

On Veterans Day, and everyday, we should honor those who have worn the uniforms of our Nation. They are the best of the best.

NEW WAKE UP CALLS ON GLOBAL WARMING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, over the last few weeks, we have all gotten a loud wake up call about the changes taking place around the world due to global warming. Unfortunately, the Bush administration is still turning a deaf ear to these alarms.

It baffles me that anyone can still deride or ignore the signs of global warming. It's even more astonishing that some people are even touting the benefits of global warming. Better access to oil and gas resources does not make up for flooded coastlines and the loss of entire species.

Yet the administration is still burying its head and hiding behind claims of insufficient research. Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence put forward in two reports released by the Arctic Council and the Pew Center, the President is still running away from his original campaign pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

In fact, the administration's top climate official reacted to these two new assessments of global warming by saying caps on greenhouse gases would not happen during this administration. Period.

These two reports clearly show that we cannot wait any longer. We cannot spend another four years hiding from the truth and delaying solutions. According to the Arctic Council report, temperatures have risen by up to 7 degrees in the last 50 years and the snow cover has declined 10 percent over the last 30 years.

These changes not only have a dramatic effect on Arctic communities, but they also threaten the economy and environment of the rest of the world.

In my corner of the globe, climate models predict that New England's temperatures could rise by ten degrees over the next century.

In its practical effects on us and on our daily lives, that is even greater than it sounds. That is greater than any climate change experienced in our region in the last 10,000 years. In New England, our economy and environment are directly linked. Tourism is one of the top economic drivers in Vermont. Global warming threatens the revenues generated by the leaf-peepers who visit our communities in the fall, the skiers who arrive in the winter, and the anglers and boaters who come in the summer.

Climate models predict that New England forests will become populated mostly by oak and hickory. We will lose the brilliant red, orange and yellows of maple and birch trees.

Ski areas will have shorter seasons and will have to invest much more of their revenues in snowmaking. As our

lakes and streams become more acidic and polluted, the attraction for anglers will decline.

Climate changes will also affect the heart of Vermont's working landscape—the thousands of family-run farms, maple sugar operations and small woodlots. Milder winter temperatures will bring more exotic pests that threaten our forests, worse air quality will degrade our soils, and more severe weather—such as flooding and ice storms—will damage farms and forests.

The maple sugar industry supports a \$100 million annual economy in our state and 4000 seasonal jobs. If climate models play out, this industry could be wiped out as sugar maples recede from all U.S. regions but the northern tip of Maine by 2100.

But even before that, sugarmakers are going to see their operations affected by warming. As every Vermonter knows, you need cold nights and warm days to get the sap to run. Climate changes have already shortened the tapping season by almost a month.

Although the changes predicted for New England are still several years—and, I dearly, dearly hope, decades away—we must act now if we are to prevent them.

I applaud the actions taken by New England states to control greenhouse emissions, but our states cannot do it alone. We are all in this together. The Bush administration must act. Congress must act.

I hope that the two recent reports from the Arctic Council and the Pew Center will prompt the White House and the Congress to recognize the responsibility we all have to future generations as well as to our own generation to start now.

Passage of the Climate Stewardship Act is a first step, and it is one that I hope we can take next year.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, one area in which the Department of the Treasury should increase their activities is in supporting U.S. financial service firms in opening up markets for our products in other countries. In some of the most important financial markets in the world the Department of the Treasury does not have personnel whose principal responsibility is to assist American financial service firms expand their presence in those markets. The Department should establish Financial Attaches in the following important capital markets:

Brussels: The expected pace of change in the EU financial markets in the next few years and the complexity of capital markets legislation now in formation justifies a focused U.S. presence at the center of the newly expanded EU.

London: London's capital markets play a critical role in the global economy and foreign exchange markets.

Shanghai: The rapidly growing Chinese economy might present significant opportunities for U.S. firms, but recent experience has shown that such

opportunities will not materialize without vigorous insistence that China abide by its commitments. It is critical that the U.S. Treasury Department have an on-the-ground presence in China.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Department of Treasury to establish financial attaché positions in Brussels, London and Shanghai and to expand opportunities for U.S. firms.

PRIVATIZATION OF AVIATION SECURITY SCREENERS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, will begin receiving applications from U.S. airports that wish to participate in the Screener Partnership Program. This program will allow airports to hire security screeners employed by private-sector companies to provide baggage and passenger security screening at their facilities for the first time since September 11, 2001.

In the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11, security screening at U.S. airports was federalized because commercial airplanes were turned into guided missiles. Those attacks demonstrated that the then current airport security system was not working. Less than two weeks later, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, testified before the Senate Commerce Committee that screeners were deficient at detecting threatening objects and were not given sufficient training by employers and access controls to secure areas in airports were weak.

The congressional conferees of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, ATSA, also concluded that "a fundamental change (is required) in the way (the U.S.) approaches the task of ensuring the safety and security of the civil air transportation system."

It is the responsibility of the administration and the Congress to ensure that aviation security does not fall back to the pre-9/11 status quo. Congress understood the need to evaluate how well a federalized workforce would compare to a privately employed workforce prior to allowing privatization which is why the ATSA included a 3-year screener pilot program involving five U.S. airports.

Despite this pilot program, the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General testified at a House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing on April 22, 2004, that there was not sufficient basis to determine conclusively whether the pilot airport screeners performed at a level equal to or greater than that of the federal screeners. GAO, also testifying at the hearing, said, "Little performance data is currently available to compare the performance of private screeners and federal screeners in detecting threat objects." Before the Nation's airports return to commercially hired and trained screening workforces, we must make sure there has truly

been adequate analysis of the performance of private airport screeners prior to allowing privatization.

In a November 16, 2004, press release announcing the commencement of its Screener Partnership Program, TSA stated, "An evaluation earlier this year concluded there was little difference in the performance or cost of the private and federal screening forces."

TSA is relying on a study that both the DHS IG and GAO found to be inconclusive. Given the high stakes involved in airport security, I am concerned that the decision to begin this program is being made without sufficient data.

In addition, I have concerns about TSA's ability to award and administer contracts with private screening companies based on a September 2004 DHS IG report that found TSA mismanaged a contract with Boeing to install Explosive Detection Systems, EDS, and overpaid Boeing by approximately \$49 million. According to the IG report, contractor performance was not evaluated for each year of the contract until approximately a full calendar year later. Most troubling is that TSA rejected some of the IG's key criticisms, which makes me question the manner in which it will manage future contracts. Moreover, I believe we must also consider whether contractual mismanagement could lead to lapses in security. Are the right standards and policies in place to ensure that private screeners will provide the same security as federalized screeners, and is TSA equipped to enforce them?

As the ranking member of the Financial Management Subcommittee and the Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee, I have long worked on the challenges of Federal acquisitions. I want to make sure that DHS, which is a composite of 22 legacy agencies, has the people and tools needed to solicit and manage the Screener Partnership Program. Just this week I contacted Secretary Ridge to express my concern about the \$49 million overrun of the Boeing EDS installation contract. That wasted money could have gone a long way towards helping Honolulu International Airport in my home State of Hawaii install inline EDS machines.

My interest is to improve the management of contracts and the collection of timely and accurate information and to stop erroneous and improper payments to contractors. For that reason I was pleased to work with my good friend, Senator FITZGERALD, in passing legislation to bring the Department of Homeland Security under the Chief Financial Officers Act, CFO. The Department runs the risk of becoming a morass of hidden contract costs and poorly managed programs without a strong CFO to ensure accountability and transparency.

I would, however, like to commend TSA for honoring a commitment made by Admiral Stone at his confirmation hearing before the Governmental Affairs Committee that Federal screeners

at airports which chose to use a private workforce give TSA screeners the right of first refusal for jobs. It is important that the substantial investment made by the Federal Government in the hiring, the training, and the deployment of Federal screeners not go to waste.

I plan to monitor very carefully how this plan develops, both in terms of the level of security provided to the traveling public and the level of transparency and accountability of the contracts.

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF FLIGHT SERVICE STATIONS

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I express my concerns regarding Federal Aviation Administration proposals to consolidate and outsource the actions currently executed by our Nation's Flight Service Stations.

Flight Service Stations are staffed by highly trained specialists and play an important role in providing pilots with valuable weather briefings and enroute communications, as well as facilitating search and rescue services. Each air traffic specialist is trained to understand the rapidly changing weather and geographic patterns of their area. Their expertise has kept flights running smoothly and has literally saved lives.

In 1997, the Federal Aviation Administration completed a 16-year effort to consolidate Flight Service Stations, reducing their total number from 318 sites to 61 sites. Since July 2002, the FAA has been developing studies regarding the outsourcing and further consolidation of 58 of the remaining 61 stations, excluding the three stations in Alaska. The FAA has announced that a final decision regarding the fate of these 58 Flight Service Stations will be made before March 17, 2005, possibly as soon as January.

I have received letters, phone calls, e-mails, and visits from South Dakotans concerned about the FAA's proposed actions. After the first consolidation in 1997, Flight Service Station sites in Aberdeen, Rapid City, Watertown, and Pierre, SD, were closed. Closure of the Flight Service Station in Huron, the last in South Dakota, would leave pilots isolated from weather updates, emergency assistance, and other vital notices. Weather is the leading cause of aviation accidents and the greatest contributor to fatalities. South Dakota cannot afford the loss of this crucial site.

My concerns and the concerns of South Dakotans are echoed in our State's legislature. In February 2004, the South Dakota Legislature approved a concurrent resolution supporting the Flight Service Station in Huron, SD, and encouraging efforts to preserve its functions. Additionally, our Governor has publicly expressed his opposition to the possible outsourcing of operations conducted at the Flight Service Station.

Flight safety is paramount and must be the most important factor in any

decision that is made. However, it is the concern of many in my State that the proposed action will be detrimental to flight safety. I strongly urge the FAA to reevaluate their plans to allow for the continued effectiveness of Flight Service Stations. •

HOUSE PASSAGE OF THE INTERNET TAX NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the House of Representatives passed today the Internet Tax Non-Discrimination Act, S. 150, clearing this bipartisan bill for its signature into law by the President. This bipartisan legislation will continue to support electronic commerce by keeping it free from discriminatory and multiple State and local taxes and from Internet access taxes.

I am proud to be a cosponsor and strong supporter of this compromise legislation to extend for the next 3 years the moratorium on taxes on Internet access and multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. In addition, our bipartisan bill will safeguard fees for universal service and 911 or E-911 services and does not affect the emerging technology of Voice Over Internet Protocol, VOIP. I thank Senator WYDEN, Senator ALLEN, Senator MCCAIN, Representative COX, Representative SENSENBRENNER, Representative CONYERS, and others for their leadership on this legislation.

The Internet has changed the way we do business. Today businesses can sell their goods and services all over the world in the blink of an eye. E-commerce has created new markets, new efficiencies and new products.

The growth of electronic commerce is everywhere, and it has been important to the businesses and the economy of my home State of Vermont. For example, the Vermont Teddy Bear Company, which employs more than 300 Vermonters, sells online 60 percent of its bears during its two busiest times of the year for Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. That is 60 percent of all Vermont Teddy Bears sold online during this busy time.

Hundreds of Vermont businesses are selling online, ranging from Al's Snowmobile Parts Warehouse to Ben & Jerry's Homemade Ice Cream. These Vermont cybersellers are of all sizes and customer bases, from Main Street merchants to boutique entrepreneurs to a couple of famous ex-hippies who make great ice cream.

What Vermont online sellers have in common is that Internet commerce allows them to erase the geographic barriers that historically limited our access to major markets. With the power of the Internet, Vermonters can sell their products and services anywhere and at any time.

Although electronic commerce is beginning to blossom, it is still in its infancy. Stability is the key to reaching its full potential, and carving out new