S. 1492

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1492, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to fund breakthroughs in Alzheimer's disease research while providing more help to caregivers and increasing public education about prevention.

S. 1553

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1553, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National Future Farmers of America Organization and the 85th anniversary of the founding of the National Future Farmers of America Organization.

S. 1554

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1554, a bill to amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to prevent later delinquency and improve the health and well-being of maltreated infants and toddlers through the development of local Court Teams for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers and the creation of a National Court Teams Resource Center to assist such Court Teams, and for other purposes.

S. 1567

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1567, a bill to provide for the issuance of a Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp.

S. CON. RES. 36

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 36, a concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of ''National Purple Heart Recognition Day''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2238

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2238 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2249

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2249 proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2276

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2276 proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2276 proposed to H.R. 2997, supra.

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 2276 proposed to H.R. 2997, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 2277

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2277 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2285

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 2285 proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. SANDERS).

S. 1570. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the percentage depletion allowance for certain hardrock mines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing legislation to eliminate from the Federal tax code the ''Percentage Depletion Allowance'' for hardrock minerals mined on Federal public lands. I want to thank Senators CANTWELL, FEINSTEIN, and SANDERS for joining me in introducing this legislation.

The Elimination of Double Subsidies for the Hardrock Mining Industry Act of 2009 would result in estimated savings of at least $250 million over 5 years, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. Under this legislation, half of these savings would be returned to the Federal treasury and half would help address the serious contamination at the thousands of abandoned mines throughout the U.S.

Percentage depletion allowances were initiated by the Corporation Excise Act of 1909. That's right, these allowances were initiated 100 years ago. Provisions for a depletion allowance based on the value of the mine were made under a 1912 Treasury Department regulation, but difficulty in applying this accounting principle to mineral production led to the initial codification of the mineral depletion allowance in the Tariff Act of 1913. The Revenue Act of 1926 established percentage depletion much in its present form for oil and gas. The percentage depletion allowance was then extended to metal mines, coal, and other hardrock minerals by the Revenue Act of 1932, and has been adjusted several times since.

Percentage depletion allowances were historically placed in the tax code to reduce the effective tax rates in the mineral and extraction industries far below tax rates on other industries, providing incentives to increase investment, exploration, and output. The problem, however, is that percentage depletion also makes it possible to recover many times the amount of the original investment.

There are two methods of calculating a deduction to allow a firm to recover the costs of its capital investment: cost depletion and percentage depletion. Cost depletion allows for the recovery of the actual capital investment—the costs of discovering, purchasing, and developing a mineral reserve—over the period during which the reserve produces income. Under the cost depletion method, the total deductions cannot exceed the original capital investment.

Under percentage depletion, however, the deduction for recovery of a company's investment is a fixed percentage of ''gross income,'' namely, sales revenue from the sale of the mineral. Under this method, total deductions typically exceed the capital that the company invested. The set rates for percentage depletion are quite significant. Section 613 of the Internal Revenue Code contains depletion allowances for more than 70 metals and minerals, at rates ranging from 10 to 22 percent.

There is no restriction in the tax code to ensure that over time companies do not deduct more than the capital that they have invested. Furthermore, a percentage deduction allowance makes sense only so long as the deducting company actually pays for the investment for which it claims the deduction.

The result is a double subsidy for hardrock mining companies: first they can mine on public lands for free under the General Mining Law of 1872, and then they are allowed to take a deduction for capital investment that they

have not made for the privilege to mine on public lands. My legislation would eliminate the use of the Percentage Depletion Allowance for mining on public lands, while continuing to allow companies to use the reasonable cost depletion method for determining tax deductions.

My bill would also create a new fund, called the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund. Half of the revenue raised by the bill, or approximately $125 million dollars, would be deposited into an interest-bearing fund in the Treasury to be used to clean up abandoned hardrock mines in states that are subject to the 1872 Mining Law. Though there is no comprehensive inventory of abandoned mines, estimates put the figure at upwards of 100,000 abandoned mines on public lands.

There are currently no comprehensive Federal or State programs to address the need to clean up old mine sites. Reclaiming these sites requires the enactment of a program with explicit authority to clean up abandoned mine sites and the resources to do it. My legislation is a first step toward providing the needed authority and resources.

In today's budget climate, we are faced with the question of who should bear the costs of exploration, development, and production of natural resources: the taxpayers, or the users and producers of the resource? For more than a century, the mining industry has been paying next to nothing for the privilege of extracting minerals from public lands and then abandoning its mines. Now those mines are adding to the Nation's environmental and financial burdens. We face serious budget choices this fiscal year, and one of those choices is whether to continue the special tax breaks provided to the mining industry.

The measure I am introducing is straightforward. It eliminates the Percentage Depletion Allowance for hardrock minerals mined on public lands while continuing to allow companies to use the reasonable cost depletion method for determining tax deductions.

Though at one time there may have been an appropriate role for a government-driven incentive for enhanced mineral production, the arguments in favor of a more reasonable depletion allowance that is consistent with depreciation rates given to other businesses are overwhelming. This corporate subsidy is simply not justified.

I thank the following organizations for endorsing this legislation: EARTHWORKS, Environmental Working Group, Friends of the Earth, National Wildlife Federation, Pew Environment Group, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Trout Unlimited, and the Western Organization of Resource Councils.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 1571. A bill to provide for a land exchange involving certain National Forest System land in the Mendocino National Forest in the State of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Deafy Glade Land Exchange Act. This legislation would authorize a land exchange between the U.S. Forest Service and Solano County to help ensure the continued operation of the juvenile correctional facility and add nearly 80 acres of wilderness quality land to the Mendocino National Forest.

Nearly 10 years ago at the suggestion of the Forest Service, Solano County purchased more than 160 acres of wilderness quality land within the Mendocino National Forest—known as Deafy Glade—with the intention of exchanging the land for the Fouts Springs Ranch. This legislation would facilitate that exchange, so that the counties could own the land beneath the facility they operate, and in exchange, the Forest Service would acquire a wilderness quality inholding.

Solano County currently operates a youth correctional facility under a Special Use Permit issued by the Forest Service on the Fouts Springs Ranch, which covers approximately 82 acres within the boundaries of the Mendocino National Forest. Solano County owns the infrastructure but leases the land from the Forest Service.

Solano County has operated the Fouts Springs Youth Facility pursuant to a joint powers agreement with Yolo and Colusa counties since 1959. The program includes counseling and education, with the goal of giving juveniles the skills to successfully reenter their communities.

More than 20 California counties have placed juvenile offenders at Fouts Springs for 6 month, 9 month, or one year periods. The program is viewed as a last resort for youth before being referred to a State prison.

Specifically, the legislation I am offering today would authorize the transfer of Fouts Springs Ranch—approximately 82 acres—from the Forest Service to Solano County; and the transfer of more than 160 acres of the Deafy Glade area in Mendocino National Forest from Solano County to the Forest Service.

The Fouts Spring youth correctional facility is in need of substantial upgrades, including the replacement of the main water line, electrical system improvements, and renovation of one of the dormitories. However, the County has postponed investing in facility upgrades until the land exchange is finalized and ownership of the Fouts Springs Ranch is transferred to the County.

Given the substantial investment already made by Solano County and the importance of the youth rehabilitation services provided by Fouts Springs, I believe the time has come to finalize this land exchange.

This legislation would not only help ensure the continued operation of the Fouts Spring youth correctional facility but it would also add nearly 80 acres of wilderness quality land to the Mendocino National Forest.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1571

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Deafy Glade Land Exchange Act''.

SEC. 2. LAND EXCHANGE, MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST, CALIFORNIA.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COUNTY.—The term ''County'' means Solano County, California.

(2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term ''Federal land'' means the parcel of approximately 82 acres of land (including any improvements to the land) that is—

(A) in the Forest;

(B) known as the ''Fouts Springs Ranch''; and

(C) depicted on the map.

(3) FOREST.—The term ''Forest'' means the Mendocino National Forest in the State of California.

(4) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map entitled ''Fouts Springs-Deafy Glade Federal and Non-Federal Lands'' and dated July 17, 2008.

(5) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term ''non-Federal land'' means the 4 parcels of land comprising approximately 160 acres, as depicted on the map.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) LAND EXCHANGE REQUIRED.—If the County conveys to the Secretary all right, title, and interest of the County in and to the non-Federal land, the Secretary shall convey to the County all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Federal land.

(c) MAP.—

(1) AVAILABILITY.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service.

(2) CORRECTIONS.—With the agreement of the County, the Secretary may make technical corrections to the map and legal descriptions of the land to be exchanged under this section.

(d) APPLICABLE LAW.—Section 206 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716) shall apply to the land exchange under this section.

(e) SURVEY; ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The exact acreage and legal description of the land to be exchanged under subsection (b) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary.

(2) COSTS.—The costs of the survey and any administrative costs relating to the land exchange shall be paid by the County.

(f) CONDITION ON USE OF CONVEYED LAND.—As a condition of the conveyance of the Federal land to the County under subsection (b), the County shall agree to continue to use the Federal land for purposes consistent with the purposes described in the special use authorization for the Fouts Springs Ranch in effect as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(g) EASEMENT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may grant an easement to provide continued access to, and maintenance and use of, the facilities covered by the special use authorization referred to in subsection (f) as necessary for the continued operation of the Fouts Springs Ranch.

(h) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND.—The non-Federal land acquired by the Secretary under subsection (b) shall be—

(1) added to, and administered as part of, the Forest; and

(2) managed in accordance with—

(A) the Act of March 1, 1911 (commonly known as the ''Weeks Law'') (16 U.S.C. 480 et seq.); and

(B) the laws (including regulations) applicable to the National Forest System.

(i) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The land exchange under subsection (b) shall be subject to any additional terms and conditions that the Secretary and the County may agree on.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1573. A bill to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the city of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to provide more clean water for the City of Hermiston, for irrigators in the area and for the Umatilla River. It is good for farmers, fish and in-stream flows.

My legislation amends the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act—P.L. 102–575—to authorize the City of Hermiston, OR, to participate in what is known as the Title XVI water reclamation program. This long-standing U.S. Bureau of Reclamation program encourages the reclamation and use of municipal, industrial and agricultural waste water. In this case, the City of Hermiston will treat municipal waste water and deliver it to a local irrigation district—the West Extension Irrigation District—for agricultural use. My bill is a companion bill to legislation already introduced for this same purpose in the House of Representatives by Representative GREG WALDEN, H.R. 2714. As with other Title XVI projects, this legislation would authorize the Bureau to assist the City in developing this project and provide a cost-share of 25 percent for the project.

The current Hermiston Water Plant discharges ''Class C'' water that can be used only for a limited amount of off-project pastureland irrigation or discharged into the Umatilla River. Beginning in December 2010, a new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System limit will go into effect, changing the water temperature and pollutants requirements of treated water being put back into the river. Although the city is currently in compliance, once the new limits take effect, the city's current plant will not allow the city to meet the new requirements. As a result, the city will need to construct a new treatment plant, but it would still have difficulty meeting the water temperature requirements.

An upgrade of the plant would not only bring the city into compliance with the new discharge requirements, but it would increase the quality of the recycled water output from ''Class C'' water to ''Class A'' water, making it suitable for all irrigation needs, not just pastureland. Further, the proposed new plant would be configured to discharge its treated water to the West Extension Irrigation District, a Bureau of Reclamation-supported irrigation project. This will significantly increase the amount of water available to the District and will have a beneficial, long-term impact on a regional farming community that faces dwindling water supplies. Acreage available to utilize the city's recycled water discharge would increase from roughly 550 acres to nearly 11,000 acres.

Finally, by ending the discharge of warmer, lower quality water into the Umatilla River, the project will improve the habitat for wildlife and fish in the River, especially for endangered and threatened species. I am pleased that the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which has fishing rights in the Umatilla River, supports the city's efforts in this regard.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. 1574. A bill to establish a Clean Energy for Homes and Buildings Program in the Department of Energy to provide financial assistance to promote residential-, commercial-, and industrial-scale energy efficiency and on-site renewable technologies; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1574

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Clean Energy for Homes and Buildings Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) homes and commercial or industrial buildings in the United States consume significant quantities of energy, including energy for electricity and heating, the generation or combustion of which creates significant quantities of greenhouse gas emissions;

(2) in most cases, energy efficiency is the most cost-effective and rapidly deployable strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy demand, and the need for long-distance transmission of energy;

(3) on-site renewable energy generation reduces greenhouse gas emissions, demand on the electricity transmission grid, and the need for long-distance transmission of energy;

(4) many energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy generation systems produce a net cost savings over the course of the useful life of the measures and systems, and often over a shorter time frame, but the initial expense required to purchase and install the measures and systems is often a significant barrier to widespread investment in the measures and systems;

(5) financial products, financing programs, and other programs that reduce or eliminate the need for the initial expense described in paragraph (4) can permit building owners to invest in measures and systems that reduce total energy costs and realize net cost savings at the time of the installation of the measures and systems, defer capital expenditure, and enhance the value, comfort, and sustainability of the property of the owners; and

(6) State and local governments, utilities, energy efficiency and renewable energy service providers, banks, finance companies, community development organizations, and other entities are developing financial products and programs to provide financing assistance for building owners to encourage the use of the measures and systems described in paragraph (4), including programs that allow repayment of loans under programs described in paragraph (5) through utility bills, or through property-based assessments, taxes, or charges, to facilitate loan repayment for the benefit of building owners and lenders or program sponsors.

SEC. 3. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to encourage widespread deployment of energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy technologies in homes and other buildings throughout the United States through the establishment of a self-sustaining Clean Energy for Homes and Buildings Program that can—

(1) encourage the widespread availability of financial products and programs with attractive rates and terms that significantly reduce or eliminate upfront expenses to allow building owners (including homeowners, business owners, owners of multi-family housing, owners of multi-tenant commercial properties, and owners of other residential, commercial, or industrial properties) to invest in energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy systems with payback periods of up to 25 years or the useful life of such a measure or system by providing credit support, credit enhancement, secondary markets, and other support to originators of the financial products and sponsors of the financing programs; and

(2) help building owners invest in measures and systems that reduce energy costs, in many cases creating a net cost savings that can be realized in the short-term, and may also allow building owners to defer capital expenditures and increase the value, comfort, and sustainability of the property of the owners.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COST.—The term ''cost'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(2) DIRECT LOAN.—The term ''direct loan'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(3) LOAN GUARANTEE.—The term ''loan guarantee'' has the meaning given the term in section 502 of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a).

(4) PROGRAM.—The term ''Program'' means the Clean Energy for Homes and Buildings Program established by section 6.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Energy.

(6) SECURITY.—The term ''security'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77b).

(7) STATE.—The term ''State'' means—

(A) a State;

(B) the District of Columbia;

(C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; and

(D) any other territory or possession of the United States.

SEC. 5. CLEAN ENERGY FOR HOMES AND BUILDINGS GOALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop and publish for review and comment in the Federal Register near-, medium-, and long-term goals (including numerical performance targets at appropriate intervals to measure progress toward those goals) for—

(1)(A) a minimum number of homes to be retrofitted through energy efficiency measures or to have on-site renewable energy systems added;

(B) a minimum number of other buildings, by type, to be retrofitted through energy efficiency measures or to have on-site renewable energy systems added; and

(C) the number of on-site solar energy, wind energy, and geothermal heat pump systems to be installed; and

(2) as a result of those retrofits, additions, and installations—

(A) the quantity by which use of grid-supplied electricity, natural gas, home heating oil, and other fuels will be reduced;

(B) the quantity by which total fossil fuel dependence in the buildings sector will be reduced;

(C) the quantity by which greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced;

(D) the number of jobs that will be created; and

(E) the estimated total energy cost savings for building owners.

(b) ESTIMATES BY ORIGINATORS OR SPONSORS.—The Secretary may rely on reasonable estimates made by originators of financial products or sponsors of financing programs for tracking progress toward meeting the goals established under this section instead of requiring building owners to monitor and report on the progress.

SEC. 6. CLEAN ENERGY FOR HOMES AND BUILDINGS PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department of Energy a program to be known as the Clean Energy for Homes and Buildings Program.

(b) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In administering the Program, the Secretary shall establish eligibility criteria for applicants for financial assistance under subsection (c) who can offer financial products and programs consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(2) CRITERIA.—Criteria for applicants shall—

(A) take into account—

(i) the number and type of buildings that can be served by the applicant, the size of the potential market, and the scope of the program (in terms of measures or technologies to be used);

(ii) the ability of the applicant to successfully execute the proposed program and maintain the performance of the proposed projects and investments;

(iii) financial criteria, as applicable, including the ability of the applicant to raise private capital or other sources of funds for the proposed program;

(iv) criteria that enable the Secretary to determine sound program design, including—

(I) an assurance of credible energy efficiency or renewable energy generation performance; and

(II) financial product or program design that effectively reduces barriers posed by traditional financing programs;

(v) such criteria, standards, guidelines, and mechanisms as will enable the Secretary, to the maximum extent practicable, to communicate to program sponsors and originators, servicers, and sellers of financial obligations the eligibility of loans for resale;

(vi) the ability of the applicant to report relevant data on program performance; and

(vii) the ability of the applicant to use incentives or marketing techniques that are likely to result in successful market penetration; and

(B) encourage—

(i) use of technologies that are either well-established or new, but demonstrated to be reliable;

(ii) applicants that can offer building owners payment plans generally designed to permit the combination of energy payments and assessments or charges from the installation or payments associated with financing to be lower than the energy payments prior to installing energy efficiency measures or on-site renewable energy technologies;

(iii) applicants that will use repayment mechanisms convenient for building owners, such as tax-increment financing, special tax districts, on-utility-bill repayment, or other mechanisms;

(iv) applicants that can provide convenience for building owners by combining participation in the lending program with—

(I) processing for tax credits and other incentives;

(II) technical assistance in selecting and working with vendors to provide energy efficiency measures or on-site renewable energy generation systems;

(v) applicants the projects of which will use contractors that hire within a 50-mile radius of the project, or as close as is practicable;

(vi) applicants that will use materials and technologies manufactured in the United States;

(vii) partnerships with or other involvement of State workforce investment boards, labor organizations, community-based organizations, State-approved apprenticeship programs, and other job training entities; and

(viii) applicants that can provide financing programs or financial products that mitigate barriers other than the initial expense of installing measures or technologies, such as unfavorable lease terms.

(3) DIVERSE PORTFOLIO.—In establishing criteria and selecting applicants to receive financial assistance under subsection (c), to the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall select a portfolio of investments that reaches a diversity of building owners, including—

(A) individual homeowners;

(B) multifamily apartment building owners;

(C) condominium owners associations;

(D) commercial building owners, including multi-tenant commercial properties; and

(E) industrial building owners.

(c) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For applicants determined to be eligible under criteria established under subsection (b), the Secretary may provide financial assistance in the form of direct loans, letters of credit, loan guarantees, insurance products, other credit enhancements or debt instruments (including securitization or indirect credit support), or other financial products to promote the widespread deployment of, and mobilize private sector support of credit and investment institutions for, energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy generation systems in buildings.

(2) FINANCIAL PRODUCTS.—The Secretary—

(A) in cooperation with Federal, State, local, and private sector entities, shall develop debt instruments that provide for the aggregation of, or directly aggregate, programs for the deployment of energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy generation systems on a scale appropriate for residential, commercial, or industrial applications; and

(B) may insure, guarantee, purchase, and make commitments to purchase any debt instrument associated with the deployment of clean energy technologies (including subordinated securities) for the purpose of enhancing the availability of private financing for the deployment of energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy generation systems.

(3) APPLICATION REVIEW.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To the maximum extent practicable and consistent with sound business practices, the Secretary shall seek to expedite reviews of applications for credit support under this Act in order to communicate to applicants in a timely manner the likelihood of support so that the applicants can seek private capital in order to receive final approval.

(B) MECHANISMS.—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall consider using mechanisms such as—

(i) a system for conditional pre-approval that informs applicants that final applicants will be approved, if established conditions are met;

(ii) clear guidelines that communicate to applicants what level of performance on eligibility criteria will ensure approval for credit support or resale;

(iii) in the case of an applicant portfolio of more than 300 loans or other financial arrangement, an expedited review based on statistical sampling to ensure that the loan or other financial arrangement meets the eligibility criteria; and

(iv) in the case of an applicant with a demonstrated track record with respect to successfully originating eligible loans or other financial arrangements and who meets appropriate other criteria determined by the Secretary, a system for delegating responsibility for meeting eligibility criteria that includes appropriate protections such as buyback mechanisms in the event criteria are determined not to have been met.

(C) DISPOSITION OF DEBT OR INTEREST.—The Secretary may acquire, hold, and sell or otherwise dispose of, pursuant to commitments or otherwise, any debt associated with the deployment of clean energy technologies or interest in the debt.

(D) PRICING.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish requirements, and impose charges or fees, which may be regarded as elements of pricing, for different classes of applicants, originators, sellers, servicers, or services.

(ii) CLASSIFICATION OF APPLICANTS, ORIGINATORS, SELLERS AND SERVICERS.—For the purpose of clause (i), the Secretary may classify applicants, originators, sellers and servicers as necessary to promote transparency and liquidity and properly characterize the risk of default.

(E) SECONDARY MARKET SUPPORT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may lend on the security of, and make commitments to lend on the security of, any debt that the Secretary has insured, guaranteed, issued or is authorized to purchase under this section.

(ii) AUTHORIZED ACTIONS.—On such terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may—

(I) give security;

(II) insure;

(III) guarantee;

(IV) purchase;

(V) sell;

(VI) pay interest or other return; and

(VII) issue notes, debentures, bonds, or other obligations or securities.

(F) LENDING ACTIVITIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall determine—

(I) the volume of the lending activities of the Program; and

(II) the types of loan ratios, risk profiles, interest rates, maturities, and charges or fees in the secondary market operations of the Program.

(ii) OBJECTIVES.—Determinations under clause (i) shall be consistent with the objectives of—

(I) providing an attractive investment environment for programs that install energy efficiency measures or on-site renewable energy generation technologies;

(II) making the operations of the Program self-supporting over the long term; and

(III) advancing the goals established under this Act.

(G) EXEMPT SECURITIES.—All securities issued, insured, or guaranteed by the Secretary shall, to the same extent as securities that are direct obligations of or obligations guaranteed as to principal or interest by the United States, be considered to be exempt securities within the meaning of the laws administered by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

SEC. 7. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

(a) PERIODIC REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after commencement of operation of the Program and at least biannually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report that includes a description of the Program in meeting the purpose and goals established by or pursuant to this Act.

(b) AUDITS BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The programs, activities, receipts, expenditures, and financial transactions of the Program shall be subject to audit by the Comptroller General of the United States under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Comptroller General.

(2) ACCESS.—The representatives of the Government Accountability Office shall—

(A) have access to the personnel and to all books, accounts, documents, records (including electronic records), reports, files, and all other papers, automated data, things, or property belonging to, under the control of, or in use by the Program, or any agent, representative, attorney, advisor, or consultant retained by the Program, and necessary to facilitate the audit;

(B) be afforded full facilities for verifying transactions with the balances or securities held by depositories, fiscal agents, and custodians;

(C) be authorized to obtain and duplicate any such books, accounts, documents, records, working papers, automated data and files, or other information relevant to the audit without cost to the Comptroller General; and

(D) have the right of access of the Comptroller General to such information pursuant to section 716(c) of title 31, United States Code.

(3) ASSISTANCE AND COST.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For the purpose of conducting an audit under this subsection, the Comptroller General may, in the discretion of the Comptroller General, employ by contract, without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5), professional services of firms and organizations of certified public accountants for temporary periods or for special purposes.

(B) REIMBURSEMENT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—On the request of the Comptroller General, the Secretary shall reimburse the General Accountability Office for the full cost of any audit conducted by the Comptroller General under this subsection.

(ii) CREDITING.—Such reimbursements shall—

(I) be credited to the appropriation account entitled ''Salaries and Expenses, Government Accountability Office'' at the time at which the payment is received; and

(II) remain available until expended.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act $2,000,000,000.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 1575. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that excess oil and gas lease revenues are distributed in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Naval Oil Shale Reserve Mineral Royalty Revenue Allocation Act. It is a bill designed to release mineral royalty receipts to Colorado where the receipts were generated from gas development within this reserve on the western slope near Rifle, Colorado.

By way of background, in 1997, Congress transferred the federal Naval Oil Shale Reserve lands in western Colorado from the U.S. Department of Energy, DOE, to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, BLM, and directed the BLM to begin leasing the oil and gas resources under these lands. The Transfer Act also directed that the royalties recouped from this leasing program be set aside and the state portion not disbursed to Colorado until the Interior Department and the DOE certified that enough money from the royalty receipts accrued to satisfy two purposes.

The first was to provide funding to clean up the Anvil Points site on these lands. Anvil Points was an oil shale research facility that operated within the Naval Oil Shale Reserve for about 40 years. The facility was operated by DOE at one point, and private industry performed research there under contract. Waste material was produced at this facility from oil shale mining and processing. That waste accumulated in a pile of about 300,000 cubic yards of spent oil shale and other material—including arsenic and other heavy metals—which rests on slopes below the facility.

The second purpose was for the reimbursement of certain costs related to the transfer.

Following the transfer to the BLM, this area experienced significant natural gas leasing and, as a result, significant royalty revenue was generated.

On August 8, 2008, the DOI and DOE certified that adequate funds had accrued to accomplish the goals of cleanup and cost reimbursement and subsequently allocated all royalty revenue generated after this date according to the Mineral Leasing Act, which establishes that Colorado receive a proportionate share.

However, considerably more revenue accrued than was necessary to accomplish the cleanup and cost reimbursement goals. This bill would direct that this additional royalty revenue be allocated to Colorado according to the formulas and processes established for the disbursement of federal mineral royalties under the Mineral Leasing Act.

The bill also directs that the Colorado share of this remaining royalty revenue be allocated to the two Counties directly impacted by oil and gas leasing on the Naval Oil Shale Reserve lands—specifically, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties. The bill further requires that the royalties be used to address these impacts through activities such as land and water restoration, road repair, and other capital improvement projects.

Based on figures provided by the BLM, there remains approximately $17 million in these accounts for Colorado's royalty revenue share. This bill would make Colorado whole and provide it with its rightful share of the remaining royalty revenue to address critical local needs and impacts from the very leasing that produced the royalty revenue.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1575

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

SECTION 1. TREATMENT OF OIL SHALE RESERVE RECEIPTS.

Section 7439(f) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3)(A) The moneys deposited in the Treasury under paragraph (1) that exceed the amounts described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) shall be transferred by the Secretary of the Treasury in accordance with section 35 of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 191) to the State of Colorado for use in accordance with subparagraph (B).

''(B) Amounts transferred to the State of Colorado under subparagraph (A) shall be used by the State and political subdivisions of the State for—

''(i) conservation, restoration, and protection of land, water, and wildlife resources affected by oil or gas development activities in Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties in the State;

''(ii) repair, maintenance, and construction of State and county roads in each of those counties; and

''(iii) the conduct of capital improvement projects (including the construction and maintenance of sewer and water treatment plants) that are designed and carried out to address the impacts of oil and gas development activities in each of those counties.''.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1576. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a carbon incentives program to achieve supplemental greenhouse gas emission reductions on private forest land of the

United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that will establish a Forest Carbon Incentives Program to help America's family forest owners slow climate change by increasing carbon sequestration and storage on private forestland. This will be critical for our national climate change response, and will create important economic opportunities for landowners across America. I want to thank my colleagues, Senators SNOWE, COLLINS, SANDERS, MERKLEY, WYDEN, LEAHY and SCHUMER, with whom I have worked closely to draft this bill. I also want to acknowledge Senator STABENOW, who has long provided leadership on this issue of carbon sequestration.

This legislation is driven by a simple fact: we cannot achieve our greenhouse gas reduction goals without comprehensive and effective utilization of U.S. forests for carbon sequestration. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that U.S. forests currently sequester a remarkable 10 percent of our annual U.S. carbon emissions. Even more remarkably, the EPA estimates that we could double this sequestration capacity to 20 percent of emissions with the right management and conservation.

Unlike some of our emerging energy technologies, forest carbon sequestration is a climate strategy that is ready to go to work right now on meeting our emissions reduction goals. We can immediately put forest owners to work on their lands undertaking activities to help move us to that 20 percent sequestration goal, and create new revenue streams for those small and family landowners to help them navigate through these troubled economic times.

One important pathway to achieve these forest carbon sequestration goals will be through carbon offset markets. For those able to participate, carbon offset programs will provide important financial incentives for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while, at the same time, helping to keep the costs of a climate program low. The opportunity to earn offset credits will create a financial incentive for large forest landowners to undertake activities that increase carbon sequestration and storage on their lands and that can be measured and verified with the precision necessary to meet rigorous environmental integrity requirements.

However, offset markets will not be easily accessible to the many family forest owners and other smaller landowners who do not have the necessary economies of scale to effectively participate in offset markets. Offset projects come with many upfront and ongoing transactional expenses that will undermine financial gains and constrain the flexibility that family forest owners and other smaller scale landowners will require to participate.

Furthermore, there are some important types of carbon sequestration and storage activities, such as permanent conservation easements, that produce real carbon gains over the long term but are hard to quantify with the precision necessary for offset markets.

We also need to engage the full range of carbon strategies to meet our carbon sequestration goals, even if they cannot conform to the requirements of offsets.

Engaging family forest owners in sequestration is no small piece of the forest carbon equation—America's family forest owners control more than half of all U.S. private forestland, with 119 million acres in ownerships of 100 acres or less. We must create new tools to engage these individuals in efforts to sequester carbon and provide economic opportunities to gain financial incentives for doing that work.

In my home State of New Hampshire, our forests embody this diverse ownership pattern and the unique opportunity to address climate change through forest carbon incentives. New Hampshire is the second most forested state in the nation, and more than 80 percent of that forestland is in private hands. We do have some large private ownerships, including large blocks of working forestland. But most of our privately owned forestland is in small ownerships—averaging 37.5 acres. According to the U.S. Forest Service, 49 percent of New Hampshire's forestland, 2,358,000 acres, is in family ownership, with 124,000 family forest owners in the Granite State.

If these landowners could aggregate their capacity to store carbon on the 2 million acres they own, they could make a significant contribution to needed reductions in the presence of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Each year New Hampshire forests already take up by photosynthesis 25 percent of the total CO2 emitted by the State from man-made sources.

But we can capture even more carbon in our Nation's forests with the right incentives like those in our proposed program. Creating incentives for forest carbon would represent a win-win for New Hampshire and a win-win in every State in the Nation that has privately owned forested landscapes.

Simply, the Forest Carbon Incentives Program will provide financial incentives for small private forest owners to engage in carbon sequestration activities and help our country meet its desired carbon reduction goals. The Forest Carbon Incentives Program will be run through the U.S. Forest Service and State forestry agencies. These experienced forest professionals will work with interested private forest owners to develop a ''climate mitigation contract'' for undertaking forest management activities that will increase carbon absorption and storage. Incentives will be awarded on a straightforward ''practices per acre'' basis, giving landowners a clear and simple agreement and reliable incentive payments. Carbon reductions achieved through these practices are not required to be permanently stored, so landowners will retain more flexibility with future management decisions. This simple and efficient program structure will enable landowners at any scale to participate, especially family forest owners holding smaller parcels that are unlikely to participate in carbon offset markets.

The program will create additional incentive opportunities for interested landowners to protect carbon gains achieved through a climate mitigation contract. Landowners can gain ''bonus'' incentive payments for also undertaking management that addresses pests, fire, and other threats that could damage forests and release the carbon that has been stored there. Landowners can also be paid for a permanent conservation easement that will assure that their lands in the program will never be developed, thereby protecting the carbon in those forests.

This legislation already enjoys support from a broad spectrum of national organizations that care about America's forests, such as the American Forest Foundation, the National Association of State Foresters, The Trust for Public Land, the National Wildlife Federation, and The Nature Conservancy among many others. Of equal importance, it has earned broad support from local, state, and regional interest groups, including the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association, Northland Forest Products, Appalachian Mountain Club, and a host of other leading forest organizations in my home state.

America must use every tool available to address climate change, and should especially favor strategies that are ready to go now and that create new economic opportunities. This legislation will provide both a meaningful climate mitigation strategy and create real jobs in the woods. I encourage my fellow Senators to consider it carefully.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1576

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Forest Carbon Incentives Program Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. CARBON INCENTIVES PROGRAM TO ACHIEVE SUPPLEMENTAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTIONS ON PRIVATE FOREST LAND.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AVOIDED DEFORESTATION AGREEMENT.—The term ''avoided deforestation agreement'' means a permanent conservation easement that—

(A) covers eligible land that—

(i) is enrolled under a climate mitigation contract; and

(ii) will not be converted for development; and

(B) is consistent with the guidelines for—

(i) the Forest Legacy Program established under section 7 of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (16 U.S.C. 2103c); or

(ii) any other program approved by the Secretary for use under this section to provide consistency with Federal legal requirements for permanent conservation easements.

(2) CLIMATE MITIGATION CONTRACT; CONTRACT.—The term ''climate mitigation contract'' or ''contract'' means a contract of not less than 15 years that specifies—

(A) the eligible practices that will be undertaken;

(B) the acreage of eligible land on which the practices will be undertaken;

(C) the agreed rate of compensation per acre; and

(D) a schedule to verify that the terms of the contract have been fulfilled.

(3) ELIGIBLE LAND.—The term ''eligible land'' means forest land in the United States that is privately owned at the time of initiation of a climate mitigation contract.

(4) ELIGIBLE PRACTICE.—The term ''eligible practice'' means a forestry practice, including improved forest management that produces marketable forest products, that is determined by the Secretary to provide measurable increases in carbon sequestration and storage beyond customary practices on comparable land.

(5) PROGRAM.—The term ''program'' means the carbon incentives program established under this section.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(b) SUPPLEMENTAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a carbon incentives program to achieve supplemental greenhouse gas emission reductions on private forest land of the United States.

(2) FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide to owners of eligible land financial incentive payments for—

(i) eligible practices that measurably increase carbon sequestration and storage over a designated period on eligible land, as specified through a climate mitigation contract; and

(ii) subject to subparagraph (B), permanent avoided deforestation agreements on eligible land covered under a climate mitigation contract.

(B) NO AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—Eligibility for financial incentive payments under a climate mitigation contract described in subparagraph (A)(i) shall not require an avoided deforestation agreement.

(c) PERFORMANCE OF SUPPLEMENTAL REDUCTIONS.—In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall report under subsection (f) on progress toward reaching the following levels of carbon sequestration and storage through climate mitigation contracts:

(1) 100,000,000 tons of carbon reductions by 2020.

(2) 200,000,000 tons of further carbon reductions by 2030.

(d) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) CONTRACT REQUIRED.—To participate in the program, an owner of eligible land shall enter into a climate mitigation contract with the Secretary.

(2) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—In establishing the program, the Secretary shall provide that—

(A) funds provided under this section shall not be substituted for, or otherwise used as a basis for reducing, funding authorized or appropriated under other programs to compensate owners of eligible land for activities that are not covered under a climate mitigation contract;

(B) emission reductions or sequestration achieved through a climate mitigation contract shall not be eligible for crediting under any federally established carbon offset program; and

(C) compensation for activities under this program shall be set at such a rate so as not to exceed the net estimated benefit an owner of eligible land would receive for similar practices under any federally established carbon offset program, taking into consideration the costs associated with the issuance of credits and compliance with reversal provisions.

(3) REVERSALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In developing regulations for climate mitigation contracts, the Secretary shall specify requirements in accordance with this paragraph to address intentional or unintentional reversal of carbon sequestration during the contract period.

(B) INTENTIONAL REVERSALS.—If the Secretary finds an owner of eligible land violated a climate mitigation contract by intentionally reversing a practice or otherwise intentionally failing to comply with the contract, the Secretary shall terminate the contract and require the owner to repay any contract payments in an amount that reflects the lost carbon sequestration.

(C) UNINTENTIONAL REVERSAL.—If the Secretary finds an eligible practice has been unintentionally reversed due to events outside the control of the owner of eligible land, the Secretary shall reevaluate and may modify or terminate the climate mitigation contract, after consultation with the owner, taking into consideration lost carbon sequestration and the future carbon sequestration potential of the contract.

(e) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

(1) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue regulations that specify eligible practices and related compensation rates, standards, and guidelines as the basis for entering into climate mitigation contracts with owners of eligible land.

(2) SET-ASIDE OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not less than 35 percent of program funds made available under this program for a fiscal year shall be used—

(i) to provide additional incentives for owners of eligible land that carry out activities and enter into agreements that protect carbon reductions and otherwise enhance environmental benefits achieved under a climate mitigation contract; and

(ii) to develop forest carbon monitoring and methodologies that will improve the tracking of carbon gains achieved under the program.

(B) USE.—Of the amount of program funds made available for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall use—

(i) at least 25 percent to make funds available on a competitive basis to compensate owners for entering avoided deforestation agreements on land subject to a climate mitigation contract;

(ii) not more than 10 percent to provide incentive payments for additional management activities that increase the adaptive capacity of land under a climate mitigation contract; and

(iii) not more than 2 percent for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program of the Forest Service to develop improved measurement and monitoring of forest carbon stocks.

(f) PROGRAM MEASUREMENT, MONITORING, VERIFICATION, AND REPORTING.—

(1) MEASUREMENT, MONITORING, AND VERIFICATION.—The Secretary shall establish and implement protocols that provide monitoring and verification of compliance with climate mitigation contracts, including both direct and indirect effects and any reversal of sequestration.

(2) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—At least annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that contains—

(A) an estimate of annual and cumulative reductions achieved as a result of the program, determined using standardized measures, including measures of economic efficiency; and

(B) a summary of any changes to the program that will be made as a result of program measurement, monitoring, and verification.

(3) AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—Each report required by this subsection shall be available to the public through the website of the Department of Agriculture.

(4) PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS.—At least once every 2 years the Secretary shall adjust eligible practices and compensation rates for future climate mitigation contracts based on the results of monitoring under paragraph (1) and reporting under paragraph (2).

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as are necessary.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 237—COMMENDING BLUE STAR FAMILIES FOR SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES AND INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF MILITARY LIFE

Mr. WARNER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

S. RES. 237

Whereas more than 1,000,000 United States troops have served in ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including members of the National Guard and Reserve,

Whereas the millions of immediate family members of United States servicemembers, including spouses, children, and parents, have contributed and sacrificed as well;

Whereas the families of each servicemember contribute vitally to the strength of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas military families, often facing significant challenges such as long separations from loved ones and frequent household moves, are civilians who serve in support of United States servicemembers;

Whereas Blue Star Families is an organization of family members of active duty, National Guard, and Reserve members of the Armed Forces serving during war time, and connects military families with civilian communities, increases awareness of the unique challenges of military life, and provides morale and support for military families; and

Whereas, in order for military families to continue to support servicemembers during this extended period of conflict, the Senate and people of the United States should support military families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the sacrifices made by Blue Star Families as members of military families and as an organization dedicated to all military families and improving the welfare of the United States;

(2) commends the patriotic efforts of Blue Star Families;

(3) commends, and offers sincere thanks to, all servicemembers and military families; and