for cuts in financing for the Superfund cleanup program. The reason this administration decided to do this is, frankly, they are depleting the Superfund, which is a fund that is set up via a fee by polluting corporations, and the administration is not interested, at least to now, in making sure that we have that fund, that that fund is not depleted.

The report that was commissioned several months ago by Democrats in