writing no later than October 31, 2006. This will help us develop a proposal which can address the concerns of the SBA as well as provide a better and more responsive SBA Disaster Assistance Program for our Small businesses.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

MARY L. LANDRIEU,
United States Senator.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 194. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 North Frontage Road West in Vail, Colorado, as the ''Gerald R. Ford, Jr. Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, as my good friend and colleague from Colorado just mentioned, we are introducing S. 194 naming the post office in Vail, CO, after former President Gerald R. Ford. As this vote just showed, we are all aware that when Gerald Ford passed away last month, our country lost a great man. Much has been said recently about President Ford: How he selflessly came to the aid of this country in one of its most trying times, how he governed through his beliefs about what was the best decision for the Nation regardless of the personal consequences, and his lifelong pursuit of bipartisanship and debate.

The defining characteristic of President Ford was his ability to remain humble and a man of the people. As testimonies poured in across the Nation, we were reminded about how he played selflessly as center at the University of Michigan, worked as a busboy while attending law school, and often hosted barbecues for his neighbors at his home in Alexandria, VA, while serving as House minority leader.

President Ford's charm and likability were shown all over the country, but away from his home State and the microscope of Washington, DC, Gerald Ford and his family also touched Colorado. As a Congressman from Michigan, the Ford family visited Colorado to ski in 1968 and since then have remained a constant presence in that community. He skied there, he built a house in nearby Beaver Creek, and he hosted a golf tournament for 20 years.

Following President Ford's passing, more than 2,500 people gathered at the base of Vail Mountain to witness a touching tribute to the President that included 500 ski instructors and a torchlight parade on Vail's Golden Peak. In Vail, like many other communities, President Ford was regarded as a tremendous asset and a man who treated everyone as an equal. Several residents remarked that one would never know he was a former President.

As a lasting tribute to this tremendous man, I cannot think of a more appropriate honor than to have Vail's post office bear the name of Gerald R. Ford, Jr. A post office is the point in every community that brings all people together, and there is no better way to symbolize the virtues President Ford demonstrated through his public and private life. I encourage the Senate to pass legislation entitled ''Senate Bill 194'' in recognition of President Ford and his contributions to Vail, CO.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in favor of a bill that will be introduced by Senator ALLARD and myself to name the post office in Vail, CO, after President Gerald R. Ford.

I call myself fortunate because I worked with President Ford. In our brief time together, it was obvious to me he was a man of honor, integrity, and courage.

Gerald Ford was a man who loved the State of Colorado, who loved its people and its culture. So it is a fitting tribute that the post office in his adopted town of Vail should bear his name.

President Ford led a remarkable life—remarkable not only for his great success but for the humility, dignity, and candor which were the hallmarks of his career. And what a career it was: from the University of Michigan to Yale Law School to service in the Navy to a leadership position in the U.S. Congress, and eventually, of course, to the Presidency of these United States, to say nothing of a long and productive post-Presidential career.

Of course, it is his time in the White House which people will remember most, and for good reason. It was President Ford who, through his leadership, brought the country together during a time of crisis. He was not only the right man at the right time for a very difficult job, he was a perfect man to deal with circumstances, the likes of which this country had never seen.

But I will remember President Ford not only for his good deeds in public office but for his unending commitment to justice and equality well after he left the White House behind. In 1999, when our shared alma mater, the University of Michigan, had its diversity policies challenged in court, President Ford wrote an op-ed piece in the New York Times about diversity, and he talked about an inclusive America which was essential to the future and the strength of the United States. In his op-ed piece, which was widely circulated, about which he and I spent time talking one day, he wrote the following:

> Of all the triumphs that have marked this as America's century—breathtaking advances in science and technology, the democratization of wealth and dispersal of political powers in ways hardly imaginable in 1899—none is more inspiring, if incomplete, than our pursuit of racial justice.

President Ford bravely defended the University of Michigan's diversity program with the same elegance and bravery with which he confronted the tribulations of the Watergate era and, in the process, left behind a legacy of tolerance and justice which will not soon be forgotten.

Of course, no tribute to President Ford would be complete without mention of his extraordinary family, particularly his wife, Betty, and as President Ford famously said:

> I am indebted to no man, and only to one woman—to my dear wife.

Betty Ford's bravery and her candor has inspired millions upon millions of Americans, and we are grateful for her service, and we wish her and the Ford family the very best.

The people of Colorado thank Gerald Ford for his service, and we are proud to move forward in helping the post office in Vail, CO, bear his name.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. SALAZAR):

S. 196. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to deny Federal retirement benefits to individuals convicted of certain offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today Senator SALAZAR and I are the Congressional Pension Accountability Act legislation to deny Federal pensions to Members of Congress who are convicted of white collar crime such as bribery. A similar provision passed the House of Representatives during the 109th Congress. I look forward to working with my colleagues to include this legislation in the ethics reform legislation to be considered by the Senate this week.

I strongly believe that all Members of Congress must be held to the highest ethical standards and those who violate the public trust must be held accountable for their actions. Last year, a series of scandals exposed Washington lobbyists and Members of Congress who used undue and improper influence to represent special interests in their dealings with the Federal Government.

In 2005, the now infamous Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleaded guilty to conspiracy, mail fraud and tax evasion charges in a plea agreement. The Justice Department is currently investigating his attempts to influence Federal Government policy in both Congress and the Executive Branch.

Last November, Representative Bob Ney resigned from the House of Representatives after pleading guilty to conspiracy and making false statements. In a plea agreement, former Representative Ney acknowledged taking trips, tickets, meals and campaign donations from Mr. Abramoff in return for taking official actions on behalf of Abramoff clients.

In March 2002, Representative Ney inserted an amendment in the Help America Vote Act to lift an existing Federal ban against commercial gaming by a Texas Native American tribal client of Abramoff. In return, Representative Ney received all-expense-paid and reduced-price trips to Scotland to play golf, a trip to New Orleans

to gamble and a vacation in Lake George, NY, all courtesy of Mr. Abramoff.

In the largest bribery case in the Congress since the 1980s, Representative Randy ''Duke'' Cunningham recently resigned from the House of Representatives after pleading guilty in Federal court to receiving $2.4 million in bribes from military contractors and evading more than $1 million in taxes. In a plea agreement, former Representative Cunningham admitted to a pattern of bribery lasting close to 5 years, with Federal contractors giving him Persian rugs, a Rolls-Royce, and antique furniture and paying for travel and hotel expenses, use of a yacht and a lavish graduation party for his daughter.

These stories are outrageous and they sicken me. As elected representatives, we must hold ourselves and all those who represent the Federal Government to the highest ethical standards. The principle is a simple one: Public servants who abuse the public trust and are convicted of ethics crimes should not collect taxpayer fmanced pensions.

Under current law, former Representatives Cunningham, Ney and others convicted of serious ethics abuses will receive a Congressional pension of approximately $40,000 per year—paid for by American taxpayers. Only a conviction for a crime against the United States, such as treason or espionage, will cost a Member of Congress their pension. This law must be changed to ensure that Congress does not reward unethical behavior.

The Congressional Pension Accountability Act will bar Members of Congress from receiving taxpayer-funded retirement benefits after they have been convicted of bribery, conspiracy, perjury or other serious ethics offenses.

It is my understanding that there is some concern about how this legislation may affect innocent spouses and children of Members of Congress who lose their pensions as a result of this legislation. Even after this legislation is enacted, the Member will still receive a refund of all contributions into either the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and will retain all benefits from the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

The Congressional Pension Accountability Act is supported by the National Taxpayers Union and a similar provision is supported by Taxpayers for Common Sense, the Family Research Council and Citizens Against Government Waste.

Together we can significantly improve our government by changing the way business is done in Washington. I believe this legislation will help ensure that our government once again responds to the needs of our people, not special interests. I ask all my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. 198. A bill to improve authorities to address urgent nonproliferation crises and United States nonproliferation operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 2007. This legislation is based on a bill I first offered in 2005. It is focused on facilitating implementation of the Nunn-Lugar program and removing some of the self-imposed restrictions that complicate or delay the destruction of weapons of mass destruction.

In 2005, the Senate approved this legislation in the form of an amendment I offered to the National Defense Authorization Act by an overwhelming vote of 78 to 19. Last year, the Senate adopted a similar amendment by unanimous consent. Unfortunately, these provisions were not included in either conference agreement.

While well-intentioned, the congressionally-imposed conditions on Nunn-Lugar have inhibited the amount of work that can be done to eliminate and safeguard weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union. Each year, a six month, thirteen step certification and waiver process must be completed before appropriated funds can be obligated to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. This annual process wastes money and valuable time—time lost in the fight against proliferation. In the field, it can prevent the availability of funds already authorized and appropriated by Congress for the Nunn-Lugar Program, thus delaying critical dismantlement work.

To date, the Nunn-Lugar program has deactivated for destroyed: 6, 934 nuclear warheads; 637 ICBMs; 485 ICBM silos; 81 ICBM mobile missile lauchers; 155 bombers; 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles; 436 submarine missile launchers; 601 submarine launched missiles; 30 nuclear submarines; and 194 nuclear test tunnels.

Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan emerged from the Soviet Union as the 3rd, 4th, and 8th largest nuclear weapons powers in the world. Today, all three are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program.

The Nunn-Lugar Program currently has a permanent waiver authority, to be used on an annual basis, for the congressionally-imposed certifications on the Nunn-Lugar program. While the waiver permits the program to continue its important work, the waiver does not solve the underlying problem.

In 1991, concerns surrounding Russian commitments to nonproliferation led the original Nunn-Lugar legislation to require President to certify annually that each recipient is ''committed to'' meeting six conditions: 1. Making a substantial investment in dismantling or destroying such weapons; 2. forgoing any military modernization program that exceeds legitimate defense requirements and forgoing the replacement of destroyed weapons of mass destruction; 3. forgoing any use of fissionable and other components of destroyed nuclear weapons in new nuclear weapons; 4. facilitating United States verification of weapons destruction carried out under the program; 5. complying with all relevant arms control agreements; and 6. observing internationally recognized human rights, including the protection of minorities.

At the time, these conditions were important to defining the U.S. strategic relationship with each Nunn-Lugar recipient. The question we must answer today is, what national security benefit do the certification requirements provide the American people? Do the conditions make it easier or harder to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Russia or elsewhere? Do the conditions make it more likely or less likely that weapons are eliminated?

Congress imposed an additional six conditions on construction of the chemical weapons destruction program at Shchuchye. These conditions include: 1. Full and accurate Russian declaration on the size of its chemical weapons stockpile; 2. allocation by Russia of at least $25,000,000 to chemical weapons elimination; 3. development by Russia of a practical plan for destroying its stockpile of nerve agents; 4. enactment of a law by Russia that provides for the elimination of all nerve agents at a single site; 5. an agreement by Russia to destroy or convert its chemical weapons production facilities at Volgograd and Novocheboksark; and 6. a demonstrated commitment from the international community to fund and build infrastructure needed to support and operate the facility.

Some will suggest that the certification process is, at most, an annoyance, but not a serious programmatic threat. I disagree. While well intentioned, these conditions delay and complicate efforts to destroy weapons of mass destruction. If the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the number one national security threat facing our country, we cannot permit any delays in our response.

The Bush Administration withheld Russia's certification in 2002 because of concerns in the chemical and biological weapon arenas. President Bush recognized the predicament and requested waiver authority for the Congressionally-imposed conditions. While awaiting temporary waiver to be authorized in law, new Nunn-Lugar projects were stalled and no new contracts were finalized between April 16 to August 9, 2002. This delay caused numerous disarmament projects in Russia to be put on hold, including: 1. Installation of security enhancements at ten nuclear weapons storage sites; 2. initiation of the dismantlement of two strategic missile submarines and thirty submarine-launched ballistic missiles; and 3. initiation of the dismantlement of SS–24 rail-mobile and SS–25 road-mobile ICBMs and launchers. Clearly,

these projects were in the national security interest of the United States, but they were delayed because of self-imposed conditions and bureaucratic red tape. A second period of delay began on October 1, 2002, with the expiration of a temporary waiver. Again, U.S. national security suffered with the postponement of critical dismantlement and security activities for some six weeks until Congress acted.

The events of 2002 are not the exceptions: They are the rule. In some years, Nunn-Lugar funds are not available for expenditure until more than half of the fiscal year has passed, and weapons of mass destruction slated for dismantlement await the U.S. bureaucratic process. This means that the program is denied access to these funds for large portions of the fiscal year in which they were intended to be spent while critical nonproliferation projects are put on hold. The bureaucracy generates reams of paper and yet ultimately produces an outcome that was never in doubt; namely, that it is in the national security interests of the United States to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Russia and elsewhere.

The certification and waiver processes consume hundreds of man-hours of work by the State Department, the Intelligence Community, the Pentagon, as well as other departments and agencies. This time could be better spent tackling the proliferation threats facing our country. Instead of interdicting WMD shipments, identifying the next AQ Khan, or locating hidden stocks of chemical and biological weapons, our nonproliferation experts spend their time compiling reports and assembling certification or waiver determinations. Even more frustrating is the fact that the majority of these reports are repetitive, in that the Department of State already reports on most of these issues in other formats.

Some will argue that the certification process provides the Administration with leverage on Russian behavior. I disagree. I do not believe any of the certification subjects are a good reason to stop the destruction and safeguarding of weapons of mass destruction. I would argue just the opposite; these are reasons for us to accelerate our efforts and become more vigilant in our approach.

These programmatic delays have given Russia, and others, cover to hide behind, pointing the finger of blame on the United States for slow program implementation and taking the spotlight off their failure to provide access and transparency. While we call on President Putin to speed up dismantlement and open more sites for security upgrades, congressionally-imposed conditions and funding delays are used as arguments against accelerating Nunn-Lugar projects.

I have concluded that despite the best intentions of Congress, the certification requirements on the Nunn-Lugar program have outlasted their utility. While the goals of the conditions are pure, they simply do not belong on nonproliferation programs. I would point out that the equally important nonproliferation programs at the Departments of Energy and State do not have these conditions. They do not suffer from the annual certification and waiver process. Why should the Nunn-Lugar program, focused on the dismantlement of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, be singled out for this treatment or need for leverage.

I am pleased that a number of administration officials and groups have endorsed the elimination of the certification and waiver process. The 9/11 Commission Report weighed in with an important endorsement of the Nunn-Lugar program, saying that ''Preventing the proliferation of [weapons of mass destruction] warrants a maximum effort—by strengthening counter-proliferation efforts, expanding the Proliferation Security Initiative, and supporting the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.'' The Report went on to say that ''Nunn-Lugar . . . is now in need of expansion, improvement and resources.'' More recently, the follow-on 9/11 Public Discourse Project wrote that the elimination of the certification requirements ''is an important step forward in protecting the United States against catastrophic attack.''

Secretary Rice has testified that the Administration strongly supports my efforts pointing out that ''flexibility in being able to administer the program would be most welcome.'' Bob Joseph, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, also expressed his support saying pointedly to me that ''the fact that there are 13 steps that can take . . . six months or longer to get through certainly . . . underlines the rationale for [this legislation] . . . Whatever we can do, Senator, to improve the efficiency of the process, to reduce the time lines involved, and to provide greater flexibility for action, I would be in favor of.''

Charles Boyd, USAF (Ret.) and Stanley Weiss, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, respectively, of the Business Executives for National Security, wrote to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate expressing support for the elimination of the certification requirements on the Nunn-Lugar program. They wrote in part: ''Even though conditions can be waived, doing so diverts time and effort that could otherwise be used to meet proliferation challenges. Relying on waivers also preserves the risk that funding delays could threaten existing projects and investments.''

In sum, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the number one national security threat facing the United States today. The Nunn-Lugar program is making tremendous contributions to the elimination of potentially vulnerable stockpiles. While the Congress' intentions in imposing annual certification requirements were pure, the process has evolved into a bureaucratic quagmire in to which months of work by numerous departments, agencies and bureaus are sunk. The Administration toils to produce a forgone conclusion; namely, that it is in U.S. interests to eliminate and secure weapons and materials of mass destruction. The funds for these operations are delayed while threats remain unaddressed. This is red-tape that we can do without. The only practical effect is unnecessary delays to our response to the number one national security threat facing the United States.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 199

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. GRANTS TO ALASKA TO IMPROVE SANITATION IN RURAL AND NATIVE VILLAGES.

Section 303 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 (33 U.S.C. 1263a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (h);

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

''(e) REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, the State of Alaska shall—

''(1) require each applicant to clearly identify the scope and the goal of the project for which funding is sought and how the funds will be used to meet the specific, stated goal of the project;

''(2) establish long-term goals for the program, including providing water and sewer systems to Alaska Native villages; and

''(3) carry out regular reviews of grantees to determine if the stated scope and goals of each grant are being met.

''(f) REPORTING.—Not later than December 31 of the calendar year following the fiscal year in which this subsection is enacted, and annually thereafter, the State of Alaska shall submit to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency a report describing the information obtained under subsection (e) during the fiscal year ending the preceding September 30, including—

''(1) the specific goals of each project;

''(2) how funds were used to meet the goal; and

''(3) whether the goals were met.

''(g) REVIEW.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall require the State of Alaska to correct any deficiencies identified in a report under subsection (f).

''(2) FAILURE TO CORRECT OR REACH AGREEMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a deficiency in a project included in a report under subsection (f) is not corrected within a period of time agreed to by the Administrator and the State of Alaska, the Administrator shall not permit additional expenditures for that project.

''(B) TIME AGREEMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of submission to the Administrator of a report under subsection (f), the Administrator and the State of Alaska shall reach an agreement on a period of time referred to in subparagraph (A).

''(ii) FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT.—If the State of Alaska and the Administrator fail to reach an agreement on the period of time to correct a deficiency in a project included

in a report under subsection (f) by the deadline specified in clause (i), the Administrator shall not permit additional expenditures for that project.''; and

(3) in subsection (h) (as redesignated by paragraph (1))—

(A) by striking ''$40,000,000'' and inserting ''$42,000,000''; and

(B) by striking ''2005'' and inserting ''2010''.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 199. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1996 to modify the grant program to improve sanitation in rural and Native villages in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a bill that will allow the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to provide grant funding and technical assistance to remote communities in Alaska for critical water and sewer projects. These remote communities are only accessible by either aircraft or boat.

This important funding was originally authorized as part of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 and was reauthorized in 2000. Every fiscal year, the EPA transfers funding authorized by this program to the State of Alaska's Village Safe Water Program, which is managed by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

The water and sewer conditions in the villages in Alaska that still need this critical funding rival the conditions in rural communities in third world countries. For example, residents in some villages in Alaska have to go to a central source in the community to get fresh water. Instead of flushing toilets, residents of some villages have to use a device called a ''honeybucket.'' This device is a large bucket with a toilet seat on top. When the honeybucket is full, it is usually dumped in a lagoon or on land. Sometimes, these dump locations are near sources of drinking water.

The Village Safe Water program has been a success over the years. Many homes in Alaska's remote communities now have plumbing due to funds authorized by this program. However, 34 percent of homes in these communities still do not have indoor plumbing. It is unacceptable that these Americans still do not have access to conventional plumbing in their homes in 2007.

Previously, the Office of Management and Budget published a Program Assessment Rating Tool report concerning this program. This report found several deficiencies concerning the administration of this program. In response to that report, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has put in place several changes to correct these deficiencies, including hiring additional accounting staff and initiating a memorandum of understanding with EPA Region 10 regarding program procedures and requirements.

This legislation reauthorizes the program through fiscal year 2010 and increases the authorized funding level from $40 million to $42 million, a modest five percent increase. Also, the legislation requires the State of Alaska to mandate that grant recipients clearly identify the scope and the goal of the project for which funding is sought and how the funds will be used to meet the specific, stated goal of the project; establish long-term goals for the program and carry out regular reviews of grantees to determine if the stated scope and goal of each grant are being met. This bill also requires the State of Alaska to submit an annual report to the EPA that addresses these issues. If a project-specific problem included in the report is not rectified within an amount of time agreed to by the State of Alaska and the EPA or if both entities are not able to agree on a timetable to fix the problem, the EPA will not disburse any additional funding for the project in question.

It is imperative that we reauthorize this critically important program soon. The health and well-being of rural Alaskans is at stake.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 200. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey, to conduct a study on groundwater resources in the State of Alaska, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in 2005 I first introduced a measure of benefit to my home State of Alaska, the Alaska Water Resources Act, for a number of reasons. While the bill easily passed the U.S. Senate in 2005, it did not complete its journey to final passage, which is why I am reintroducing the bill today. The importance of water resource data collection to a State that has a resource-based economy cannot be overstated. Economic development is predicated on access to an adequate water supply, and in my State there is inadequate hydrologic data upon which to secure both economic development and the health and welfare of Alaskan citizens.

Alaska is an amazing State from a hydrological viewpoint. It is home to more than 3 million lakes—only about 100 being larger than 10 square miles—more than 12,000 rivers and uncounted thousands of streams, creeks and ponds. Together these water bodies hold about one-third of all the fresh water found in the United States.

Alaska is home to a number of large rivers. The Yukon, which originates in western Canada, runs 1,400 miles—discharging from 25,000 cubic feet of water per second in early spring to more than 600,000 cubic feet per second in May during the spring thaw. The Yukon drains roughly 330,000 square miles of Alaska and Canada, about one-third of the State. Besides the Yukon, Alaska is home to nine other major rivers and creeks all running more than 300 miles in length: the Porcupine, Koyukuk, Kuskokwim, Tanana, Innoko, Colville, Noatak, Kobuk and Birch Creek.

Alaska residents from early spring to fall face substantial flood threats, from spring flooding caused by breakup and ice damming to fall's heavy rains, but the State has fewer than 100 stream gaging stations operated by the U.S. Geological Survey—Alaska having less than 10 percent of the stream flow information that is taken for granted by all other States in the Nation. Alaska averages one working gage for each 10,000 square miles, while, as an example, Pacific Northwest States average one gage for each 365 square miles. To emphasize the lack of data now available for Alaska, I would point out that to equal the stream gage density of the Pacific Northwest States my State would need to have over 1,600 total gage sites.

Alaska also supports the Nation's least modern and undeveloped potable water distribution system. Water for Alaska towns outside of the more densely populated ''Railbelt'' comes predominately from groundwater sources. Surface water sources often result in supply/storage problems since these surface sources freeze and are not readily available for up to half of the year. The chances for water-borne contaminants to affect potable water supplies, including fecal matter from Alaska's plentiful wildlife populations, human waste from inquate or nonexistent sewage treatment facilities, and natural mineral deposits, natural arsenic levels in mineralized zone creeks frequently exceeding EPA standards) are present and increasing. In areas that predominately depend on groundwater sources, such as the ''Railbelt'' there is only very limited knowledge of the nature and extent of aquifers that support those critical groundwater supplies. Extensive permafrost further complicates the potential for adverse impacts to Alaska. In portions of Southcentral Alaska where there is a dependence on groundwater as the source for an adequate healthy water supply, the availability of that supply is starting to be in jeopardy. Allocations of water need to be based on scientific data, and the data needed upon which the allocations are made is unavailable. Users of water are only beginning to realize the potential conflicts that may arise, and the limits on future economic development that may result from inadequate knowledge of the water resource, particularly in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, on the Kenai Peninsula, and to a lesser extent in portions of the municipality of Anchorage and in the Fairbanks area, where groundwater provided by wells is a crucial part of the State's water distribution system, and where there is little known about the size, capacity, extent and recharge capability of the aquifers that these wells tap.

Alaska, according to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, still has some 16,000 homes in 71 generally Native villages not being served by piped water or enclosed water haul systems. There are still 55 villages in Alaska where up to 29 percent of the residents are not served by sanitary water systems, with more than 60 percent of residents not being served in 16 villages. Even though, since statehood in 1959, the State and Federal governments have spent $1.3 billion on rural water-sanitation system improvements, the State still has an estimated need for nearly $650 million in additional funding to complete installation of a modern water-sanitation system.

Planning and engineering for those locations cannot be easily completed without better information as to the availability and extent of supply of water and better analysis of new technologies that could be used for water system installations, including possible desalination for some island and coastal communities.

For all these reasons today I have reintroduced legislation authorizing the Department of the Interior's Commissioner of Reclamation and the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct a series of water resource studies in Alaska. The studies will include a survey of water treatment needs and technologies, including desalination treatment, which may be applicable to water resources developments in Alaska. The study will review the need for enhancement of the National Streamflow Information Program administered by the U.S. Geological Survey. The Streamflow review will determine whether more stream gaging stations are necessary for flood forecasting, aiding resource extraction, determining the risk to the state's transportation system, and for wildfire management. Groundwater resources will also be further evaluated and documented to determine the availability of water, the quality of that groundwater, and the extent of the aquifers in some urban areas.

This type of study, already conducted for most all other States in the Nation, should help Alaska better plan and design water systems and transportation infrastructure and also better prepare for floods and summer wildfires.

There is literally ''water, water everywhere'' in Alaska, but too often, especially in communities such as Ketchikan that take water from surface sources, or the rapidly growing Mat-Su Valley where there may be less water to drink during unusually dry summers, there is a real and growing problem of maintaining an adequate healthy supply of pure water. This problem is only going to grow more severe with a growing population and economy. This bill is designed to provide more information to help communities plan for future water needs and to help State officials plan for flood and fire safety concerns and further economic development.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 205. A bill to grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President. Today I reintroduce legislation which will resolve an ongoing dispute in my State concerning rights of way in the Copper River Valley region.

In the 109th Congress, both the Senate and House of Representatives held hearings on this bill. It is my hope that we can move this important legislation quickly through the Senate.

When Congress attempted to settle outstanding land claims in Alaska, it unintentionally created a land dispute between Native allotees and utility companies. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Federal Government and the State of Alaska granted rights of way to the Copper Valley Electric Association to run power lines across areas in our state that were later claimed by Alaska Natives. These rights were conveyed before Alaska Native allotment claims had been filed and processed.

In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which legislatively ratified native allotment land claims subject to the valid existing rights of other land holders. However, several Native allottees challenged the existing rights of other land holders and claimed that the Copper Valley Electric Association was trespassing on their lands. In 1987, the Department of Interior's Interior Board of Land Appeals affirmed this position, finding native allotees have priority over other competing uses of land—in this case, those of the utility company—regardless of the fact that the rights of way were granted prior to the conveyance of the property in question to the allotees. This situation is still unresolved and has resulted in years of litigation.

We have been unable to settle these disputes through existing remedies. These conflicts now jeopardize existing transportation and utility corridors and threaten future infrastructure development in the region.

At my request, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed this situation. The GAO issued its report and recommended solutions. This bill incorporates the GAO's recommendation. It compensates the owners of the Native allotments, while ensuring that the utility companies are able to provide residents with the infrastructure and services they need. I believe this is the most equitable solution available, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—RECOGNIZING THE UNCOMMON VALOR OF WESLEY AUTREY OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 21

Whereas Wesley Autrey is a citizen of New York, New York;

Whereas Wesley Autrey is a veteran of the United States Navy;

Whereas Wesley Autrey has been a member in good standing of the Construction and General Building Laborers' Local 79 since 1996;

Whereas Wesley Autrey witnessed a fellow subway passenger suffer from a seizure and fall onto the train tracks;

Whereas Wesley Autrey was compelled by his belief that he should ''do the right thing'' and serve as an example to his 2 young daughters;

Whereas Wesley Autrey demonstrated uncommon valor and tremendous bravery in diving onto the train tracks to save the life of his fellow subway passenger only moments before an incoming train passed over them;

Whereas the beneficiary of Wesley Autrey's courageous actions is now recovering at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center, New York;

Whereas Wesley Autrey has conducted himself with the utmost humility in the midst of his newfound fame; and

Whereas Wesley Autrey stands out as an example of selflessness to members of his community, his State, and the Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that Wesley Autrey acted heroically by putting his own life at risk to save that of his fellow citizen; and

(2) expresses its deep appreciation for Wesley Autrey's example and the values that his actions represent.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2, S. 5, S. 113

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that there are three bills at the desk that are now due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

A bill (S. 5) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for human embryonic stem cell research.

A bill (S. 113) to make appropriations for military construction and family housing projects for the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2007.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. S. 1, the ethics bill, at 11 a.m. tomorrow morning, January 9, for debate only until 2:15 p.m, with the time, until the Senate recesses for the party luncheons, equally divided and controlled between the leaders and their designees.

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