

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2094

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2094, a bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

S. 2132

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2132, a bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2178, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 2182

At the request of Mr. WALSH, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2182, a bill to expand and improve care provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces with mental health disorders or at risk of suicide, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2192

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to amend the National Alzheimer's Project Act to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to prepare and submit, directly to the President for review and transmittal to Congress, an annual budget estimate (including an estimate of the number and type of personnel needs for the Institutes) for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to such an Act.

S. 2223

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cospon-

sor of S. 2223, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

S. 2244

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2244, a bill to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

S. 2252

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2252, a bill to reaffirm the importance of community banking and community banking regulatory experience on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, to ensure that the Federal Reserve Board of Governors has a member who has previous experience in community banking or community banking supervision, and for other purposes.

S. 2255

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2255, a bill to remove the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan from treatment as terrorist organizations and for other purposes.

S. 2263

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2263, a bill to appropriately limit the authority to award bonuses to employees.

S. 2265

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2265, a bill to prohibit certain assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

S. RES. 364

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) and the Senator from

Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 364, a resolution expressing support for the internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

S. RES. 421

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 421, a resolution expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the Senate for the acts of heroism and military achievement by the members of the United States Armed Forces who participated in the June 6, 1944, amphibious landing at Normandy, France, and commending them for leadership and valor in an operation that helped bring an end to World War II.

AMENDMENT NO. 2752

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2752 intended to be proposed to S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. LEE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. VITTER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HELLER, Mr. PAUL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. SHELBY, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. PRYOR, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. WALSH, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. TESTER, and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. 2280. A bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline; read the first time.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, today I filed an updated bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline project. That bill is at the desk. What this legislation does is it approves the project congressionally, which is authorized under the Constitution of the United States. Section 8 of article 1 of our Constitution expressly gives Congress the authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations. That is the determination we are looking for here from the President on this pipeline project. The decision is simply: Is the project in the national interest or is it not?

The President and his administration have been considering this project, and

this decision—is it in the national interest or not—for more than 5 years. We are now in the sixth year. It was our expectation the process would be completed on or about the first week in May. The final environmental impact statement came out at the end of January and, as the prior environmental impact statements had determined, this environmental impact statement said there is no significant environmental impact caused by the project. This is a study done over years by this administration's Department of State. For the fourth time the report came out with no significant environmental impact created by this project. So as I say, it was the expectation of this Senate and really of Americans across the country that sometime in May the President would make a decision because all along he said he was following the process, and once the process was completed he would make a decision. A little over a week ago, on the afternoon of Good Friday—a time that I believe was selected in order to minimize the news coverage—the President or the administration made the announcement they would now delay this project indefinitely—indefinitely. Not a statement of: We are just going to follow the process, which is what had been said before. Even though the President, in a meeting with me and our conference, came out and said we would have a decision before the end of 2013. That is what he told us. That didn't happen because then he changed it to: We are going to follow the process. Now it is not even going to follow the process. He is just going to delay a decision indefinitely.

The rationale for that is that there is litigation in Nebraska as to whether the public service commission in the State of Nebraska has the right to determine the route of the pipeline through Nebraska or whether in fact the legislature does.

Some time ago, right at the beginning of 2012, we had passed legislation in this body, which I sponsored, that required the President to make a decision on the project within 90 days. We passed that bill and, in fact, he then made a decision to decline the project based on the route in Nebraska. So Nebraska went through the work of re-routing the pipeline in the State, and that new route was approved by the legislature and it was approved by the Governor. But opponents of the project decided to sue on the basis that, no, the PSC should make a decision as to the route in Nebraska.

So be it. That can be adjudicated in Nebraska, as can any other issue that somebody may choose to file a lawsuit over. But that really has nothing to do with the decision the President needs to make. The decision the President needs to make is a very simple decision: Is this pipeline project in the interest of the United States or is it not? This is after his State Department has said there is no significant environmental impact created by the project

not once, not twice, but four times. So it is a simple decision.

It is a decision of whether we should have more energy that we produce in our country and that is produced in Canada, our closest friend and ally, or whether we should keep getting energy from the Middle East. It is a decision about whether we should have more jobs. The State Department says 42,000 jobs are created in constructing the pipeline. It is a decision about economic activity. This creates economic activity, with hundreds of millions in tax revenue to help reduce the deficit and debt without spending one penny of Federal money.

That is the decision before the President. But he refuses to make it. So it is long past time—long past time, as we are now in year 6—for this body to step forward and make the decision. As I said just a minute ago, we have the authority to make the decision. Section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations. So we need to make the decision. The time is long past when we can continue to wait.

How can we continue to wait when the President says it will be an indefinite time period before he will even consider making a decision?

So the bill we have put forward is a very simple, straightforward bill. As a matter of fact, I am going to take a couple minutes and read it because it is three pages. It is an updated bill to a bill I provided on a bipartisan basis earlier. We had 27 cosponsors of the earlier legislation. We now have 56 Republicans and Democrats on this bill, and we are working very hard to get 60 so there is no procedural way to stop this legislation, but I will take just a minute and read it because it is self-explanatory, it is simple, it is straightforward, and it is common sense.

A bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

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

SECTION 1. KEYSTONE XL APPROVAL.

IN GENERAL. TransCanada Keystone Pipeline, L.P. may construct, connect, operate, and maintain the pipeline and cross-border facilities described in the application filed on May 4, 2012, by TransCanada Corporation to the Department of State (including any subsequent revision to the pipeline route within the State of Nebraska required or authorized by the State of Nebraska).

So we have expressly put language in there to address the litigation. The litigation the President is concerned about we expressly address in the bill.

(b) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.—The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement issued by Secretary of State in January 2014, regarding the pipeline referred to in subsection (a), and the environmental analysis, consultation, and review described in that document (including appendices) shall be considered to fully satisfy—

(1) all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 . . . and

(2) any other provision of law that requires Federal agency consultation or review (including the consultation or review required under section 7(a) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 . . . with respect to the pipeline and facilities referred to in subsection (a).

(c) PERMITS.—Any Federal permit or authorization issued before the date of enactment of this Act for the pipeline and cross-border facilities referred to in subsection (a) shall remain in effect.

(d) FEDERAL JUDICIAL REVIEW.—Any legal challenge to a Federal agency action regarding the pipeline and cross-border facilities described in subsection (a), and the related facilities in the United States, that are approved by this Act, and any permit, right-of-way, or other action taken to construct or complete the project pursuant to Federal law, shall only be subject to judicial review on direct appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

(e) PRIVATE PROPERTY SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this Act alters any Federal, State, or local process or condition in effect on the date of enactment of this Act that is necessary to secure access from an owner of private property to construct the pipeline and cross-border facilities described in subsection (a).

That is it. It is that simple. It is that simple.

So our President has been deliberating on this now for 6 years, and that is the decision. Are we going to produce energy in this country, are we going to work with Canada to get our energy, are we going to create jobs, are we going to generate economic activity or are we going to continue to rely on oil from the Middle East?

It is not as though there is no precedent to do it. Look at this chart. The red line is the Keystone Pipeline. I don't know how many people realize it, but we have already built the Keystone Pipeline—not the Keystone XL Pipeline for which we are seeking approval but the Keystone Pipeline. The project under consideration is a sister project to one that has already been built. It brings oil from Canada into the United States. That is the Keystone project. It has been permitted and built. It is in operation now.

The Keystone XL Pipeline, the sister project, brings oil from Canada into the United States; then North Dakota and Montana put light sweet Bakken and crude oil in it as well, and that oil goes to our refineries. Does it seem like a complicated decision, a difficult decision? Does it seem like something that requires 6 years of study?

The point is this body can approve it. That is what this is all about. We have 56 Senators—56 Senators, Republicans and Democrats—saying: Give us a vote. Give us a vote. Let this Senate do its job. Let's approve this project. It is a very straightforward decision.

Is this decision going to be made for special interest groups? Is this decision going to be blocked? Are we not going to get a vote because special interest groups are opposed to something the American people want? In the most recent poll, 70 percent of Americans want it built. What does it take?

One of the arguments I heard is: It is a pipeline. It has to be studied for 6

years because it is so complicated and difficult.

There are the pipelines we have in this country. We have millions of miles of pipeline, but it is so difficult to figure out whether we should build one more that produces energy and jobs for our country? A lot of these pipelines are old and we have millions of miles of pipelines all over this country. We can't decide whether we should build one more that is state-of-the-art?

What are we saying to our friends and neighbors in Canada? They very much want this project. They feel they have dealt with our country in good faith. What are we saying to Canada?

Some might say, if the pipeline isn't built, then that energy will not be produced from the oil sands area in Canada.

Really? Is that right? Then what is this pipeline moving? Oil from the oil sands in Canada. What is moving on our railroads all over this country?

If we don't build this pipeline, that oil is either going to China—and then we end up continuing to get our oil from the Middle East—or it is going to move by rail. If it moves by rail, that is 1,400 tanker cars a day on our railroads, 14-unit trains of 100 cars a day on our railroads. Does that seem like a better way to move it than a state-of-the-art pipeline? That is the decision.

I could put the decision in front of anybody in this country and I don't think it would take them 6 years to decide and I don't think it should take our President not only 6 years to decide, but now he said indefinitely—an indefinite delay.

It is time to vote on this important issue. I wish to thank the Senators who have stepped up and supported this legislation—certainly Senator LANDRIEU, who will be down here to talk about it in a minute, and Senator HEITKAMP, my fellow Senator in North Dakota, and many others on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats.

It is not a partisan issue. It is an issue of whether we are going to make this decision for the people of this country and build an energy future for this country—energy security for this country—where we produce more energy in North America between the United States and Canada than we consume so we don't have to rely on energy from the Middle East or from Venezuela or other countries that may not share our beliefs, our views, and our interests. That is the decision or is this going to be a decision for special interest groups?

If the President refuses to make that decision, we in this body have a responsibility to do it, and we put forward a bill to approve it.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their hard work on this bill, and I ask others to join us. Let's make this decision, and let's make it for the American people.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I am going to speak very briefly this afternoon about a very timely and im-

portant subject. My colleague and partner, Senator HOEVEN, came to the floor earlier—I was unable to come at that time—to speak about a bill for which he has actually provided extraordinary leadership.

I wish to thank the Presiding Officer, and Senator HOEVEN for his leadership as well, to try to help bring to the floor of the Senate a vote to help construct the Keystone Pipeline. It is an issue a group of us have been working on now for quite some time. I wish to thank the Presiding Officer again. I wish to also thank the other Democratic leaders who have been so supportive and helpful to us in this effort: Senator PRYOR from Arkansas, Senator MCCASKILL from Missouri, Senator TESTER from Montana, who agreed to cosponsor the bill, Senator WARNER from Virginia, Senator HAGAN, Senator BEGICH, Senator MANCHIN, Senator DONNELLY, and Senator WALSH. I really want to thank them and other colleagues who have decided they may not want to cosponsor the bill that will be introduced later tonight, but they very well may vote for it, and I appreciate it.

I know this has been a very contentious issue for many, because people have very strong feelings about this particular pipeline called the Keystone XL Pipeline. Some of us who support it have a little trouble understanding why it is such a big deal, but I appreciate there are strong feelings on the other side of this issue. For those of us from States such as Louisiana and Texas and Oklahoma and North Dakota, particularly, that are affected by this pipeline, it is clear that the technology—and we should be proud of it—is extraordinary, it is exploding and, in some ways, unprecedented and unexpected. The technology is creating a real opportunity for America and for North America. That opportunity is for us to produce more oil and gas. The opportunity is to continue to maintain coal supplies that are clean and appropriate for the environment—or advanced coal technologies, I should say—and provide the kind of energy, including as well alternative energies that are emerging, such as wind and solar, and maintaining our nuclear and strategic advantage as part of our electric grid. It provides a real opportunity for us to go from a major country that was scrambling to plan where our energy was going to come from and really concerned about it—paying very high prices sometimes at the pump and through our electric grid—to now a country that gets to actually say, My gosh, look at the resources we have right here in America and the resources we potentially have with our partners and our allies. One of the strongest allies we have in the world is Canada, and an emerging ally—emerging in its relationship with us—is Mexico: The North American continent. I think there is so much potential for Canada, the United States, and Mexico—and others share my view—to become completely not only energy inde-

pendent but an energy powerhouse for the world—a world in which the North American continent, at least, wants to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights. Senator CARDIN was just on the floor talking about how important that issue is for our Nation and world. He has given literally his life as an expert on human rights around the world and is leading the Helsinki Commission. He was just talking with us about the importance of this and what is happening in Ukraine and in Russia and in Europe recently.

So the issue of freedom and private enterprise and opportunity and education and energy self-sufficiency are goals we treasure and it is possible for the rest of the world and our allies around the world.

But what signal does it send if America is not willing to do its part when it comes to production right here in America and transporting oil and natural gas and other emerging fuels—alternative fuels, alternative sources of electricity—when we are not doing our very best?

I know it is contentious, but I come to the floor to talk about this issue. Senator HOEVEN gave an excellent defense of why the Keystone Pipeline is important. But I want to underscore that in terms of jobs and the economy. I want to underscore the process. Because there are a lot of Democrats and others in my caucus—friends and colleagues—who have said: Well, has the process been complete? Has the process been thorough?

I want to review for the record a couple of very interesting aspects. Before I start, I want to point out, again, this, shown on this map I have in the Chamber, is the Keystone XL Pipeline.

There is already a “Keystone Pipeline” that has been constructed and has been operating for quite some time. This is an existing pipeline that is operating from Canada down to the refineries in Texas technically, but very close to the Louisiana border. We are very proud of our industry in Texas and Louisiana—the refining capacity we have, the ability to generate resources this country and the world need. Hopefully, if we can open exports appropriately—which is happening, as we speak. Permits are being issued. The jobs that are created here, the opportunity for creating jobs in every one of our 50 States, including Hawaii and Alaska, and in our territories and in our first nations, as they are called, in our tribal territories, is almost without peer in the last several decades.

But this XL Pipeline is an alternative route, and it has been debated for quite some time. There have been these permits I am going to talk about in a minute that have been reviewed and will put that into the RECORD because there is some concern: Have we really reviewed what we need to do? Have the environmental studies been met?

So into the RECORD I want to put: On April 16, 2010, the Department of State

issued its Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It opened a 45-day comment period, which extended for additional days.

Then, a year later, on April 15, 2011, the Department of State issued a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and opened another 45-day comment period. At that time, there were 280,000 comments that were received. Those comments were read, responded to, and absorbed into the process.

On August 26 of that year—2011—the Department of State issued its Final Environmental Impact Statement and opened an additional 90-day review period. The agency continued to accept public comments.

Then, on March 1, 2013, the U.S. State Department issued its Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Keystone XL Presidential Permit application, which includes the proposed new route through Nebraska because there were some questions earlier in the process whether it should go through Nebraska.

Let me say, as strongly as I support the Keystone Pipeline, I also support States—whether it is Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Nebraska, or North Dakota—to make determinations according to their own laws and their own constitutions about the takings of private property, which is sometimes required for projects such as this. Those processes cannot be shortchanged and they cannot be ignored.

One of the court cases right now in Nebraska is because—the courts have ruled this—the Governor there overstepped his bounds and he, according to the court in Nebraska, took actions that were contrary to the law in Nebraska and the constitution.

So these laws I am not dismissive of—the rules and regulations. Nebraska still has some issues that have to be resolved. But the rest of the pipeline to the south here has already been constructed. This part is being worked on. There are other parts of the pipeline that can be started while Nebraska finishes its very legitimate decisions between its courts, its public service commission, and its legislature about the issues in Nebraska—which, let me say, the landowners have valid concerns, and the courts have ruled so.

But, nevertheless, on January 31, 2014—this year—the State Department issued its Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the permit application, confirming that the project is safe and will have limited environmental impacts. The report reflects that TransCanada has agreed to incorporate 59 special safety conditions recommended by the pipeline safety commission.

So to my colleagues who say: Have we given ample time to review, I would say the answer is clearly yes. Is it time to build the pipeline? Yes. And should we get about a vote on the Senate floor to express strong support for a piece of America's infrastructure—North Amer-

ican infrastructure that is critical to the future growth of our economy and to the promise of opportunity, economic opportunity for our citizens? I think the answer to that is yes.

This group of Democrats—of which the Presiding Officer, Senator WARNER from Virginia, is a part—has been working on this now for several years.

One other point I would like to make: the comparison here of other pretty well-known and very large public works projects or private developments—some of them are public and some of them are private—that have been constructed.

The Hoover Dam—very well known—took 5 years to complete, from 1931 to 1936. From planning, design, to completion—5 years.

The Pentagon took 2 years to complete, from 1941 to 1943.

The Space Shuttle Discovery took 4 years to complete, from 1979 to 1983.

The Ambassador Bridge between the United States and Canada—3 years to complete. Design, build, and complete—from 1927 to 1929.

The Theodore Roosevelt—4 years to complete, from 1968 to 1972.

America and Canada: Together we have been building major projects for many years—complicated, tough projects that require tremendous co-operation between agencies, and dealing with environmental protection rules and regulations, and meeting citizens' concerns.

This is not anything new. We have been doing this in America for a long time. It is time to stop studying and stop waiting and start building this Keystone XL Pipeline.

Now, again, the legislation we have introduced today—Senator HOEVEN, Senator LANDRIEU, and 10 other Democrats, and several other Republicans—to build this pipeline would simply say it is time to stop studying; start building. With all due respect, the process is complete. We just acknowledged the process is done.

We also acknowledge there is still an outstanding issue in Nebraska. Nothing in this bill will affect the court decisions, the timeframe in Nebraska. But what it will send is a signal that this other section can start to be built and constructed. And then, of course, Nebraska will take—we do not know. It could be 6 months, it could be a year. We do not know when that process will finally be resolved.

But we can start now. It is going to take several years for this to be completed. If we wait another year, it is pushing this even further back for no good reason.

Let me mention a third argument.

I think some people are under the mistaken impression that this is maybe the first time we have built infrastructure with Canada. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There are 100 cross-border permits that have already been approved for oil and natural gas and electric transmission facilities crossing the U.S.-Mexico or the

U.S.-Canadian border. Of these 100 are 21 oil pipelines crossing the border.

So this is such a basic, important point of building infrastructure between Canada, America, and Mexico that some of us who support these kinds of things fairly routinely are having difficulty understanding why 5 years and five permits and five reviews is not satisfactory to build something that has been basically built multiple times before.

Some people may say: Oh, but the difference is, this is connecting the oil sands. The oil sands in Canada are a very important resource, not just for Canada but for the United States. I am glad these oil sands are here as opposed to in Venezuela or I am glad the oil sands are here as opposed to in Cuba. I am glad the oil sands are here as opposed to in the middle of Russia with everything else they have.

I am happy Canada has resources. I am happy. They are a friend and a neighbor and close to us. I am also really impressed with Canada's environmental standards, which are, by my calculations—not in depth, but just a broad review, after speaking to so many industry and government leaders there—very rigorous. I do not think there is anyone in this Chamber who would counter that.

It is well known and understood that Canada has very high standards. They understand, accept climate change. They believe carbon is affecting the climate in a negative way. They believe they can reduce the amount of carbon coming out. They are sensitive to that. But they know what we know—that the world is going to need oil and gas for decades to come. It is not going to stop in 5 years or 10 years. We need oil and gas for decades. Why not use our own? Why not use the oil and gas from Canada, America, and Mexico—creating jobs right here at home, instead of importing it from places around the world that we do not even get along with or places around the world that do not share our values or places around the world that can use the price of oil or gas to hurt our economy. Why don't we take charge of our own economy?

So when some people complain about the oil sands in Canada, I am, frankly, glad they are there. I am glad we can tap into them with extraordinary new, cleaner technologies to have oil and gas and energy for this country that has a very bright future.

So with the reviews—five over 5 years—hundreds of thousands of comments from business, industry, citizens, environmental groups that have been taken into consideration, the Department of State has issued its final review, and that final review said it is safer and more environmentally in tune with our environmental rules and regulations to transport this oil through a pipeline than through rail or highway.

For those of us who live in places that do a lot of production, we always

say we are proud of the industry, and we are—the industry makes mistakes, and when they mess up, they have to clean up—but I also have to say, I am very conscious, as most Americans are, of the traffic on our highways, of the backups on our rail system. I hear complaints from businesses, manufacturers: We cannot get our products fast enough.

So here we have a chance to move a commodity under the ground, safely through a pipe, but know if we do not build this pipeline, it is going to move by rail or truck, which congests our highways, congests our rail lines, and causes even more impact on our environment.

I think the record is clear. I think the arguments are in. I think there is no question that this is right for the environment, right for the country, and clearly in the interests of the United States. This will benefit not just the gulf coast where the refineries are, but it is going to create jobs throughout our entire country. Suppliers to this project exist everywhere.

There is a terrific map that I have shown before where suppliers from all over the country are providing either labor or support for the construction of this pipeline and much other similar infrastructure in the Nation.

We already have 2.9 million miles of pipeline in America. This piece we are speaking about today is 1,000 miles. We already have 2.9 million miles of pipe. Yes, some of it needs to be upgraded. Yes, not every inch of it is safe. We are working on that. But this is probably going to be the safest pipeline ever built in the history of America. It has been reviewed so many times. I cannot wait to look at the details of what has been required. I am positive that it is going to be the safest pipeline ever built. It has taken 5 years to get it.

So that is what our bill does. I am going to end with again thanking the Democrats who have joined with me to support the Keystone XL Pipeline. I thank the caucus for at least the opportunity. Hopefully, we will introduce this bill tonight. Hopefully, we can get a vote on this bill. Let me say that the vote will be in connection with the energy efficiency bill that will also be brought to the floor. The reason, as chair of the energy committee, I think that is so important is that while neither one represents a comprehensive energy plan for the country, which I hope to develop with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—I just stepped into this position in the last month—these are two important energy-related pieces that need resolution.

The energy efficiency bill has now been worked on by Senator SHAHEEN and Senator PORTMAN—bipartisan—for 5 years, almost as long as the Keystone Pipeline has been under consideration by the administration. We have had an energy efficiency bill worked on by Republicans and Democrats that will create thousands of private sector jobs.

It is supported by the Business Roundtable, the Real Estate Round-

table, the Chamber of Commerce, labor leaders all over our country, building owners, and retail establishments. The energy efficiency bill is a terrific piece of legislation. Again, it came out of our committee 18 to 3. There are very few things that have come out of the energy committee that are that impactful. There are little bills that come out that really do not mean much to anybody. They may come out unanimously. It means a lot to the person who is sponsoring it, but it does not have national impact. This has national and international impact—all positive.

Senator SHAHEEN has been a champion of trying to bring this bill to the floor. We have been rebuffed and rebuffed and rebuffed by the Republican side for no reason because some of them are wanting to debate health care and some of them want to debate Iran sanctions. I said: Let's just talk about energy. It is important for the country to focus at least a few hours of the Senate's attention on energy.

America is focused on it. They want it to be affordable. They want it to be as clean as possible. They do not want to have to buy it from countries they do not share values with and do not appreciate. They want less imports to America, more domestic production of alternatives and oil and gas. So let's get about that business.

So efficiency is basically doing a lot more—a lot more with a lot less—saving taxpayers and saving huge sums of money. The example that everyone is becoming more familiar with is the Empire State Building in New York, an extraordinary private sector effort to take one of our most iconic buildings that we all know and which many millions of Americans have actually visited, and to take an old building that was constructed in the 1930s, retooling it with private money—not public grants, private money—and saving the building owners and the tenants of that building millions and millions of dollars as an example of what can be done in commercial buildings throughout this country.

That needs to be unleashed with the legislation of JEANNE SHAHEEN—that power, that promise, to do more of that is going to be unleashed by this bill that Senator PORTMAN and Senator SHAHEEN have carefully put together and Senator WYDEN also when he was chair, with Senator MURKOWSKI's help, and they got it out of the committee.

I committed when I stepped into the leadership of the committee to build on their good work and to do my very best to get that bill to the floor. We have an energy bill with Keystone. I thought the two of them, working together, Republicans and Democrats, we could get a good compromise by working on both of them at the same time. We are capable of doing it. They are clearly broadly supported. It will help create jobs in America.

We will begin with two important steps—not the only ones. There is more

that can be done. People come to me and say: Senator, we should do this, we should do that. Yes, we can work on coal. We can work on propane. We had a hearing on propane today. We can work on additional rail for the country. We can work on pipeline safety. We can work on alternative fuels. We can work on strengthening our relationship with Israel and China. We can work on new kinds of automobiles.

But that is for another day. We cannot do all of it at one time. But what we can do is what is before us. We can do what is before us. We can do what is clearly timely. The energy efficiency bill, for 5 years, has been waiting for action by this Senate. The House has already passed an energy efficiency bill.

The pipeline has been waiting 5 years and has been reviewed five times. It is time to move forward on both and create the kinds of jobs for America that we need—high-paying, middle-class jobs—and to begin to help build America and North America as the energy powerhouse that it can be, doing it together. We can recognize the transport of oil and gas, and the production is important, but also alternative and focusing on efficiency and conservation, and many of our Democrats are very proud of the work in that area.

I am sorry to keep the Senate. I think I might be the last speaker of the evening. But I thank the leadership for providing the time, and again, I want to thank Senator HOEVEN for his leadership.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. THUNE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2282. A bill to prohibit the provision of performance awards to employees of the Internal Revenue Service who owe back taxes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, this is a speech—these are some remarks—that I really should not have to make, but late this afternoon, I rise to discuss more amazing actions from our Nation's tax collector. This is, unfortunately, an agency that is fast becoming the gang that cannot shoot straight—the folks who brought us the partisan suppression of free speech, who piled onto that with proposed rules to shut down political action by groups with which they disagree or do not favor, and the same team that shares confidential taxpayer information with their allies outside of government. Obviously, I am talking about the Internal Revenue Service.

Here is a great deal: Break the law you are required to enforce and get a cash bonus and free time off.

What on Earth is this all about?

Well, last week, the Treasury Department's Inspector General for Tax Administration issued a report, which I have here, on the Internal Revenue Service bonuses that were awarded to

personnel who have violated the tax laws or who have been subject to serious infractions of employee policy.

This is a lot like hiring someone to work for you, and then they steel money from you or acted in ways that are very inappropriate. Would you give them a bonus? I do not think most businesspeople would do that. According to the inspector general, close to \$3 million was awarded to staff with violations on their records, with about half of that amount going to people who had violated the Tax Code.

Other personnel at the IRS received cash bonuses or other awards despite being cited for—listen to this—drug use, making violent threats, fraudulently claiming unemployment benefits and misusing government credit cards. Still they got bonuses—up to \$3 million.

In fact, the report indicates that close to 70 percent of IRS personnel receive some sort of performance award—70 percent of the IRS. That is rather remarkable when you think about the sorts of problems your average taxpayer has in getting help from that particular agency.

This is flatly outrageous—if not appalling or atrocious—and cannot be tolerated. It also makes me wonder what you have to do to be disqualified from an award.

More disturbing, these awards, even for people breaking the law, are perfectly acceptable under current IRS and government-wide guidelines. Let me repeat that. These awards, even for people breaking the law, are perfectly acceptable under current IRS and government-wide guidelines.

Indeed, the IG report makes it clear that under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement with the main union for IRS employees, these awards are appropriate and cannot be taken away because of such violations.

The distribution of these awards at a time when the IRS is under scrutiny for its actions concerning the political activity of conservative groups, when its performance of basic taxpayer service functions has drastically worsened, and when it is calling for additional funding, calls into question the agency's commitment to fair enforcement of our tax laws.

The IG report recognized that these awards—while not technically prohibited—appear to be in conflict with the IRS's charge of "ensuring integrity of the system of tax administration." Well, no kidding. Thank goodness for the inspector general.

That is what we call an understatement—maybe the understatement of the year.

This is another fox in the henhouse story. Not only is the fox in the henhouse, but he is now being rewarded for eating the chickens.

These performance awards are just plain wrong and should not go to anyone who breaks the law, particularly the laws which the agency enforces.

These bonus awards weaken public confidence in the Nation's tax enforce-

ment agency and are a sign that the agency has indeed run off the rails.

The inspector general report recommended that the IRS create a new policy to take disciplinary actions into account when awarding bonuses.

It seems to me we need to do more than set up a new policy or guideline. We need something more concrete and more immediate. That is why today I am joining with my friends—Senators ENZI, CORNYN, RUBIO, TOOMEY, THUNE, JOHANNES, ISAKSON, and Leader MCCONNELL—to introduce the No Bonuses for Delinquent IRS Employees Act—a bill that really should be unnecessary. I thank my colleagues for joining me and, more especially, Senator ENZI, who has done a great deal of work on this and helped expose this from the first.

Our bill is pretty simple. It will prohibit the IRS from providing any performance award to any IRS employee who owes an outstanding Federal tax debt for failing to pay their taxes.

Nobody likes to be audited. Nobody likes to get that phone call from the IRS. Nobody likes to see the taxman at the door. And then if the taxman says: I am sorry, you owe X for a violation of Y, and you find out this individual got a performance bonus even though he or she fails to meet the tax obligations they face, that is rather incredible.

Given what we know about recent IRS actions—and the growing discontent with the agency I hear from Kansans every day—continuing to award personnel bonuses to employees who have outstanding tax liabilities or have violated the tax laws is beyond comprehension and outrageous and should be stopped.

This is not a partisan issue. It is just plain common sense. The IRS should not be in the business of awarding bonuses to its agents who are unable or unwilling to abide by the tax laws they are directed to uphold—simple as that.

So I call upon all my colleagues to support the No Bonuses for Delinquent IRS Employees Act and will ask for its immediate consideration.

In closing, I would like to point out this issue has been well-documented in a 26-page report by the inspector general. I thank the inspector general for the work he has done. Right on the first page it says: "The Awards Program Complied With Federal Regulations, but Some Employees With Tax and Conduct Issues Received Awards." Most IRS employees complied with Federal regulations, but some employees with tax and conduct issues still received awards. That is an oxymoron.

Then, if you skip to the back, there are some recommendations. The recommendation is for corrective action. This is what it says:

The IRS Human Capital Officer—Daniel Riordan is the IRS Human Capital Officer—will conduct a feasibility study. But they do not have to take action right away. They just want to discuss the feasibility of a study—by June 30 of this year—just a couple months away—for the implementation of a policy requiring management to consider a policy change.

It does not say just to do it; it says just consider whether conduct issues resulting in disciplinary actions should be made part of the performance evaluation, especially the nonpayment of taxes owed to the Federal government, prior to awarding performance and discretionary awards.

Daniel Riordan has received marching orders from the Inspector General to conduct a feasibility study by June 30, to determine whether the IRS should even consider whether disciplinary actions, including the nonpayment of taxes owed to the Federal Government, should be part of the evaluation as to whether an employee should be eligible for a performance award.

We really do not need this legislation. We have introduced it to force action. The inspector general says: Let's have action. On 26 pages, he says: Let's have action.

So to Daniel Riordan, I have the following advice—before we get 60 people on this and pass a bill, why don't you just go ahead and do it. Do not conduct a feasibility study. We have all the evidence right here. If you would just change the current policy, it would remove yet another problem, another unfortunate asterisk when we think of the IRS.

I want to thank my colleagues for co-sponsoring this legislation and again ask for its immediate consideration.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 432—RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND OTHERS IN RESTORING AND REPAIRING THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. RES. 432

Whereas the employees of the National Park Service work tirelessly to maintain the beauty of the 401 national parks of the United States, revitalize communities, preserve local history, celebrate local heritage, and create outdoor recreation for children and families;

Whereas the Washington Monument was built between 1848 and 1884 to commemorate George Washington, the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War and the first president of the United States;

Whereas the Washington Monument is a symbol of unity and freedom in the United States and is the distinguishing feature of the skyline in Washington, DC;

Whereas the Washington Monument is admired by more than 25,000,000 individuals who visit the National Mall each year;

Whereas the Washington Monument was closed for over 2½ years for necessary repairs after being damaged by an earthquake in 2011;

Whereas engineers examined each of the 9,040 marble stones on the exterior of the Washington Monument and many of the