

is the realization that during this time we have been buying oil from Saddam Hussein, hundreds of thousands of barrels a day. In September of 2001, we set a record by importing nearly 1.2 million barrels of oil per day from Saddam.

It is almost as if we would take his oil, put it in our airplanes, and go take out his targets. That is rather ironic. I think it is rather inconsistent, and it shows certainly an inconsistency in our foreign policy.

What does he do with the money he receives from the United States? Why, he takes care of his Republican Guard, the group that keeps him alive, and develops more weapons of mass destruction and perhaps aims them at our ally Israel. Maybe that is an oversimplification of foreign policy. Nevertheless, that is what has been going on over a period of time. So we have become, to some extent, perhaps a partner because we are providing Saddam Hussein indirectly, through the purchase of his oil, with a cashflow that allows him to develop his weapons of mass destruction.

Others might say that is inconsistent logic because someone else would buy his oil if the United States did not. I am not going to pursue that, other than to state a fact: We are buying hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil from Saddam Hussein. He is developing weapons of mass destruction. Where does he get the money? A portion of it comes from oil sales to the United States.

So as we contemplate our decision on initiating an action against Saddam Hussein, we have to look back to the circumstances surrounding 9/11 where, had we known that the threat was what it turned out to be, we would have initiated an action. We did not know. We did not initiate an action.

We can criticize our security. We can criticize the CIA and the other intelligence agencies for inadequate information. Nevertheless, the fact remains, we did not know. Had we known, we would have taken action.

In the case of Saddam Hussein, clearly we know he is developing weapons of mass destruction. So the point is, should we take action? If we do not, who will? What is the actual threat? We do not know, but it is clearly a choice. We are giving Saddam Hussein a choice of either surrender—in other words, open up your country to the U.N. inspectors—or be prepared for the ultimate alternative, and that is basically to be subjected to a conflict that could go on for some time.

I see my good friend, the senior Senator from West Virginia, is seeking recognition. I will conclude with one reference: That we need to consider again the obligation that the energy conferees have. The conference is in order. The issues are being discussed. There is an issue, and it is the issue of opening up ANWR that is within the authority of the conference to bring back to the Senate for action. As the President well knows, the House has

included ANWR in its bill and the issue is before the conference.

At a time when we are contemplating an action against Saddam Hussein, which certainly would result in an upheaval in the Mideast, it is imperative each Member recognize his or her obligation to address this with some finality. It simply makes sense to authorize the opening of this area so we can reduce our dependence on Mideast oil, particularly the sources we currently get our oil from, including Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

There is going to be an invitation by the conference to invite Members to ANWR, to Kaktovik, on September 13. Members should avail themselves of the opportunity to see for themselves that it could be opened up safely.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Alaska for his comments. There will come a time when the Senate should debate this question.

I compliment the distinguished Senator from Alaska on his concerns with respect to Saddam Hussein. I believe he said we have every reason to believe Saddam Hussein has developed a nuclear capability. I hope I am not misquoting the Senator.

In the days ahead, we will want to know what the evidence is. I do not intend to get into any long debate at this point about the matter because we have a bill before us with a pending amendment. We need to get on with that, but no Senator is seeking recognition at this point.

Perhaps Saddam Hussein has developed such a nuclear capability. When the able Senator says we have every reason to believe he has, that is not quite the point. Where is the evidence?

Of course, it is to be expected that some people in this country will assign unpatriotic reasons for the asking of questions by Senators. We have a right to ask questions, we have a duty to ask questions, because we are living in a very perilous time.

The war drums are beating all around us. I want to listen to what is said. I want to listen to what the President has to say. I want to listen to what he is going to say at the United Nations. I hope the United Nations will respond. I am not saying we in the Congress have to have authorization by the United Nations. Authorization is contained right here in this little book I hold in my hand, the Constitution of the United States. This Congress has the power to declare war.

I, for one, am not going to hang my vote on an authorization by the U.N. for us in this Congress to do thus and so. We should know what the United Nations has to say. I think the United Nations should take a position. If the straits are as dire as we hear, then the United Nations ought to be concerned. And the United Nations ought to give the world the benefit of its opinion. I

am glad the President is going to the United Nations.

I am breaking our own rules here. I ask unanimous consent, although the Pastore rule may not have run its course, I may speak on a different subject.

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

Mr. BYRD. The United Nations, I think, has a duty to let the world know where it stands and what its opinion is. If this country is going to eventually go into a difficult situation, as may confront us, if war is declared by this legislative branch, or if war is approved, authorized, by this legislative branch, then we in the United States should not have to go it alone.

But when we say we have every right to believe that Saddam Hussein has developed nuclear capability, well, we have every right in our minds to think perhaps he has, and we can easily convince ourselves, but is that enough? Where is the evidence?

I, for one, intend to ask questions as we go along. It is not unpatriotic to ask questions. I intend to ask questions. I have a right to ask questions. Where is the evidence? We might think about that as we go along.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003—Continued

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I hope Senators will come to the floor if they have anything to say by way of debate on the pending amendment, if they have an amendment to the amendment. I hope Senators will come to the floor and exercise their right to offer amendments, or to speak. But we do not have the time to waste by just waiting and letting the clock run.

This afternoon, the Senate will be debating the homeland security legislation. Take a look at the situation we are in. October 1, a new fiscal year, is rapidly approaching. It is staring us in the face. Not one appropriations bill has been sent to the President for his signature. Where is the other House, where is the other body, on this matter? I don't seek to point the finger, but the facts are the facts.

The Appropriations Committee of the Senate, which I chair, and the distinguished former chairman, just preceding me, Senator STEVENS, he and I and others on the committee, Republicans and Democrats, have reported out 13 appropriations bills. We did that before the recess. We in the committee have done our work. Where is the House? Why doesn't the House report? I have to be careful about criticizing the other body. I don't criticize. I simply ask the question, Where is the House in this matter?

The House has acted on the House floor on, I believe, six bills; I believe I am correct. The Senate on the floor has acted on, in the past, three appropriations bills. One is now pending. But all the appropriations bills have been

reported by our Appropriations Committee in this Senate. We did that before the recess. We need other bills from the House. The Constitution does not say appropriations bills have to start in the House. It says the revenue bills must, the revenue-raising bills, but not appropriations. However, by custom, the House over the years has generally initiated the appropriations bills. I don't have any quarrel with that.

So where are the other bills? Our time is fast running. The new fiscal year begins on October 1. Here we are, the Nation is confronted with some great questions. The question of homeland security, that is homeland defense. That is the defense of our country, our families, our children, right here in this country.

We have legislation before the Senate that deals with homeland security. We need to get on with it or we need to take our time. And here again we need to ask questions—that is what I have been doing—on homeland security. But where are we? Here we are with three Senators on the floor. Now, Senators are busy. There are committee meetings going on, I know, right now. However, I urge Senators to come to the floor and get this bill going and try to pass it.

Tomorrow, a good many Senators are going to New York City. I am not, but a good many Senators are going to New York City. I don't believe I need to go to show my concern for what has happened. I have reacted as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I and Senator STEVENS, Republicans and Democrats on that committee have reacted, have responded to the needs of New York City. We have done the best we could. We have appropriated \$20 billion. So we have responded. I feel sorrow and the need for comfort as much as anyone, but I make the point here that I am not going. I think we ought to be right here doing our work. We have plenty of it to do and not much time.

Look at the calendar, and you will see how squeezed we are to get our remaining work done. We have homeland security. We have nine more appropriations bills to pass in this body after this bill that is before the Senate is acted on. Then we have to go to conference. And here we are, the calendar is running.

I have taken a good bit of time on this point to say this. I don't want anyone to misunderstand my remarks. I have my own viewpoint. As Popeye used to say: I am what I am, and that's all I am. So I have my viewpoint. But it is not my will that should be done. We have work to do, and we ought to be here doing it. We ought to be here right now moving on with it.

The distinguished ranking member is here at his post. He and I have offered amendments on behalf of the Members on both sides. Where are the other Members who have amendments? Where are they? The first question that

was ever asked in the history of mankind was the question: Where art thou? And God, walking through the Garden of Eden, in the cool of the day, said: Adam, Adam, where art thou? That was the first question that was ever asked in the history of mankind: Where art thou?

If I might just pick up on those words—that is all that I, this humble piece of mortal clay can do, is ask: Where art thou? Where are the Senators? Where are we?

Let me say again with apologies to Senators, I know they are very busy. But those who have amendments ought to come. This floor is open and will be. I will take my chair at any time somebody comes in the door.

So: Where art thou? Senators, hear me, come to the floor, offer your amendments; let's have votes and move on.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, the Senator from West Virginia makes a good point. We always hear about those who want to come and make their statement regarding any piece of legislation. Then we go at breakneck speed and grind to a halt. That seems to be what we have done.

Let me just say a few words on behalf of the drought amendment that is before the Senate. We are concerned about the drought as it happened in this area that has been expanded. We have been in a drought situation in Montana for about 5 years. We have been, not only in a situation of summer drought and no summer moisture, but also in the area of low snowpack in the Rocky Mountains, in the areas that feed the irrigation water and stock water and many other amenities that have been provided by that wonderful element. But this year, that drought expanded. It expanded to our neighbors to the south, Colorado and Wyoming, the western Dakotas, and Kansas. Some would say that is almost the breadbasket of this country.

I had an opportunity to drive through those drought areas in western Kansas and Colorado and western Nebraska, and I would say the stories I heard and the history we have studied of the great drought of the dirty thirties—if we were using the same farm way of doing business that we did then, we would probably be back in a dust bowl situation in the Midwest. That is how dry it has been—just no rain at all.

So this is needed legislation. It is not just legislation that has come as a whim to anybody who lives in the heart of this country.

Was all of Montana affected by drought? No. We are a large State. We are 148,000 square miles—not quite as big as Texas, not quite as big as California or Alaska. Nonetheless, if you measure in air miles from the northwest corner to the southeast corner of my State, it is further than from here to Chicago—from Washington, DC, to Chicago.

In the northeastern part of the State, we fared pretty well with crops, grass. But as the rangeland has droughted out in the last 5 years, we have seen a decline, also, in the numbers of livestock. That not only affects our farm income but also our tax base. It affects us in many more ways than just the loss of the numbers of cattle or the loss of a crop.

So this is needed legislation.

We have tried, now, for better than a year and a half to provide relief for those who have been affected by that weather pattern. We have an opportunity here to pass this legislation. The chairman of the subcommittee and the chairman of the full committee is right on when he says we should be moving on this piece of legislation. In fact, it should be off from the Senate tonight, to be honest, probably, if we had the full days to work on it. But everyone knows we move to homeland defense, homeland security, later and we are paralleling these two pieces of legislation.

This particular appropriations bill always draws a little bit of attention because it deals with sensitive areas: Our national public lands and our parks. As many people as there are in the world, there are that many opinions as to how we should manage those public lands and those parks. So it brings diverse ideas, different ideas, and many of them come to this floor. However, we have been lacking that debate in the last 2 days, and that causes some concern, I suppose. Nonetheless, we should be moving along.

I urge my colleagues, especially those on this side of the aisle, that if they have amendments to offer or want to speak on the issue that is before us now, to do it now. It will not be long before we will be to noon, and at that time we go into morning business and then, after that, homeland security.

I stand in support of the chairman of the committee in asking our colleagues to please do that. I know we are working feverishly to clear more amendments. We have already done some of those, and the staff has just done wonderful work in narrowing down our work on the amendments that were offered by Members of the Senate.

Seeing no other Senator standing with a request to speak, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we now have a number of issues pending on this important piece of legislation. But the one issue that is pending that we need to dispose of today is drought assistance. People on both sides of the aisle need to move this issue for their constituents. It is an important piece

of legislation. We have been waiting—yesterday and today—for people to come to speak against it. We have had no one come to speak against this piece of legislation.

That being the case, I am going to move to waive all points of order dealing with this amendment. I think that should be done. I intend to do it very shortly.

Some people may not like it, but the fact of legislative life in the Senate is that we are going to have to vote on this legislation. We should move forward on it. Once we get it out of the way, we can move further down the road.

The two managers of the bill have acted on a number of amendments today. We could complete this bill very quickly. We only have an hour left today.

The amendment now pending before the Senate is the drought assistance amendment offered by Senator DASCHLE.

Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the pending amendment.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at this time, I move to waive all points of order relating to this amendment.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield before he makes that motion?

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Senator has the floor and certainly has the right to make that motion. Would he mind, now that he has announced his intention, to go through a quorum call and get consent that once the quorum call is completed he retain his right to the floor? Certainly before he makes the motion other Senators may come; they will know. They will know from having heard this that business is moving and that we can't continue with the luxury of waiting until next week.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the experience and wisdom of my friend from West Virginia has prevailed in the past and will this time. I think his suggestion is a wiser choice. I withdraw my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I indicate to all assembled here that we need to move this amendment along. I have had a number of people indicate to me that they do not like this amendment, but they can come and talk about it. This isn't just going to go away. I hope we can do that very shortly.

I would also indicate that Senator HARKIN is here wishing to offer a sense-of-the-Senate resolution.

I ask unanimous consent that I retain the floor when the quorum is rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are in a Senate kind of situation here. We have both managers of the bill who support the amendment offered by the majority leader. I believe we have a significant majority of Senators who support the Daschle amendment. But we are in a posture where we have people—unknown, unnamed—who do not like this amendment.

As I indicated earlier, we are going to move to waive points of order on this amendment. We are not going to do it now, as Senator BYRD suggested; we will do it at a later time. To get people to come over who oppose this amendment would be the most appropriate thing to do.

In the meantime, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, be recognized for up to 10 minutes to speak on the underlying legislation and that the Senator from Montana be recognized for up to 10 minutes to speak on the legislation. Following that, I ask unanimous consent that, after calling off the quorum call, Senator BYRD be recognized.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would therefore ask we go forward with the 10 minutes, and the 10 minutes, and then, if there is a quorum call, the Senator gets the floor. I think it might be better if he just got the floor after this. Let's do it that way. After they finish their speeches, Senator BYRD gets the floor.

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

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, the amendment before us is critically important to many parts of the country. It is certainly critically important to my State.

This has been a year of extremes. In southwestern North Dakota, it has been the worst drought since the 1930s. If you went to southwestern North Dakota, what you would find is it looks like a moonscape. We have had wildfires, the most extensive in my lifetime.

We had, in one part of south central North Dakota, a wildfire that burned 35,000 acres. That burned an entire town, the little town of Shields, ND. Hundreds of buildings burned up. The only two buildings that survived were the bar and the church. It is amazing what happens in these circumstances.

I was there the morning after that dreadful night, and I met with the ranchers. One rancher had been up fighting fires for 72 hours.

As he slumped in a chair, he told me: Senator, if there isn't assistance com-

ing, I have to liquidate my herd and I am out of business.

Of course, he would have to liquidate his herd at the time prices are plunging; ranchers all over the region are liquidating their herds because there is not feed for their cattle. It is happening in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, right down the heartland of the country.

At the same time the whole southwestern quarter of my State is hit by the worst drought since the 1930s, in the northeastern quadrant of the State, we have had hundreds of thousands of acres that couldn't be planted because it was too wet. What a remarkable set of circumstances.

In northeastern North Dakota, in a 24-hour period, we got 12 inches of rain—12 inches of rain in a State where we average 18 inches of rain in a year.

Hundreds of thousands of acres were destroyed, much of it never planted. Some 3 million acres in my State were never planted. This is a disaster by any description.

What we do here determines whether or not people go under or survive. Some have said: Look to the farm bill for your assistance. There are no disaster provisions in the farm bill. I was one of the conferees on the farm bill, along with the distinguished chairman of our committee, the Senator from Iowa. We had disaster provisions in the farm bill that passed the Senate, but when we went to conference, those who represented the House told us there were two issues they could not discuss in the conference. Those two issues: Opening up Cuba for trade and disaster assistance.

They said those had to go to the Speaker of the House. And when the majority leader called the Speaker of the House, he said unequivocally: No disaster assistance, period, in the farm bill.

The conferees from the House side said that later on in the session it would be possible to consider disaster assistance, but it was not possible in the farm bill.

So when the White House says to farmers in this country, look to the farm bill for disaster assistance, there is no help there for disasters. It was specifically precluded by the speaker of the House of Representatives, supported by the President of the United States. There is no disaster assistance in that farm bill.

I just held a hearing in my State on this issue. The Governor of the State, a Republican Governor, the commissioner of agriculture, a Democrat, the leaders of the farm organizations—some Democrats, some Republicans—were present. What unified them was the dire emergency that exists, the urgent need for aid. Every single witness at the hearing, and everyone in the crowd who spoke, delivered the same message: Unless there is help coming, thousands of farm families are going to be forced off the land.

They made it very clear. The commissioner of agriculture said the losses in North Dakota so far are over \$800 million. In Washington, \$800 million is not a lot of money. In North Dakota, \$800 million is a huge amount of money. It will condemn to failure thousands of farm families if there is not assistance coming from here.

Every time there has been a natural disaster in any part of the country for as long as I have been in the Senate, this Nation has responded. We have declared an emergency. We have provided the money. We should do no less here.

It is not just North Dakota. It is the flooding in Minnesota, the worst floods in their history. It is disaster in our neighboring State of Montana, our neighboring State of South Dakota, and, as I indicated, right down the heartland of the country. We have seen the worst wildfires in history in Colorado and Arizona—all of this because of overly dry conditions. But there are parts of the country that have had flooding and, as a result, crop failure.

This bill costs over \$5 billion. We know that. We acknowledge it. But what has not been discussed is the substantial savings in the farm bill because of these same conditions. There are billions of dollars of savings in the farm bill because prices are higher than were anticipated at the time the farm bill was written. Why? Because of these disasters, there is less production. Therefore, prices are higher than were anticipated. As a result, there will be substantial savings in the farm bill.

I have asked the Congressional Budget Office to reestimate the farm bill based on these most recent prices. I can tell you, it will mean billions of dollars of savings in the farm program itself. But those dollars are not available for the disaster program unless we pass one.

This is an emergency. Always we have responded to natural disasters. Whether it was hurricanes in Florida, earthquakes in California, flooding in Missouri, or drought in other parts of the country, this Nation has rallied as one to provide assistance.

I was very interested to see the President supporting disaster assistance for eastern Europe at the very time I was home in North Dakota going community to community. We saw the President declare his support for U.S. assistance for disasters, flooding, occurring in eastern Europe. Well, he has a plan for eastern Europe. He has no plan for the heartland of America.

That cannot be the result. That is not fair. It should not be what we do. We ought to declare an emergency just like we always do. We ought to understand there are substantial savings under the farm bill because prices are higher than were anticipated because of these very disasters. And we ought to reach out a hand of help and hope to the hundreds of thousands of families across this country hit by the various

natural disasters. That is the American way. It is what we have done consistently for others. We ought to do no less now.

I urge my colleagues to join to pass this urgently needed legislation. We have helped you when you needed assistance. We are asking now for the same consideration. At a time of devastating natural disasters, our region of the country needs help. We are not alone.

Even with higher prices than were anticipated, it is very important to understand that because production is dramatically reduced, USDA, just 2 weeks ago, indicated that net farm income would decline by a stunning 23 percent. That is what is going to happen because of this series of natural disasters.

That is a hit no part of our economy can afford to take. It is time to act. It is time to vote. We ought to have that opportunity. I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, first, I thank my colleague from North Dakota. He made a very good point that I don't think has been emphasized enough; namely, the farm bill that this body passed and enacted into law because of the recent disastrous conditions occurring in America will result in fewer Federal payments, fewer dollars paid out than was anticipated under that bill. As my friend from North Dakota pointed out, it is billions of dollars in savings which largely will offset the cost of this bill.

My good friend further pointed out that farmers will receive payments under this legislation, disaster assistance, but will not receive it until this legislation is enacted into law. I thank my good friend from North Dakota for making that valid point. Some think that, gee, if we passed a farm bill, why do we have to pass agricultural disaster assistance which, for the 2 years—2001 and 2002—crop disaster program and the livestock assistance program scores at \$5 billion. Crop Insurance is an important risk management tool but provides declining coverage in years of successive disasters. Emergency haying and grazing on CRP acreage is important. These are all pieces to the puzzle. The piece that is still missing—that producers are counting on the most—is emergency natural disaster assistance. I thank my friend from North Dakota for pointing that out.

Madam President, this is really pretty basic. Without our help, without passing agricultural disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers, this body will accomplish change in the future of rural America forever. We are at that point. After successive years of disaster, drought in Montana, we are at the breaking point.

If agricultural assistance does not pass, I can tell you that my State of Montana, and probably other States in

the Nation—particularly the high plains States, and perhaps even the State represented by the occupant of the Chair—the rural American landscape is going to change forever. Small towns are going to die. People are going to leave. There is not going to be much left. We are going to be destroying a way of life.

It is that basic, that simple. It has been said this is a real emergency, a real disaster. That is an understatement. It will be changing the landscape of rural America if this legislation does not pass.

I want to read from a letter from Wells Fargo Bank, a national lending institution which has banks in Montana. This is from Alan Pearson, district manager:

Wells Fargo has always had a number of tools at its disposal, recognizing that farmers and ranchers have cyclical years. As lenders, we have made all efforts to ensure that credit needs are met by providing operating lines of credit and equipment and real estate financing. In addition, where applicable, Wells Fargo is the principal provider and underwriter of Federal Crop Insurance.

However, it is our sense that, without significant Federal assistance for our region, many farmers and ranchers will not make it. Private insurance and easing of credit requirements only go so far.

A principal reason why the situation warrants Federal assistance is that surface and groundwater resources have depleted to a level that requires successive above-average periods of precipitation to bring water reserves back to normal levels.

I will repeat that. The situation has deteriorated so much that only with "successive above-average periods of precipitation to bring water reserves back to normal levels" will farmers begin to recover.

Continuing:

These conditions have worsened over the last 3 years, and our analysis shows that farm income will suffer unless Government assistance is available.

As you are aware, without specific and timely Federal emergency disaster assistance, many producers will face daunting challenges in their operations.

Unfortunately, a natural disaster is not only a condition in just a few States, as of July 22, 49 States are impacted by drought, and 36 percent of our country is currently classified at some level of drought. More than 40 percent of our Nation's rangeland is currently rated as poor or very poor. This is an issue that cannot be ignored.

The Senator from North Dakota mentioned the problems in conference, trying to get the other body to agree, and the Speaker has basically said no. I hope very much the Speaker reconsiders, that the White House reconsiders and realizes that there is such an emergency that we must pass this legislation.

I am pleased more than a fifth of the Senate has cosponsored this amendment. I will read some of the organizations that proposed this and endorse it: National Farmers Union, American Farm Bureau Federation, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American Corn Growers, American Sheep Industry, American Soybean Association,

National Association of Wheat Growers, National Barley Growers, and a number of others.

I want to make another point that has not been made enough. There have been many references to the Dust Bowl years in the thirties. Some farmers tell me—very respected farmers whose operations have been in families for years—that this is even worse than the thirties for two reasons: Basically, in the thirties, there was 1 year with a little precipitation that broke the drought a little bit. But, more important, in the thirties, we did not have something called CRP. We did not have the Conservation Reserve Program. Many producers in my State have put their land in the CRP. What is CRP, for those who don't know? The CRP is the program the United States provides for farmers so they can take their land out of production and put it into grassland, in reserve. That is the Conservation Reserve Program. It helps the environment and helps game and birds and so forth. It is also a way for farmers to cash flow during years of drought.

Because of better farming practices today, we do not have the Dust Bowl situation. If we continued to use the same farming practices today, we would be back to the situation of the thirties. You would see wind blowing dust across the Nation. It is because of our better farming practices that we don't have quite the Dust Bowl situation that all Americans at that time knew about.

That leads me to another point. If a major U.S. company loses 20 percent of its income, which is in the quarterly reports, the stock goes down, it is in the newspapers, and everybody knows about it. Or if an industry loses a huge percentage of its income, or people go bankrupt, such as Enron and WorldCom and others, everybody knows about those bankruptcies because they are in the newspapers. People do not know about the individual farmers and ranchers who have to sell out because they, in effect, go bankrupt because of Dust Bowl situations, because of lack of income, and because of successive years of drought. Producers in my State have lost more than 20 per cent of their income for 4 consecutive years. There isn't another industry in America that could do that and still be standing. We should all be grateful that they are still in business because they are the ones who ensure that we have food on our plates.

So it is our responsibility, as representatives of our States, to make this known to the world—particularly to the country and the Senate—so that our colleagues have an appreciation of what we are experiencing in Montana and in other Northwestern States. It is that serious.

As has been pointed out, this body has responded to other emergencies—floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, the Trade Towers, and it was more than appropriate; everybody rushed to help. But we have the same emergency, the

same disaster conditions today, but it is not as well known because it is a slow disaster. Mother Nature sometimes rains in parts of our State and not in others. Drought disaster is not as visible as, say, a WorldCom bankruptcy or an Enron bankruptcy; but it is just as important—in fact, even more important to those people who have to leave those communities and to those communities and towns.

I plead that Members of this body vote overwhelmingly to help people who are facing disaster. I ask the body to also recognize the disaster we are facing. I ask the President of the United States to reconsider and agree and recognize that we have a disaster in the heartland of America, and we have a responsibility collectively, as the people's representatives, to help the people we represent and support disaster assistance. It is the only thing we can do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BAUCUS. I will be glad to yield to my good friend from North Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I say to my colleague, we deeply appreciate the information he has provided on this issue. It was the Senator's amendment that prevailed in the Senate farm bill to provide disaster assistance in the first place. Nobody has understood better than he the consequences and the magnitude of this disaster. Perhaps no State has been harder hit than his own.

I want to stand and acknowledge the leadership of the Senator from Montana on this issue and thank him publicly on behalf of the people I represent and the other people affected in other States for the diligence of the Senator from Montana. He has been relentless in getting disaster assistance for our people, and I want to thank him for it.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I thank my good friend from North Dakota. We are all in this together. This is teamwork. By working together—both sides of the aisle—representatives and the people, we are going to get this passed because it is so necessary and so important. I thank my good friend, as part of the larger team.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from West Virginia is to be recognized at this point.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I do not wish to have the floor at this moment. It may be the distinguished Democratic whip will have need for the floor, or any other Senator for that matter. I yield my time back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have a number of people who wish to speak this morning. We have some who I understand want to speak against the amendment. They have not shown up yet in 2 days, but I assume they want to speak.

I indicated to the staff of the minority that we would like to extend time on this bill until 12:30 p.m. today. I will not put that in the form of a unanimous consent request until I hear from the minority. That is what I would like to do.

It is my understanding the Senator from North Dakota wishes to speak on this legislation for up 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from North Dakota be recognized to speak, and that following his statement, I be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I listened attentively to my colleague from North Dakota and my colleague from Montana. Their remarks about this issue describe how important it is for us to enact legislation dealing with this disaster.

I thought I would bring a poster that shows a picture of two parts of North Dakota: One State, two extremes. This top picture shows a farmer/rancher down in the southern part of our State standing in an area that looks very much like a moonscape. There is no vegetation left. This is completely dry and pretty well dead. This is a drought area that has consumed a significant portion of the southern part of our State, and it has been devastating to those farmers and ranchers trying to make a living down there.

This bottom picture was actually taken on the same day in the same State, but this is a different part of the State. This is an area that received 12 inches of rain in 1 day. This is a farmer who lost everything.

These pictures are representative of a wide group of producers in our States. We call them producers, but they are family farmers. They risk all they have to try to raise a crop and have a livestock herd that can make it through good and bad times, and then try to take the crop or the livestock to market and make some money.

They are discovering this year, as is much of the country, that trying to tend a herd of livestock or raise a crop is very difficult in the circumstances that exist. We have a disaster that has occurred over a substantial portion of this country. This is the Palmer Drought Index. One can see over a substantial portion of the country where there is massive drought.

Some people say: So what? So what about family farming? Will Rogers many years ago said: If one day in this country all the lawyers and the accountants failed to show up for work, it would not be a very big deal. But if on that same day all the cows in America failed to show up to be milked, now that would be a problem.

He was, in his own way, trying to describe the importance of family farmers, the importance of production agriculture. Production agriculture, from our standpoint in North Dakota, is families out there living under a yard light trying to make a go of it by

planting seed in the spring and having every hope perhaps that seed will grow into something they can harvest and take to the market and be able to recapture their living expenses. They live on hope.

We have seen now over recent years weather patterns that have devastated large groups of family farmers. These clearly are disasters. When you have a drought of the type we have had, it is truly a disaster.

If tonight 1,000 tornadoes spring up and move relentlessly across the prairies or the western part of the United States and destroy all the structures and the vegetation, that is a disaster. Tomorrow we would have FEMA, we would have trucks, we would have armies of people moving because the headlines would be: This is a disaster, and we have to move and deal with it.

It does not matter whether it is drought, flood, earthquake, fire, or tornado. The devastation and destruction that occurs to the crops of tens of thousands of family farmers is a disaster, and we need to respond to it.

I am proud to say that in every set of circumstances in my service both in the Senate and the House of Representatives, when there has been a disaster and a proposal on the floor of the Senate to respond to that disaster, I have said yes. It does not matter to me where it is in this country. If there are cities, counties, States, groups of people in this country who have suffered a disaster, then I want to be a part of the voice of this Congress that says to them: You are not alone. This country wants to help.

I want to be, and have always been, a part of a group in this Congress who says we want to extend the helping hand of America during a time of disaster.

That needs to be the case now with respect to the disaster that occurs on family farms in this country because of this relentless, gripping, devastating drought in some parts of the country and, in other parts of the country, flooded lands.

There are a good many ways to deal with disasters. Some disasters might be just a single farm disaster. When I was a young boy, a good friend of ours named Ernest died. His crop was still in the field. He died of a heart attack one evening. The neighbors gassed up the combines and the trucks and went over and harvested the crop and took it to the market for Ernest's widow. That is just the way it works. That is what neighbors are about. That is what communities are for. But that is a disaster of one farm where neighbors can solve the problem.

In a disaster of this type where you have this relentless drought that has destroyed so many acres, so many crops, so much pastureland, neighbors are in the same shape. They are all devastated by this drought and all losing the opportunity to make a living.

Some say: All you do is talk about farmers. This is not just about farmers.

It is about those communities and small towns, medium-size towns across the heartland of our country. It is about rural businesses. It is about the local grain elevator that does not have any grain to handle. The local feedstore that is not going to sell any feed. It is about the machinery dealer who is not going to sell machinery. It is about jobs in the manufacturing plants that produce that machinery to process that feed. So it is much more than just family farms.

This is a circumstance where we need to take action now. I happen to think family farmers are America's economic all-stars. They produce, produce, produce in a prodigious way. It has always baffled me that farmers are accused of being guilty of overproducing. We have a world in which a half a billion people go to bed every night with an ache in their belly because they are hungry, and our farmers produce food and are told the food they produce has no value.

Are they nuts? Of course, it has value. This is a hungry world. We need to be smart enough to connect it all. Our family farmers are enormous producers and have done very well, but they suffer disaster. They are individual, small economic units. They are up against the weather. They are up against insects. Once they plant that seed, they might lose their crop to a drought. They might lose it to a flood. They might lose it to insects. They might lose it to disease. They might lose it to hail. They might lose it to wind. And if they manage to not lose it to any of those things and they get a crop off by harvesting it in the fall, they might find out they lose their value by going to a country elevator and discovering the grain trade has told them their food in a hungry world has no value.

So these farmers suffer all of those risks and more, but they cannot cope with the kind of relentless drought that exists in this country in a way that devastates individual producers in State after State.

This is an important issue. It is not parochial. It does not deal with just a few problems in a few areas. What has happened in this country is we have passed a farm bill that tries to help farmers during collapsing prices. That is a significant problem and a significant achievement, to pass a farm bill that does that. But if one does not raise a crop because of a disaster price protection, it does not help; there is no protection at all. That is why a disaster declaration and a disaster bill dealing with these issues of drought and floods for preventive planting and destroyed crops is so very important.

We need to do this, not tomorrow, not next month, not next year; we need to do it now. If we fail to do this now, there are a good many families who will lose their hopes and dreams for the future. They will not be around next spring. They will not be there because they will not be able to continue farm-

ing. This is an important and good investment for this country to make. It invests in the American dream for family farmers, for family entrepreneurs, and I am pleased to be a part of a group that has brought it to the floor of the Senate, and I am pleased today to support it.

This is an urgent need. Congress needs to pass this, and we need to pass it now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have a number of people wishing to speak on this amendment, all of whom are in favor of it. After 2 days, we have not had anybody speak against it, but they will not let us vote on it.

I have a unanimous consent request I will make, but I have to wait until we get approval from the other side. It is my understanding the Senator from Louisiana, Mr. BREAUX, wishes to speak for 3 minutes. Following the statement of Senator BREAUX, I ask unanimous consent that I again have the floor.

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. BREAUX. Madam President, I say to my colleagues who have spoken previously on this amendment, I join with them as a cosponsor of this legislation. The previous speaker from North Dakota was absolutely correct when he pointed out this is not a parochial issue.

I am not from Montana. I am not from North Dakota. I am not from the Great Plains. In fact, I am as far away from these States as one could probably be and probably still be in the continental United States.

Being from Louisiana, we traditionally do not have a lot of problems with drought. As a matter of fact, it is very common for Louisiana to have 8, 9, even 10 inches of rain during the summer months in one afternoon. Our problem in many cases is not drought but too much water. We were jokingly talking about how we could be of help by somehow reversing the flow of the Mississippi River from north to south and changing it from south to north and sending the excess water we frequently have in Louisiana to our friends and neighbors in farms in the Great Plains, the Midwest. That is a novel idea, but it is not going to happen.

Until something like that happens, it is very important to be able to try to recognize this is a national issue. Whether one is from South Dakota or from Louisiana, it is very important when farm organizations and groups in one part of the country have a problem that is not through their own making, we in other parts of the country recognize it and help to contribute.

One of the provisions that is a defect in the farm bill is that when someone has a disaster, they can receive disaster loans. The last thing a person

who has no crop needs is more debt which they would incur by having an additional loan.

The program we talked about in the past really does not particularly address the situation where farms are literally wiped out of any production because of a flood or because of a drought, thus preventing them from harvesting a crop. Having a loan in that circumstance does not help the farmer. They cannot pay back the loan if they do not have a crop. It is just that simple.

Therefore, in the interest of trying to be of help from a national perspective, this legislation has been brought to the floor. It is absolutely essential. Because of the way the system works, it will ultimately save the Government money. By helping now, we avoid greater debt and greater losses in the future. So I strongly support this effort.

We have our own unique problems right now. In my State of Louisiana, particularly in the rice industry, we are looking for ways to help solve some of the problems our farmers are experiencing because of some of the lowest prices in decades.

Our farmers are not going to be able to make it, not because of a drought or because of a flood but because of the potential of an economic disaster which Congress should be addressing as well.

In the meantime, this is the right thing to do for a disaster that is being caused by a drought. I strongly support it, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Michigan be recognized to speak for 4 minutes.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that I retain the floor following her statement.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I urge in the strongest possible terms that we pass this disaster relief package. The years 2001 and 2002 have been absolutely devastating years for Michigan agriculture. When I was home in August, I had an opportunity to visit from northern Michigan down to southern Michigan. To show the sense of urgency felt, there was an ad hoc group that put together petitions and cards. The Michigan Agricultural Industry Alliance and others, Lee Lavanway from Eau Claire, MI, in the southwestern part of Michigan, put together over a thousand petitions and cards desperately calling on us to act on behalf of American agriculture. I urge that we do so.

In the year 2001, 82 of Michigan's 83 counties were declared a disaster because of drought. Early frosts and then flooding later in the year also contrib-

uted to considerable crop damage. Secretary Veneman issued another disaster declaration for 2002 covering 50 counties.

In 2001, yields for program crops, such as corn and soybeans, plummeted. Other crops, such as grapes and beans, had monumental losses. 2001 was the worst year in recorded history for dry beans in Michigan. In fact, earlier this year Bob Green of the Michigan Bean Commission testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee about this issue.

The 2001 year drought also devastated sugar beet crops. The grape growers in Michigan have struggled with not 1 but 2 devastating crop years. The extreme, record-high temperatures during the week of April 14, followed by freezing temperatures shortly after that, have caused great damage in our fruit and vegetable crops. I have heard from apple, grape, peach, asparagus, raspberry, and other growers who have had very bad results—in fact, devastating results—as a result of the bad weather.

In July, I visited tart cherry orchards and witnessed with my own eyes the devastation that followed that bad weather. There is not a single cherry on any of these trees. We are not talking about less of a crop, we are talking about no crop. One of the farmers told me he did not have enough in his entire orchard to make one cherry pie.

When we look at this, it is astounding what has happened to Michigan agriculture and to our farmers. The lack of crop in Michigan has a ripple effect on our entire economy. Processing facilities are laying off workers. There is a lower demand for agricultural machinery and supplies.

To give an idea of the importance of these lost crops, fruit production contributes \$235 million to the economy of the State of Michigan.

I call on my colleagues, in the strongest possible words, to join together to pass, by a strong bipartisan voice, this disaster relief measure. I ask the President of the United States to join, to stand with us on behalf of our American farmers.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are very close to working out a unanimous consent agreement on the Harkin-Craig amendment which deals with Medicare and reimbursement of States. Senator HARKIN has been here literally all day trying to get a time agreement. We hope we will have the approval from the minority. They have agreed on the fact we should do this amendment. The only question now is the time that will occur.

In the meantime, we have had bipartisan support on the underlying Daschle amendment. We have had the manager of the bill, Senator BYRD, support it; the Republican manager of the bill has supported it, Senator BURNS. In fact, Senator BURNS is a cosponsor of the amendment. At last count, we had 18 or 20 cosponsors of the amendment.

The problem we have is under the Senate rules, there can be a couple of people who will not allow us to go forward on legislation. That is what we have here. It is too bad. We have tried everything we could to get a vote. It appears to me that probably what we will have to do is go forward with a cloture motion on this amendment. That would be the best thing to do. I hope that can be done. Under the constraints of time we have we need to do that before the noon hour. I am confident we will have the necessary signatures on the petition to do that.

As I indicated, there is overwhelming support for this amendment. This is something that all farm State Senators believe is important. For those not in the heavy agricultural areas, it is something we believe is fair and reasonable that should have, frankly, been done some time ago. It is good that we are in a position to move forward on this.

I, therefore, send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the Daschle amendment No. 4481.

Harry Reid, Byron L. Dorgan, Kent Conrad, Tom Harkin, Jean Carnahan, Max Baucus, John Breaux, Patrick Leahy, Edward M. Kennedy, Herb Kohl, Dianne Feinstein, Richard J. Durbin, Charles Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Deborah Stabenow, Tim Johnson, Arlen Specter, Tom Daschle.

Mr. REID. The staff is working to make sure we can clear the Harkin-Craig amendment. It is my understanding we are very close to that.

The unanimous consent agreement I will soon request at an appropriate time—which I will not do now—will ask consent the pending amendments be set aside and Senator HARKIN be recognized on behalf of himself and Senator CRAIG to offer an amendment on the sense of the Senate regarding Medicare; that there be 10 minutes debate with respect to that amendment, and the time be controlled between Senators HARKIN and CRAIG; that upon the use of time, the time be yielded back and there be a vote.

I hope we are in a position to offer that in the Senate at the appropriate time.

Madam President, the Senator from Pennsylvania wishes to speak. We have had a series of Democrats who have spoken. It is certainly fair he be allowed to speak. I ask unanimous consent Senator SPECTER be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes and also that the time pending for the bill be extended until the hour of 12:15.

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania.