

I might add, we had devastating floods in Iowa in 1993. We did some of this mitigation. Because some of those homes were removed—in fact, I think there is one town where basically the whole town was moved to higher ground. And guess what. They did not get flooded this time. A lot of times it makes good sense to do that.

We are going to need flexible community development block grant funding for infrastructure repair and home assistance. Economic Development Administration funds for infrastructure will be needed for businesses and jobs. Corps of Engineers funding will be needed for the repair and improvement of levees. We will also need Department of Agriculture support for a whole variety of agricultural things—from repairing conservation structures to meeting new soil conservation problems and cleaning up debris. Every culvert going under these roads, all over the State of Iowa, has been plugged up with some kind of debris. Bridges—all this stuff—need to be taken out and taken out in a hurry. So we are going to need the help of the Department of Agriculture on that.

So it will be several weeks, at least, before we can have an accurate measure of the total economic losses and physical destruction. Probably more time than that for areas south of the water. The water is all moving south, so I hate to say this, but I think northern Missouri is about to get hit pretty hard. And as to the absolute southeast of Iowa, we have not seen it hit the absolute southeast of Iowa yet.

So, again, we are going to have to get a pretty good handle on this, but this is a national disaster. It requires a national response.

So, Mr. President, I am sure Senator GRASSLEY and I will have more to report in the days ahead. But our thoughts and prayers are with the good people of Iowa and neighboring States who are still struggling with floodwaters or still picking up the pieces from devastating tornadoes.

Again, I want to join with Senator GRASSLEY in thanking so many church groups in Iowa. We saw them. Every place we went, we saw church groups getting together. Protestant, Catholic, evangelical—no matter who—they were all getting together and setting up response teams, doing an outstanding job. It was so wonderful to see these people come together and organize in that fashion.

Then, of course, in Cedar Rapids, some of the churches are underwater. I may not have one here on this map, but I had a picture earlier. I had some pictures of churches that were underwater too. But the church groups, religious groups in Iowa, have been wonderful.

On a really somber and sad note, I would, again, express my condolences to the families of the Boy Scouts who were killed at Little Sioux—a terrible tragedy—and to the families where some of the kids were hurt pretty

badly. Some of them are still in critical condition.

So we are praying for their recovery, their full recovery. But you listen to the stories that came out of that Boy Scout camp, and you see what a good thing Boy Scouts is and the leadership they provided and how they pulled together and helped one another. There is a lot of strong leadership in these Boy Scouts.

So we hope their families will take some condolence in the fact that these kids responded in a great leadership fashion. These young kids responded as adults after that tornado hit that Boy Scout camp.

Lastly, Mr. President, I deeply appreciate the many expressions of concern and caring expressed by our Senate colleagues. I have gotten a lot of phone calls and messages, and I thank all my colleagues for their expressions of concern and caring.

We will get through it. Obviously, we will get through it. I think Iowa will be a stronger State. We will have some tough times. I have no doubt about it. A lot of people out there do not have much money. A lot of times it is the lowest income people along the rivers and stuff because, well, the spacing—that is where the cheapest land is, isn't it? That is where the lowest cost houses are, for the most part. I am not saying all, but for the most part. I have seen some pretty beautiful homes inundated by water too, I might add, but a lot of these people are low-income people. They are elderly. They have nowhere to turn. As a caring nation, we have to help them put their lives together again.

So we will be on this every day. I am pleased to hear that President Bush—I just found this out a few minutes ago—will be coming to Iowa on Thursday. That will be good. I hope he can see this firsthand and then help us with getting those FEMA matching funds down as much as possible.

With that, again, I will be reporting more in the days ahead. But we are starting the clean-up process now from the most devastating flood I have ever seen in all my years in the State of Iowa.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MIDWEST FLOODING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this Father's Day weekend I celebrated by buying a dehumidifier. I live in the Midwest, and we have had a lot of rain, but I am lucky because my problems with a damp basement are minor—very

minor—in comparison to what people all across the Midwest are facing. We have seen this before. I was hoping and praying we wouldn't see it again for a long time, but our colleagues from Iowa and Minnesota and others have spoken on the floor about the devastation that is a result of massive flooding in the Midwest and Wisconsin as well.

Tens of thousands of our neighbors in the Midwest have suffered staggering losses and need help and our Government needs to be there, as promised. In my State of Illinois, the same floods that have devastated our northern neighbors are now heading our way. We are in a race against time and nature.

By Wednesday of this week, at least in the Quincy area of the Mississippi River, we expect the Mississippi River to reach its crest. It is the mightiest river in North America. It is a beautiful river and a big part of America's history but, boy, when the rains start falling and all those rivers start feeding into it, the Mississippi can become almost uncontrollable.

There are fears that the flooding along the Mississippi in Illinois could reach historic levels that we experienced during the great flood of 1993. I know all about that one. That was a flood on my watch. I was a Congressman in central Illinois, with a big swath of Illinois and the Mississippi River in my district.

It was one of the most costly and devastating natural disasters ever to hit our country. It didn't come with the intensity and immediacy of a Hurricane Katrina and certainly didn't cause the long-term devastation they felt in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Floods in our part of the world are a gradual, building thing that seem like they will never go away. More than 50 people died in 1993. Thousands were forced to evacuate their homes, as hundreds of levees failed up and down the Mississippi River. The economic damage exceeded \$15 billion.

The experts told us after that flood that it was a 500-year flood event. So we thought we would be able to brag about that for the rest of our lives, and generations to come will point back to 1993. Well, here we are 15 years later, and we seem to be on the verge of another similar disaster.

Many times, weather-related disasters, such as Katrina, give us no warning. They strike in a matter of minutes, hours or days if we are lucky. This is different. We have seen this crisis coming for quite a while.

Illinoisans are working hard and fast to try to prepare for the worst and to minimize the damage.

Last Friday, when the Senate adjourned, I went back to my home State and drove over to Quincy on the Central Illinois Expressway and met with Mayor John Spring and then went down to Grafton, IL, and met with Mayor Richard Mosby. Senator OBAMA was in Quincy on Saturday.

In those cities and towns up and down the Mississippi River, people are

filling sandbags as fast as they can do it. They are fortifying existing levees and creating levees to protect businesses and homes and valuable infrastructure.

I commend all the residents, volunteers, emergency workers, and the more than 400 members of the Illinois National Guard, who are working to brace our State for these floodwaters. Many people are working around the clock.

That is one of the nice things about this great Nation. I take special pride in the Midwest, which is where my roots are. When an emergency such as this arises, I have watched how people rally around and try to help.

Again, I was with Mayor Spring in Quincy on Friday. People were literally spending their entire day filling sandbags. It is hard work; many times it is back-breaking work, repetitive. But the spirit in that meeting place was as good as anyplace I have ever been. They all felt they were pulling together for their neighbors, their community, their city, and for their State. They felt a special kinship.

It is not unusual, of course, to see the great efforts of the Red Cross. They are always there trying to help people along, providing a sandwich and a bottle of water to the folks who need it when they are working. Also, other volunteers, including folks at a age where they could not pitch in and fill a sandbag, but they were making sandwiches and cookies to bring to the volunteers. It is that kind of a community outpouring that means so much.

The official Government agencies were sure there doing their part, including FEMA and our Illinois counterpart, coordinating the disaster response, along with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Over the weekend, two levees in our State—in the towns of Carman and Keithsburg—failed. Hundreds of residents in those towns have left their homes. Another levee broke last week in the town of Lawrenceville, on the east side of the State, and residents are stranded there without drinkable water.

Floodwaters are starting to seep into other towns along the river. Heavy rains are still falling north of us, pushing the river higher by the day.

Our Governor has already declared 15 counties in Illinois State disaster areas.

At the urging of Senator OBAMA and myself, Governor Blagojevich wrote to President Bush and asked him to declare a number of Mississippi River counties Federal disaster areas. Quincy is preparing for the worst. The river is expected to crest at 32 feet. One of the main concerns there is the water intake plants that provide water for the region. If it goes down, it may take months to restore it. That will be a hardship on a lot of people we hope to avoid.

I was with GEN Bill Enyart, head of the Illinois National Guard, Friday

night. I said: Bill, I hope that as a special project the Illinois National Guard will join with Mayor John Spring to try to protect that waterworks. It is important. Bill answered the call immediately and called Mayor John Spring and sent 100 members of the Air Force National Guard there to start sandbagging around the water treatment plant, trying to save it before the river crests on Wednesday. All those volunteers and emergency workers—even State prisoners released from the local prisons and correction camps—are working side by side to fill sandbags.

I also wish to say a word about State Senator John Sullivan in that area. He rolled up his sleeves immediately and went to work. I was with him Friday. He is roaming up and down the river trying to make sure he gives a helping hand where needed. He calls State and Federal agencies to see where they can be of assistance. He is a terrific public servant, and I was glad to be with him at that time.

Senator OBAMA came to Quincy over the weekend and looked at the situation and pitched in as well, filling sandbags, and he was able to see how our State is being affected.

The volunteers worked through Father's Day. The celebration with family was short-lived. They tried to do their best to tame the mighty Mississippi River. These volunteers are demonstrating amazing spirit. A flood is a devastating prospect to face and envision. But these folks have responded with resolve and determination. I am proud of them, and I am so proud to represent them. Their work may save homes, businesses, and lives. Every sandbag that is filled may make it much easier for communities to get back on their feet when the floodwaters recede.

State and local leaders in Illinois are also working around the clock to prepare for the worst. We know, from looking at neighboring States, that the severity of this flood will be more than the people of Illinois alone can absorb.

The magnitude of this disaster will require action from the Federal Government.

I have stood in Congress for over 20 years, and every time some section of our Nation has been victimized by a disaster, I have always felt that is when we come together as an American family, when we draw on our national treasure and the efforts of American workers across the country to come to the rescue of our neighbors in trouble. Well, now it is time for the Midwest to ask for that help.

I know this Congress and President will be forthcoming. They have done a good job so far. We have to make certain we give them all the tools they need to move quickly back home to prepare for the worst, to try to avoid tragedies that can be avoided, and then to clean up afterwards and get on with their lives.

Senator OBAMA and I will work with the Illinois congressional delegation to

ensure that the communities and the people affected do not face this disaster alone. America and this Congress and Senate will stand with them.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is now closed.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 6049, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act of 2008, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for energy production and conservation to extend certain expiring provisions, to provide individual income tax relief, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the record, it is my understanding the time between now and 5:30, when we vote on the motion to proceed to the tax extenders, has been evenly divided between the Republican and Democratic sides.

I ask unanimous consent that all time—even time on the quorum calls—be credited to both sides equally during that period.

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

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, in a couple of hours we are going to be voting again on cloture and we will be making a choice between two different points of view. We did this 2 weeks ago, a week ago last Thursday, and the result was that cloture was not invoked on the House-passed so-called tax extenders package, and I think the same result will end up being the case this evening.

It is essentially a choice between the Democratic leadership trying to do this in a partisan way by simply bringing up the House bill and trying to push that through, or getting together, as we have done in the past, in a bipartisan way, to ensure that the tax provisions we all support and we all want extended into law are done in a way that does not require that taxes be increased in some other part of the Tax Code.