

Whereas the State has lost 2,100 square miles of coastal wetlands since the 1930s and is expected to lose another 500 square miles over the next 50 years if nothing is done to mitigate wetland loss;

Whereas 2,000,000 residents, more than 50 percent of the State's population, live within Louisiana's coastal zone;

Whereas Louisiana's working wetlands provide protection for coastal communities and for oil and gas pipelines that serve as the major energy artery in the United States, delivering more than 25 percent of the Nation's energy;

Whereas wetland ecosystems throughout the United States are threatened by erosion, invasive species, runoff, and habitat loss; and

Whereas World Wetlands Day is celebrated around the world on February 2 of each year by government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and groups of citizens in the global community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges the severity of the wetland loss occurring in Louisiana;

(2) recognizes and supports the observance of World Wetlands Day in the United States; and

(3) supports efforts to raise awareness about the critical need to sustain and preserve wetlands in Louisiana, the United States, and throughout the world.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today in honor of World Wetlands Day proclaiming February 2 America's Wetlands Day.

February 2, 1971 was the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Each year since 1971, leaders from all parts of the world have used this day to raise public awareness of the value and benefits of wetlands—not only as ecological gems, but as economic boons, incubators of biodiversity, and a sportsman's paradise.

The signing in 1971 of the Convention on Wetlands provided a framework for national action and international cooperation toward the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Wetlands can be found in every country and are among the most productive ecosystems in the world.

Those of us from Louisiana have a rather unique perspective on the subject of wetlands. You see, Louisiana's coast is really America's Wetland. It is not a beach, but a vast landscape of estuaries, rivers, freshwater marsh, forested floodplains, and vernal pools.

The landscape that extends along Louisiana's coast is one of the largest and most productive expanses of coastal wetlands in North America. It is the seventh largest delta on earth, where the Mississippi River drains two-thirds of the United States. It is also one of the most productive environments in America—"working wetlands" as they are known to Louisianians—producing more seafood than any other State in the lower 48. It's the nursery ground for the Gulf of Mexico and habitat for one of the greatest flyways in the world for millions of waterfowl and migratory songbirds.

Even more importantly, Louisiana's coastal wetlands provide storm protection for ports that carry nearly 500 mil-

lion tons of waterborne commerce annually—the largest port system in the world by tonnage. That accounts for 21 percent of all waterborne commerce in the United States each year. In fact, four of the top ten largest ports in the United States are located in Louisiana.

These wetlands also offer protection from storm surge for two million people and a unique culture. Louisiana's low-lying coastal communities are home to more than 2 million people—nearly half the State's population. Even as those communities recover from the back-to-back 2005 hurricanes, they remain threatened and compromised as the land they occupy erodes from beneath their feet.

Tragically, Louisiana's wetlands are eroding at a devastating rate: approximately 24 square miles per year disappear—that is the equivalent of approximately one football field lost every 38 minutes. Within the next 50 years—even with current restoration efforts taken into account—those wetlands are expected to recede an additional 500 square miles.

The U.S. Geological Survey recently found that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita alone transformed 217 square miles of marsh to open water. Tragically, these eroding wetlands are Nature's levee system—they diminish a hurricane's destructive power by reducing storm surge and absorbing wave energy.

Scientists have estimated for every 2.4 square miles of wetlands, storm surges are lowered by about one foot. Some studies suggest that only one square mile of wetlands may achieve this. Because these wetlands are nurseries for many species of fish and shellfish, their loss has a profound impact on the \$1 billion dollar per year fishing industry supported by Louisiana's fragile coastal environment.

The costs associated with Louisiana's coastal wetland loss are not only Louisiana's to bear—they are the entire Nation's. For instance: Hurricanes Katrina and Rita impacted more than 26,000 businesses, destroyed 275,000 homes, and caused more than \$44.7 billion in insured losses.

Today, more than 40 percent of the Nation's oil and nearly a quarter of the Nation's natural gas is produced in or transported through Louisiana.

More than 20 percent of the nation's imported oil is delivered to and processed in Louisiana.

Louisiana is second only to Texas in the number of oil refineries on its soil—with 17 refineries, most of which are located in the coastal zone.

The erosion of Louisiana's coastal wetlands—America's Wetlands—endangers the U.S. energy supply and it endangers the Nation's critical infrastructure in the Gulf Coast: Refineries and petrochemical facilities that drive U.S. economic growth are at risk of being flooded, damaged and shut down, as we saw during the 2005 hurricanes.

That is why I am submitting a Sense of the Senate resolution that will ac-

knowledge February 2, as World Wetlands Day and express that it is the sense of the Senate that we must raise awareness of the Nation's imperiled wetlands—in Louisiana and throughout the country. We need to raise awareness of these critical issues and we need to work locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to confront this problem head on.

The good news is that scientists know how to restore the wetlands and they have been very successful in reinforcing barrier islands that protect these ecological gems. What has heretofore been lacking is not the will, but the resources with which to undertake this critical challenge. The passage of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act changed that and certified America's commitment to providing long-term, sustainable funding to address this problem. Today, we have the will; we have the way; let's get to work and preserve America's wetlands.

SENATE RESOLUTION 73—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 6, 2007, AS "RONALD REAGAN DAY"

Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mrs. DOLE, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. VITTER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. McCAIN, Mr. McCONNELL, and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 73

Whereas President Ronald Wilson Reagan, a man of humble background, worked throughout his life serving as an entertainer, a corporate spokesman, Governor of California, and President of the United States;

Whereas Ronald Reagan served for 2 terms as the 40th President of the United States;

Whereas Ronald Reagan was elected to his second term by almost three-fifths of the electorate, a percentage surpassed only by the election of President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1964, and was victorious in 49 of the 50 States in the general election, an electoral college record unsurpassed in the history of Presidential elections in the United States; and

Whereas February 6, 2007, will be the 96th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth, and June 5, 2007, will be the third anniversary of his passing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 6, 2007, as "Ronald Reagan Day"; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 9—CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION DURING "NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE WEEK"

Ms. LANDRIEU submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 9

Whereas the architectural profession has made unique contributions to the history, texture, and quality of life in the United States;

Whereas the beginning of an organized architectural profession in the United States was signified by the founding of the American Institute of Architects 150 years ago;

Whereas today there are approximately 281,000 individuals in the United States who work in the profession of architecture;

Whereas architects express the richness of the Nation's heritage and the vitality of its spirit through the vigilant stewardship of great architectural and historic treasures;

Whereas architects improve the quality of life for all individuals in the United States by combining advances in building technology with design innovation to build healthy, safe, livable, and sustainable buildings and communities; and

Whereas the week beginning April 8, 2007, has been designated by the American Institute of Architects as "National Architecture Week" to bring attention to the importance of the architectural profession to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that the contributions of the architectural profession should be recognized and celebrated during "National Architecture Week"; and

(2) the Congress encourages the people of the United States and interested organizations to observe "National Architecture Week" with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., in open session to receive testimony on the fiscal year 2008 budget request and the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 war supplemental requests in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2008 and the future years defense program.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 6, 2007.

The agenda to be considered: Oversight of Recent EPA Decisions.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, at 2:45 p.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to hear testimony on "The President's Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Proposal."

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the

Senate on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, at 10 a.m. to hold a hearing on Somalia.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on "Preserving Prosecutorial Independence: Is the Department of Justice Politicizing the Hiring and Firing of U.S. Attorneys?" for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. in Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 226.

Witness List: The Honorable Mark Pryor, United States Senator [D, AR]; The Honorable Paul J. McNulty, Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC; Mary Jo White, Partner, Debevoise & Plimpton, LLP, New York, NY; Laurie L. Levenson, Professor of Law, Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, CA; Stuart M. Gerson, Partner, Epstein Becker & Green, Washington, DC.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on "Judicial Nominations" for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. in Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 226.

Witness List: John Preston Bailey to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of West Virginia; Otis D. Wright II to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California; George H. Wu to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 6, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mitchell Lincoln and Shakti Shakti of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

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

DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 6, 2007, AS "RONALD REAGAN DAY"

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 73.

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

The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 73) designating February 6, 2007, as "Ronald Reagan Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, the resolution I am honored to submit today with my colleague, Senator FEINSTEIN, is to commemorate today, February 6, 2007—what would be Ronald Reagan's 96th birthday—as Ronald Reagan Day.

President Ronald Wilson Reagan, a man of humble background, worked throughout his life serving freedom and advancing the public good, having been employed as an entertainer, union leader, corporate spokesman, Governor of California and President of the United States. In 1981, when Ronald Reagan was inaugurated President, he inherited a disillusioned Nation shackled by rampant inflation and high unemployment. During Mr. Reagan's presidency he worked in a bipartisan manner to enact his bold agenda of restoring accountability and common sense to government, which led to an unprecedented economic expansion and opportunity for millions of Americans.

Mr. Reagan's commitment to an active social policy agenda for the Nation's children helped lower crime and drug use in our neighborhoods. President Reagan's commitment to our armed forces contributed to the restoration of pride in America, in her values and in those cherished by the free world, and prepared America's Armed Forces to meet 21st Century challenges. President Reagan's vision of "peace through strength" led to the end of the Cold War and the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union, guaranteeing basic human rights for millions of people. It is entirely appropriate that on February 6, 2007, which will be the 96th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth, and the third since his passing, we declare February 6th, 2007, to be Ronald Reagan Day and urge all citizens to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be added as a cosponsor to this resolution.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I also be added as a cosponsor to this resolution.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motion to reconsider laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 73) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 73

Whereas President Ronald Wilson Reagan, a man of humble background, worked throughout his life serving as an entertainer, a corporate spokesman, Governor of California, and President of the United States;