

OFFSHORE PRODUCTION AND SAFETY ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the importance of responsibly increasing our domestic drilling and energy production in order to secure America's energy future. Montana is home to the Bakken oil and gasfield, the largest technically recoverable onshore oilfield in the United States. In 2007, production from Elm Coulee field in Richland County averaged 53,000 barrels per day—more than the entire State of Montana a few years earlier. That number is expected to rise significantly as new pathways to market are put in place. Advancements in oil and gas technology are also making it possible for us to extract resources that just 5 years ago no one thought was possible.

I will continue to push responsible development of the Bakken Field. Oil and gas development in the Bakken region has applied new technology originally designed to enhance natural gas development and turned a small field into the largest onshore field in the United States. Our job in the Senate should be to encourage these kinds of innovations. Our job in the Senate should be to make sure that in places like the Bakken, where it makes all the sense in the world to develop, government agencies approve and permit exploration and development in a timely fashion. The Bakken is a strong example of where Montana is contributing to increasing American-made energy.

The Outer Continental Shelf is another good example. We can and should encourage investment in this area so that we increase production to meet our needs as the consumer of 25 percent of the world's produced oil. We must also continue to explore for new resources—and prove those—since as of now we only have 3 percent of the world's reserves.

Unfortunately, there are a number of proposals supported by my colleagues across the aisle who do not responsibly balance the U.S. energy needs with our responsibility to protect our coastal communities and other economic livelihoods. Specifically, S. 953 does the exact opposite of what we need to safely and responsibly increase American production.

The systemic lack of oversight in the Minerals Management Service was a critical component of last year's Deepwater Horizon explosion and 3-month oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. The failure of BP, Halliburton and others to follow safety requirements, and the failure of the Federal Government to enforce these requirements, has cost our country tens of millions of dollars. These irresponsible oversights caused significant economic and environmental harm to an entire region.

In response to this disaster, the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling stated as their first finding that “the explosive loss of the Macondo

well could have been prevented.” The report key findings also state, “Fundamental reform will be needed in both the structure of those in charge of the regulator oversight and their internal decision making process to ensure their political autonomy, technical expertise, and the full consideration of environmental protection concerns.”

S. 953 does the exact opposite of what the offshore drilling commission recommended by encouraging lax oversight by setting an arbitrary timeline of 60 days, allowing insufficient time for in-depth analysis. Let's be honest: the practical effect of that policy would be for certain administrations to approve permits that they should not approve while other administrations reject permits that could ultimately have been approved. This kind of rush to judgment will only inject even more politics into our energy debates. As the Senate has shown time and again, that is the last thing we need.

No, it is time for a little less politicking and a little more common sense in our energy policy. Yet this bill also forces the Department of Interior to reissue leases without any environmental review—the opposite of the full environmental consideration the BP oilspill commission suggested. When a group of folks get together and tell you how to prevent another Gulf of Mexico disaster, the commonsense thing to do is listen to them.

I believe there are responsible measures we can take and should take to increase domestic production, which makes us more energy secure and helps to insulate us from unpredictable ups and downs in world production. We need to dedicate resources to efficiently and effectively processing drilling applications. But tying the agencies' hands behind their backs with arbitrary deadlines or forcing them to hold lease sales and not process environmental reviews does not address the problem.

If the Deepwater Horizon disaster proved anything, it is that cutting corners doesn't promote our economy or protect our environment. Encouraging regulators to look the other way or deny permits because they cannot fully consider them is antithetical to good governance. That is not good for American production, American jobs or American energy security.

PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to speak about a devastating illness, pancreatic cancer, and what we in the Senate can do to address this serious problem. Winston Churchill once said, “Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.” I could not agree more.

Pancreatic cancer is a serious disease that affects over 42,000 Americans each year. We have made great strides to expand cancer research and improve treatments, but unfortunately pan-

creatic cancer research is where breast cancer research was in the 1930s. The survival rate for pancreatic cancer today is the same as it was 30 years ago. We have little understanding of the causes, no methods of early detection, few effective treatments, and single-digit survival rates.

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth-leading cause of cancer death in the United States, and 75 percent of pancreatic cancer patients die within a year of diagnosis; the 5-year survival rate is barely 5 percent.

According to a recent report on cancer trends, death rates for pancreatic cancer are increasing while death rates for all cancers combined, including the four most common cancers, prostate, breast, lung and colorectal, continue to decline. It is time to do something about this tragedy, this death sentence for tens of thousands of Americans.

It is time to make a serious commitment to ensure that advances in pancreatic cancer research keep up with the progress we have seen in fighting other types of cancers. That is why I am proud to be a cosponsor of S. 362, the Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Act, introduced by the Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE. This legislation is designed to address the shortfalls in pancreatic cancer research by developing a comprehensive, strategic annual plan for pancreatic cancer research and awareness activities.

The Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Act would better target research, develop a cadre of committed scientists, promote physician and public awareness and require accountability for these efforts. The bill creates a 5-year pilot project for the highest mortality cancers, defined as those with 5-year survival rates below 50 percent. It builds upon the Specialized Programs of Research Excellence, SPORes, that exist for breast and prostate cancer by designating at least two additional pancreatic cancer SPORes.

Finally, the bill promotes physician and public awareness through partnerships between the National Institutes of Health, NIH, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, and patient advocacy organizations to develop a primary care provider education program.

The most important thing that we in Congress can do for those who have pancreatic cancer is to resolve to find new ways to improve treatments for those suffering from this devastating disease.

The health of our citizens is not a Democratic or Republican issue, it is an American priority and one we must all champion. The well-being of our country depends on the well-being of our citizens.

I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in supporting S. 362, the Pancreatic Cancer Research and Education Act.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MELANIE AH SOON

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate an outstanding educator from my State, Melanie Ah Soon from Sacred Hearts Academy, for receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

This award, administered by the National Science Foundation on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, is the highest recognition that a mathematics or science teacher may receive. Since the program's inception in 1983, more than 4,000 educators nationwide have been recognized for their contributions to mathematics and science education. As a former educator and principal, I know firsthand about the countless hours that go into creating curricula, and it makes me proud to see outstanding teachers receive recognition for their hard work.

The dedication of Melanie to her field and to the children of Hawaii is undeniable. I applaud her for receiving this outstanding recognition, and I wish her the very best in her future endeavors.●

REMEMBERING GEORGE ROGERS

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, today I wish to memorialize one of Alaska's greatest pioneers and statesmen, Mr. George W. Rogers. Born to immigrant parents in 1917, George Rogers died on October 3, 2010, in the Juneau home he designed. By his side were Jean, his wife of 68 years, their children, and several close friends.

Often described as a "Renaissance man," George devoted his adult life to the spirit of the Territory and State of Alaska. As an economist, politician, educator, author, architect and artist, his contributions shaped the state and he will always be part of Alaska's story.

Armed with a B.S. in economics from University of California at Berkeley, George began his long and historic Alaskan career in 1945. With the hope of feeding U.S. troops with less expense, the Office of Price Administration sent him up to negotiate reduced prices for raw fish. The job ended with the close of WWII, but George stayed on to advise several territorial governors, among them Ernest Gruening, who later would become one of Alaska's first U.S. Senators. It was Governor Gruening who encouraged George to attend Harvard for an MPA and a Ph.D.

Dr. Rogers saw in economics the effects of dynamic forces of change, largely those related political, bureaucratic, and technical conditions. To George, Alaska was the perfect petri dish to study his "real world" of economics, and to that study he devoted his life.

At Governor Gruening's request, George created a revenue system for the Territory of Alaska. Later, during

the fight for statehood, Territorial Governor B. Frank Heintzelman sent him as a consultant to the Alaska Constitutional Convention where he also served as the stand-in for the convention's secretary. He considered his greatest contribution to the convention his work on apportionment to ensure Alaska's rural people are fairly represented.

Of the convention he said:

We had been through a decade-long . . . worldwide depression. We had World War II, and so Republicans and Democrats both realized that we've got to put aside political differences and look at the construction of our government. And it was such a wonderful, uplifting experience to have the two competing parties sit together and work this out. . . . it's one of the high points of my whole life because it was a period of great hope.

George applied this experience of hope and optimism to the rest of his professional and personal life. Believing in the possible, he influenced the fair development and treatment of Alaska's fisheries, timber, and oil for the benefit of all. He was involved in circumpolar research, the development of the Alaska Permanent Fund, and he helped to establish the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska. The Institute observes its 50th anniversary this year, dedicating the celebration to Dr. Rogers.

Much of George's personal time was shared with the city of Juneau. Elected to the assembly both before and after statehood, he served on numerous committees and as a member of the Juneau Rotary Club. His architectural skills provided the design for the Zach Gordon Youth Center, a vibrant recreation facility dedicated exclusively to Juneau's youth.

George was a great enthusiast and supporter of the arts. He designed sets for local productions, created the art for program covers and posters, and acted and sang on the stage. His abilities and openness of heart encouraged others to greater heights. He was a lifetime member of the Juneau Symphony Foundation, a member of the Juneau Lyric Opera, and the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council.

A loving and caring husband and father, George and his wife Jean were a unit. With the addition of six adopted children, George redesigned and expanded their two-room, 1948 miner's cabin until it became a five-bedroom, two-bath home. The house burned in 2000, but the irrepressible George began designs for the new one the following day.

As we bid farewell to his physical presence, George's many contributions live in perpetuity. Whether through his advisory work, his scholarly work, or the seven books he wrote—some of which have been adapted as educational textbooks—he made a lasting difference.

George's friends not only realize the depth of his impact on Alaskan life, they will also always remember the

twinkle in his eye, his quick wit, his honesty, and his ability to best them at dominos.

George Rogers was a great man, a role model, an Alaskan, and he has left an enduring legacy.●

GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the remarkable accomplishments of Granada Hills Charter High School's Academic Decathlon team, which won the 2011 Academic Decathlon and its first national championship. Members of the national championship team include: Austin Kang, Harsimar Dhanoa, Elysia Eastty, Joon Lee, Shagun Goyal, Riki Higashida, Eugene Lee, Sindhura Seeni, and Celine Ta. The team is coached by Matt Arnold, Nick Weber, and Spencer Wolf.

Each year, hundreds of high schools throughout the Nation compete for the honor of becoming Academic Decathlon national champions. This year, Granada Hills Charter High School earned the distinction of winning its first national championship, as well as California's 9th consecutive national title and 18th overall championship.

Competing in an Academic Decathlon is a daunting task. Students spend many hours studying, practicing, and competing, often away from their family and friends. The Academic Decathlon's intense 2-day national final competitions include testing at seven different events, speeches, essay writing, and interviewing exercises. As the Granada Hills community celebrates the hard work and achievement of the Granada Hills Decathlon team, I invite all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating California's Granada Hills Charter High School Academic Decathlon team on becoming the 2011 National Academic Decathlon Champions.●

MECCA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I welcome the students from the 6th grade class at Mecca Elementary School, who are visiting Washington, DC. I am particularly honored to have these students visit the U.S. Capitol because they know firsthand how important it is to speak up and be heard to make government officials aware of vital issues that affect their community.

Like all Americans, the residents of Mecca, CA, have the right to expect that the air they breathe is clean, and that the Federal and State government will enforce the Nation's environmental laws to protect them from dangerous pollution. Unfortunately, some residents in Mecca became sick from overpowering air pollution coming from a nearby waste recycling facility. The noxious odors posed a public health risk to the two schools located