

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT EDMOND LO

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to U.S. Army SSG Edmond Lo of Salem, NH.

Tragically, on June 13, 2009, this brave 23-year-old gave his life for this Nation when an improvised explosive device detonated while his explosive ordnance disposal team courageously worked to neutralize the threat near Samarra City, Iraq. At the time of this hostile action, Sergeant Lo, a member of the 797th Ordnance Company based at Fort Hood, TX, was serving his second tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Edmond demonstrated a willingness and dedication to serve his country from an early age. A 2004 graduate of Salem High School, Edmond was a member of the Air Force Junior ROTC Program and commander of the drill team, color guard, and operations squadron. He was well known and liked by his teachers and fellow students and earned himself a full scholarship to a top engineering school upon graduation. However, sensing a call to duty, and because of his desire to protect his country, Edmond instead chose to join the Army.

Just as many of America's heroes have taken up arms in the face of dire threats, Edmond dedicated himself to the defense of our ideals, values, freedoms, and way of life. His valor and service cost him his life, but his sacrifice will live on forever among the many dedicated heroes this Nation has sent abroad to defend our Nation's freedom.

A beloved member of the Salem community, Edmond was respected and admired by all those around him. As a loyal member of the U.S. Army, he continually performed above and beyond all expectations. Because of Edmond's efforts, our liberty is more secure.

Kathy's and my thoughts, condolences, and prayers go out to Edmond's parents, David and Rosa Lo, his brothers and sisters, and his other family members and many friends who have suffered this most grievous loss. All will sorely miss Edmond Lo, a true patriot who was proud of his family, proud of where he lived, and proud of what he did. In the words of Daniel Webster—may his remembrance be as long lasting as the land he honored. God bless Edmond Lo.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

CELEBRATING WEST VIRGINIA DAY

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to recognize that 146 years ago today, West Virginia became the 35th State to join the Union. The only State to have seceded from a Confederate State, West Virginia's birthday shines as an anniversary which commemo-

rates the spirit, perseverance, optimism, and hard work of its people.

West Virginia is unique in countless ways; and her history is just the beginning. For almost 200 years, West Virginians have played a significant role in the development and advancement of our nation. From the Battle of Philippi in Barbour County, which was the first organized land battle of the Civil War, to John Brown's historic raid on the Arsenal in Harpers Ferry, we recognize the role our State has played in the making of America's history.

The only State to lie entirely within the borders of Appalachia, we remain incredibly diverse; our geography, population, and heritage are what have lead to our identity as the "Wild and Wonderful" State. From the renowned Greenbrier Hotel and Resort in White Sulphur Springs, to the New River Gorge in Fayetteville, which houses the longest steel-arch bridge in the United States, it is no wonder that we draw tourists here from all over the globe.

But it is not the many historical sites or beautiful landscapes that capture the fortitude of West Virginia, but rather, her people—people who continue to inspire with pride and honor, and overcome challenges with a resolve like no other.

Early last month, flash flooding devastated families throughout southern West Virginia, damaging at least 1,500 homes with the worst flooding the area has seen for quite some time. The humanitarian response within the State has been profoundly moving; with people traveling hours to donate their time and energy to assist their fellow West Virginians, and some 300 National Guard troops posted in the area—proving that goodwill is alive and well in West Virginia. Seeing this outpouring, I was reminded of serious flooding in our State when I was Governor. I opened National Guard armories to house displaced families but none showed up—because their neighbors had taken them in. That is a shining example of our Mountaineer spirit.

In addition to serving the people of our State, the West Virginia National Guard is committed to global security, with 38 active units serving around the world, including in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Our State motto, "Mountaineers are always free," can be found resonating not only in all corners of the Mountain State but across the globe. And it is a motto that West Virginians have stood up for time and again—as our State's veterans are among the bravest, most selfless, and most devoted in the entire Nation.

West Virginians have the amazing ability to make sure our culture—which we are so proud of—is also part of our future. Ours is a State wrapped in age-old traditions, but also a State with a readiness to adapt to its younger generations; a veritable melting pot of both old and new world. The Ramp Eating Capitol of the World is found in Richwood, where international crowds

gathered in April for the annual Ramp Eating Contest to delight in this West Virginia favorite. And artists across our State are finding more innovative ways to market our cultural heritage, from Blenko Glass and amazing woodwork, to folk-art, quilts and Appalachian music.

Our schools, colleges and universities have inspired some of the best and brightest young leaders. West Virginia University and Marshall University have produced some of the greatest minds in some of the toughest fields worldwide, and have played an integral role in supporting the communities they inhabit. The Promise Scholarship, which pays instate collegiate tuition fees for those high school graduates with qualifying academic records, has helped thousands of students afford college since its inception. Thanks to this measure, admission to institutions of higher education in West Virginia has steadily increased, drawing students from across the Nation to study subjects such as biometrics, forensics, and defense.

Native West Virginians often joke that telephone calls placed to God are local, as our State is "almost" heaven. We love and are so proud of our awe-inspiring scenery and our towering mountains, and we can't wait to show them off to anyone who visits. And what those visitors also find when they come to our beautiful State is a population well-versed in humility and good-nature. It is indeed the people who pay the greatest tribute to our Mountain State, and it is my honor and privilege today to wish you on their behalf, the happiest of birthdays, West Virginia.●

INDIRECT LAND USE

Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a lingering issue that could have serious detrimental effects on our nation's ethanol industry.

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 increased the renewable fuels standard—commonly known as the RFS—to 36 billion gallons annually of ethanol and other biofuels by 2022.

I support the RFS . . . Always have. The RFS simply means more domestic energy production, less imported oil from unfriendly nations, and more jobs in rural America—both on and off the farm.

The 2007 law requires EPA to come up with new rules to determine greenhouse gas emissions throughout the lifecycle of renewable fuels. Simply put, EPA must calculate how much greenhouse gas is emitted from the time the seed is produced to the time drivers use the fuel in their cars, with every step in between. These steps include production, transportation, distribution, and blending, just to name a few.

Under the 2007 law, renewable fuels must emit anywhere from 20–60 percent fewer greenhouse gases than petroleum.

Unfortunately, when calculating lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, EPA has included theoretical indirect land use changes.

As the theory goes, increased production of biofuels leads to more grain being used for biofuels and less being exported to foreign markets. Allegedly, this decrease in exports means additional grain production is required in other parts of the world, creating increased cultivation in those areas. Proponents of this way of thinking say forests in other parts of the world are being converted to crops to substitute for the missing U.S. grain.

However, that is all it is, an unsubstantiated theory, an argument that just doesn't hold water. Pure bunk.

As an example, in 2004, over 10,000 square miles of the Amazon was deforested. In 2008—the peak year for ethanol production to date—that number dropped to under 5,000 square miles. How is that possible?

Due to significant technological advances and ever-increasing efficiency, the American farmer continues to meet the demand for food, feed, and biofuel. For instance, in 1980, the average corn yield per acre in this country was 91 bushels. Last year, it was 153.9 bushels—a 70-percent increase in productivity.

In fact, this spring, American farmers will use almost exactly the same amount of acres for corn production as they did 30 years ago—about 85 million acres. Yet the productivity advances mean we will likely harvest roughly 6 billion bushels more corn on the exact same amount of land.

The soybean industry can tell a similar story. In 1980, American farmers produced just under 1.8 billion total bushels of soybeans on 69.5 million acres. In 2007—almost 30 years later—they produced almost 2.7 billion bushels on 64.7 million acres. That is a production increase of nearly a billion bushels, on 5 million fewer acres.

So the facts seem clear. Even as the production of biofuels increases, deforestation rates have been cut in half just in the last 5 years.

Clearly, no reliable or accepted model for measuring indirect land use change exists. Projection models for indirect land use are based on assumptions about how landowners made choices about what to do with their land. And unless the EPA has recently hired mind-readers, they might as well be playing pin the tail on the donkey.

Calculating emissions from indirect land use changes is such an inexact science; it is really no science at all. There is literally no way to know if what you come up with is accurate.

Our farmers and ethanol producers should not be held responsible for land use decisions made half way around the world, especially when they are based on untested and unreliable assumptions.

Just last year, the President's own Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar—then a sitting U.S. Senator—signed a letter

to EPA stating that EPA's calculations pertaining to indirect land use are based on "incomplete science and inaccurate assumptions."

For all these reasons, today I sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson requesting a 120-day extension of the deadline for the public comment period on the RFS. EPA needs adequate time to hear from impacted industries and organizations about the potentially devastating effects of these untested, unreliable indirect land use calculations. I hope the EPA will give serious consideration to my request.

Additionally, I am cosponsoring S. 943 and S. 1148, both bills that would remove indirect land use assumptions from the renewable fuel standard. Doing so does not in any way impact emissions reductions requirements. The requirements remain intact and the same goals can be reached. These bills will simply remove a very untested, incomplete, assumption-based factor from the equation.

And while the environmental benefits of ethanol have been well-documented, the RFS was enacted to increase our energy security and decrease our dependence on foreign oil. Right now, over 60 percent of our oil is imported from other countries. Much of it comes from countries that, put very simply, don't like us very much. We have to take steps to become less reliant on these nations for our energy needs and more reliant on ourselves, and the RFS does that.

For example, the production and use of 9 billion gallons of ethanol in 2008 displaced the need for over 320 million barrels of oil. This is the equivalent of eliminating oil imports from Venezuela for 10 months. Put another way, it represents the equivalent of 33 days' worth of oil imports. Those are not insignificant numbers.

An expanded ethanol industry has yielded another very important result: rural economic development. Using my home state of Nebraska as an example, ethanol has clearly benefitted many rural communities.

Almost 10 years ago, as Governor of Nebraska, I supported several initiatives to incentivize what was then a relatively small ethanol industry. Well, today Nebraska is the Nation's second largest ethanol producer.

Nebraska currently has 20 operational ethanol plants, with a combined production capacity of over 1.3 billion gallons of ethanol each year. These plants represent more than \$1.4 billion in capital investment and provide direct employment for roughly 1,000 Nebraskans.

Energy security, economic development, environmental improvement, these issues are all connected. And ethanol and our Nation's farmers have contributed to each in a positive way.

As elected officials we should support the biofuels industry, not undermine it. Basing our energy policy on some unsubstantiated theory regarding indirect land use is the wrong approach.

With the passage of the RFS, Congress asked farmers and biofuel producers to significantly expand and increase their production levels. Let's not pull the rug out from under them with unwise policies.

I am proud to cosponsor S. 943 and S. 1148 and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING SALVATORE "TORRE" M. MERINGOLO

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I pay special tribute to the outstanding accomplishments of Salvatore M. Meringolo, vice president for development at St. Mary's College since 1997.

Mr. Meringolo leaves a remarkable record of accomplishment at St. Mary's College. He was hired 15 years ago as director of the library and information services and directed a comprehensive modernization effort that encompassed library partnerships with the University of Maryland System and raised \$2 million for the library's endowment.

During his tenure as vice president for development, St. Mary's endowment has grown from less than \$5 million to more than \$24 million. Moreover, Mr. Meringolo pursued Federal funding strategies that have yielded more than \$6 million for programs such as St. Mary's River Project and campus IT networking infrastructure.

For the past 3 years, Mr. Meringolo has served as secretary to the Board of Trustees. I had the honor of serving on the board from 1988–1999. He has provided staff support to the board's development, governance, and executive committees.

Mr. Meringolo often represents the college in the local community, having served as vice president of the Patuxent Partnership, as a member of the Navy Alliance, and the college's representative to the Economic Development Commission of St. Mary's County.

When the college and Historic St. Mary's City joined forces to create the \$65 million Maryland Heritage Project, Mr. Meringolo worked to ensure a compelling and timely application. The facilities of St. Mary's College were reshaped over the last decade as a result of the Maryland Heritage Project.

The challenge presented by St. Mary's small-scale and modest resources was largely overcome by the talents of this very thoughtful and experienced individual. The college has experienced enormous growth in the last 15 years and much of that growth can be attributed to Mr. Meringolo's leadership.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the many accomplishments of Torre Meringolo and in wishing him success in his future endeavors. •