

S. 607

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 607, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a five-year extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program, and for other purposes.

S. 615

At the request of Mr. PAUL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 615, a bill to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 87

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 87, a resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and to encourage greater cooperation with the European governments, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in preventing and responding to anti-Semitism.

S. RES. 88

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 88, a resolution celebrating Black History Month.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 625. A bill to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 625

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 "Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN RELATING TO THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF IRAN.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 134 the following new section:

"SEC. 135. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.

"(a) TRANSMISSION TO CONGRESS OF NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN AND VERIFICATION ASSESSMENT WITH RESPECT TO SUCH AGREEMENTS.—

"(1) TRANSMISSION OF AGREEMENTS.—Not later than 5 calendar days after reaching an agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees—

"(A) the text of the agreement and all related materials and annexes;

"(B) a verification assessment report of the Secretary of State prepared under paragraph (2) with respect to the agreement; and

"(C) a certification that—

"(i) the agreement includes the appropriate terms, conditions, and duration of the agreement's requirements with respect to Iran's nuclear activities and provisions describing any sanctions to be waived, suspended, or otherwise reduced by the United States, and any other nation or entity, including the United Nations; and

"(ii) the President determines the agreement meets United States non-proliferation objectives, does not jeopardize the common defense and security, provides an adequate framework to ensure that Iran's nuclear activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security, and ensures that Iran's nuclear activities permitted thereunder will not be used to further any nuclear-related military or nuclear explosive purpose, including for any research on or development of any nuclear explosive device or any other nuclear-related military purpose.

"(2) VERIFICATION ASSESSMENT REPORT.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall prepare, with respect to an agreement described in paragraph (1), a report assessing—

"(i) the extent to which the Secretary will be able to verify that Iran is complying with its obligations under the agreement;

"(ii) the adequacy of the safeguards and other control mechanisms and other assurances contained in the agreement with respect to Iran's nuclear program to ensure Iran's activities permitted thereunder will not be used to further any nuclear-related military or nuclear explosive purpose, including for any research on or development of any nuclear explosive device or any other nuclear-related military purpose; and

"(iii) the capacity and capability of the International Atomic Energy Agency to effectively implement the verification regime required by the agreement, including whether the International Atomic Energy Agency has the required funding, manpower, and authority to do so.

"(B) ASSUMPTIONS.—In preparing a report under subparagraph (A) with respect to an agreement described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall assume that Iran could—

"(i) use all measures not expressly prohibited by the agreement to conceal activities that violate its obligations under the agreement; and

"(ii) alter or deviate from standard practices in order to impede efforts to verify that Iran is complying with those obligations.

"(C) CLASSIFIED ANNEX.—A report under subparagraph (A) shall be transmitted in unclassified form, but shall include a classified annex prepared in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information.

"(3) EXCEPTION.—The requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1) shall not apply to an agreement defined in subsection (i)(4).

"(b) PERIOD FOR REVIEW BY CONGRESS OF NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 60-day period following transmittal by the President of an agreement pursuant to subsection (a), the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives shall, as appropriate, hold hearings and briefings and otherwise obtain information in order to fully review such agreement.

"(2) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING PERIOD OF REVIEW.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in para-

graph (3), during the period for review provided in paragraph (1), the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a).

"(3) EXCEPTION.—The prohibition under paragraph (2) does not apply to any deferral, waiver, or other suspension of statutory sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action if that deferral, waiver, or other suspension is made—

"(A) consistent with the law in effect on the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015; and

"(B) not later than 45 days before the transmission by the President of an agreement, assessment report, and certification under subsection (a).

"(c) EFFECT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States pursuant to an agreement subject to subsection (a) or the Joint Plan of Action—

"(A) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b)(1), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does favor the agreement;

"(B) may not be taken if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b)(1), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does not favor the agreement; or

"(C) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, following the period for review provided in subsection (b)(1), there is not enacted any such joint resolution.

"(2) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this subsection, the phrase 'action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States' shall include waiver, suspension, reduction, or other effort to provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to, Iran under any provision of law or any other effort to refrain from applying any such sanctions.

"(d) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF IRANIAN COMPLIANCE WITH NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, within 10 days of receiving credible and accurate information relating to a potentially significant breach or compliance incident by Iran with respect to an agreement subject to subsection (a), submit such information to the appropriate congressional committees.

"(2) MATERIAL BREACH REPORT.—Not later than 10 days after submitting information about a potentially significant breach or compliance incident pursuant to paragraph (1), the President shall make a determination whether such potentially significant breach or compliance issue constitutes a material breach and shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees such determination, accompanied by, as appropriate, a report on the action or failure to act by Iran that led to the material breach, actions necessary for Iran to cure the breach, and the status of Iran's efforts to cure the breach.

"(3) SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after entering into an agreement described in subsection (a), and not less frequently than once every 180 days thereafter, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with the agreement during the period

covered by the report, including the following elements:

“(A) Any action or failure to act by Iran that breached the agreement or is in non-compliance with the terms of the agreement.

“(B) Any delay by Iran of more than one week in providing inspectors access to facilities, people, and documents in Iran as required by the agreement.

“(C) Any progress made by Iran to resolve concerns by the International Atomic Energy Agency about possible military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program.

“(D) Any procurement by Iran of materials in violation of the agreement.

“(E) Any centrifuge research and development conducted by Iran that—

“(i) is not in compliance with the agreement; or

“(ii) may substantially enhance the enrichment capacity of Iran if deployed.

“(F) Any diversion by Iran of uranium, carbon-fiber, or other materials for use in Iran’s nuclear program in violation of the agreement.

“(G) Any covert nuclear activities undertaken by Iran.

“(H) An assessment of whether any Iranian financial institutions are engaged in money laundering or terrorist finance activities, including names of specific financial institutions if applicable.

“(I) An assessment of—

“(i) whether, and the extent to which, Iran supported acts of terrorism; and

“(ii) whether Iran directly supported, financed, planned, or carried out an act of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world.

“(4) ADDITIONAL REPORTS AND INFORMATION.—

“(A) AGENCY REPORTS.—Following submission of an agreement pursuant to subsection (a) to the appropriate congressional committees, the Department of State, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense shall, upon the request of either of those committees, promptly furnish to those committees their views as to whether the safeguards and other controls contained in the agreement with respect to Iran’s nuclear program provide an adequate framework to ensure that Iran’s activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.

“(B) PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON NUCLEAR INITIATIVES WITH IRAN.—The President shall keep the appropriate congressional committees fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations with Iran relating to Iran’s nuclear program, including any new or amended agreement.

“(5) CERTIFICATION.—After the review period provided in subsection (b)(1), the President shall, not less than every 90 days—

“(A) determine whether the President is able to certify that—

“(i) Iran is transparently, verifiably, and fully implementing the agreement, including all related technical or additional agreements;

“(ii) Iran has not committed a material breach with respect to the agreement or, if Iran has committed a material breach, Iran has cured the material breach;

“(iii) Iran has not taken any action, including covert action, that could significantly advance its nuclear weapons program;

“(iv) Iran has not directly supported or carried out an act of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world; and

“(v) suspension of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to the agreement is—

“(I) appropriate and proportionate to the specific and verifiable measures taken by

Iran with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program; and

“(II) vital to the national security interests of the United States; and

“(B) if the President determines he is able to make the certification described in subparagraph (A), make such certification to the appropriate congressional committees.

“(e) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event the President does not submit a certification pursuant to subsection (d)(5) or has determined pursuant to subsection (d)(2) that Iran has materially breached an agreement subject to subsection (a), Congress may initiate within 60 days expedited consideration of qualifying legislation pursuant to this subsection.

“(2) QUALIFYING LEGISLATION DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘qualifying legislation’ means only a bill of either House of Congress—

“(A) the title of which is as follows: ‘A bill reinstating statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.’; and

“(B) the matter after the enacting clause of which is: ‘Any statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran pursuant to

_____ that were waived, suspended, reduced, or otherwise relieved pursuant to an agreement submitted pursuant to section 135(a) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 are hereby reinstated and any action by the United States Government to facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to such agreement, or provide any further waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief is hereby prohibited.’, with the blank space being filled in with the law or laws under which sanctions are to be reinstated.

“(3) INTRODUCTION.—During the 60-day period provided for in paragraph (1), qualifying legislation may be introduced—

“(A) in the House of Representatives, by the Speaker (or the Speaker’s designee) or the minority leader (or the minority leader’s designee); and

“(B) in the Senate, by the majority leader (or the majority leader’s designee) or the minority leader (or the minority leader’s designee).

“(4) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—Qualifying legislation introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and in the House of Representatives to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

“(5) DISCHARGE.—If the committee of either House to which qualifying legislation has been referred has not reported such qualifying legislation within 10 session days after the date of referral of such legislation, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of such legislation and the qualifying legislation shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

“(6) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

“(A) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—After each committee authorized to consider qualifying legislation reports it to the House of Representatives or has been discharged from its consideration, it shall be in order to move to proceed to consider the qualifying legislation in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on the qualifying legislation. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

“(B) CONSIDERATION.—The qualifying legislation shall be considered as read. All points of order against the qualifying legislation and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as

ordered on the qualifying legislation to its passage without intervening motion except 2 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the qualifying legislation shall not be in order. No amendment to, or motion to recommit, qualifying legislation shall be in order.

“(C) APPEALS.—All appeals from the Chair relating to the application of the Rules of the House of Representatives to the procedure relating to the qualifying legislation shall be decided without debate.

“(7) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the committee authorized to consider qualifying legislation reports it to the Senate or has been discharged from its consideration (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of qualifying legislation, and all points of order against qualifying legislation (and against consideration of the qualifying legislation) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the qualifying legislation is agreed to, the qualifying legislation shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

“(B) DEBATE.—Debate on qualifying legislation, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion to further limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the qualifying legislation is not in order.

“(C) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—The vote on passage shall occur immediately following the conclusion of the debate on the qualifying legislation and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate, if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

“(D) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to qualifying legislation shall be decided without debate.

“(E) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto message with respect to qualifying legislation, including all debatable motions and appeals in connection with such qualifying legislation, shall be limited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

“(8) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

“(A) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of qualifying legislation of that House, that House receives qualifying legislation from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

“(i) The qualifying legislation of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

“(ii) With respect to qualifying legislation of the House receiving the legislation—

“(I) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no qualifying legislation had been received from the other House; but

“(II) the vote on passage shall be on the qualifying legislation of the other House.

“(B) TREATMENT OF JOINT RESOLUTION OF OTHER HOUSE.—If one House fails to introduce or consider qualifying legislation under

this section, the qualifying legislation of the other House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this section.

“(C) TREATMENT OF COMPANION MEASURES.—If, following passage of the qualifying legislation in the Senate, the Senate then receives a companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

“(f) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—Subsection (e) is enacted by Congress—

“(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of legislation described in those sections, and supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such rules; and

“(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

“(g) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the section shall be construed as—

“(1) modifying, or having any other impact on, the President’s authority to negotiate, enter into, or implement appropriate executive agreements, other than the restrictions on implementation of the agreements specifically covered by this Act;

“(2) allowing any new waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief from statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law, or allowing the President to refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) during the period for review provided in subsection (b)(1);

“(3) revoking or terminating any statutory sanctions imposed on Iran; or

“(4) authorizing the use of military force against Iran.

“(h) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

“(1) the sanctions regime imposed on Iran by Congress is primarily responsible for bringing Iran to the table to negotiate on its nuclear program;

“(2) these negotiations are a critically important matter of national security and foreign policy for the United States and its closest allies; and

“(3) it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity to consider and, as appropriate, take action on any agreement affecting the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

“(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) AGREEMENT AND ALL RELATED MATERIALS AND ANNEXES.—The term ‘agreement and all related materials and annexes’ means the agreement itself and any additional materials related thereto, including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, and guidance, technical or other understandings, and any related agreements, whether entered into or implemented prior to the agreement or to be entered into or implemented in the future.

“(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ has the meaning given that term in section 14 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

“(3) IRANIAN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ‘Iranian financial institution’ has the meaning given the term in section 104A(d) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8513b(d)).

“(4) JOINT PLAN OF ACTION.—The term ‘Joint Plan of Action’ means the Joint Plan of Action, signed at Geneva November 24, 2013, by Iran and by France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and all implementing materials and agreements related to the Joint Plan of Action, including the technical understandings reached on January 12, 2014, the extension thereto agreed to on July 18, 2014, the extension agreed to on November 24, 2014, and any extension that is agreed to on or after the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015.

“(5) MATERIAL BREACH.—The term ‘material breach’ means, with respect to an agreement described in subsection (a), any breach of the agreement that substantially—

“(A) benefits Iran’s nuclear program;

“(B) decreases the amount of time required by Iran to achieve a nuclear weapon; or

“(C) deviates from or undermines the purposes of such agreement.

“(6) NONCOMPLIANCE DEFINED.—The term ‘noncompliance’ means any departure from the terms of an agreement described in subsection (a) that is not a material breach.

“(7) P5+1 COUNTRIES.—The term ‘P5+1 countries’ means the United States, France, the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

“(8) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ‘United States person’ has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8511).”

This act shall become effective 1 day after enactment.

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

S. 630. A bill to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of myself and Senator BOXER to introduce legislation to establish a National Heritage Area in the California Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This legislation will create the first Heritage Area in California.

This bill was first introduced in 2011 and has been the subject of Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearings in both the 112th and 113th Congresses. Since then, the Delta Protection Commission has completed a feasibility study, as required, and endorsed the legislation. Additionally, the National Park Service has confirmed that the study is consistent with the agency’s interim National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines.

I was pleased to have had the opportunity to work with Senator BOXER, Representative JOHN GARAMENDI, and the County Supervisors from the five Delta Counties to develop this legislation and look forward to continuing to partner with them as well as local, State and Federal agencies to care for and improve the Delta.

This bill will establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as a National Heritage Area. The purpose of the heritage area is to conserve and protect the Delta, its communities, its resources, and its history.

The Delta Protection Commission, created by California law and responsible to the citizens of the Delta and

California, will manage the Heritage Area. It will ensure an open and public process, working with all levels of Federal, State, and local government, tribes, local stakeholders, and private property owners as it develops and implements the management plan for the Heritage Area. The bill authorizes \$10 million in Federal assistance over the next 15 years to provide technical assistance and matching grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to implement the management plan to conserve and protect the delta’s natural, historical and cultural resources.

It is also important to understand what this legislation will not do. It will not affect water rights. It will not affect water contracts. It will not affect private property. It will not affect fishing or hunting.

Nothing in this bill gives any governmental agency any more regulatory power than it already has, nor does it take away regulatory from agencies that have it.

In short, this bill does not affect water rights or water contracts, nor does it impose any additional responsibilities on local government or residents. Instead, it authorizes Federal assistance to a local process already required by State law that will elevate the Delta, providing a means to conserve and protect its valued communities, resources, and history.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the largest estuary on the West Coast. It is the most extensive inland delta in the world, and a unique national treasure.

Today, it is a labyrinth of sloughs, wetlands, and deepwater channels that connect the waters of the high Sierra mountain streams to the Pacific Ocean through the San Francisco Bay. Its approximately 60 islands are protected by 1,100 miles of levees, and are home to 3,500,000 residents, including 2,500 family farmers. The Delta and its farmers produce some of the highest quality specialty crops in the United States.

The Delta offers recreational opportunities to the two million Californians who visit the area each year for boating, fishing, hunting, visiting historic sites, and viewing wildlife. It provides habitat for more than 750 species of plants and wildlife. These include sand hill cranes that migrate to the Delta wetland from places as far away as Siberia. The Delta also provides habitat for 55 species of fish, including Chinook salmon, some as large as 60 pounds, that return each year to travel through the Delta to spawn in the tributaries.

These same waterways also channel fresh water to the Federal and State-owned pumps in the South Delta that provide water to 23 million Californians and three million acres of irrigated agricultural land elsewhere in the State.

Before the Delta was reclaimed for farmland in the 19th Century, the Delta flooded regularly with snow melt each spring, and provided the rich environment that, by 1492, supported the

largest settlement of Native Americans in North America.

The Delta was the gateway to the gold fields in 1849, after which Chinese workers built hundreds of miles of levees throughout the waterways of the Delta to make its rich peat soils available for farming and to control flooding.

Japanese, Italians, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Greeks, South Asians and other immigrants began the farming legacy, and developed technologies specifically adapted to the unique environment, including the Caterpillar Tractor, which later contributed to agriculture and transportation internationally.

Delta communities created a river culture befitting their dependence on water transport, a culture which has attracted the attention of authors from Mark Twain and Jack London to Joan Didion.

The National Heritage Area designation for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta will help local governments develop and implement a plan for a sustainable future by providing federal recognition, technical assistance and small amounts of funding to a community-based process already underway.

Through the Delta Heritage Area, local communities and citizens will partner with Federal, State and local governments to collaboratively work to promote conservation, community revitalization, and economic development projects.

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. 630

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 "Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Establishment Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **HERITAGE AREA.**—The term "Heritage Area" means the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Heritage Area established by section 3(a).

(2) **HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The term "Heritage Area management plan" means the plan developed and adopted by the local coordinating entity under this Act.

(3) **LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.**—The term "local coordinating entity" means the local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area designated by section 3(d).

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) **STATE.**—The term "State" means the State of California.

SEC. 3. SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA HERITAGE AREA.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established the "Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Heritage Area" in the State.

(b) **BOUNDARIES.**—The boundaries of the Heritage Area shall be in the counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo in the State of California, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Sac-

ramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Proposed Boundary", numbered T27/105.030, and dated October 2012.

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The map described in subsection (b) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service and the Delta Protection Commission.

(d) **LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.**—The local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area shall be the Delta Protection Commission established by section 29735 of the California Public Resources Code.

(e) **ADMINISTRATION.**—

(1) **AUTHORITIES.**—For purposes of carrying out the Heritage Area management plan, the Secretary, acting through the local coordinating entity, may use amounts made available under this Act to—

(A) make grants to the State or a political subdivision of the State, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;

(B) enter into cooperative agreements with, or provide technical assistance to, the State or a political subdivision of the State, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties;

(C) hire and compensate staff, which shall include individuals with expertise in natural, cultural, and historical resources protection, and heritage programming;

(D) obtain money or services from any source including any that are provided under any other Federal law or program;

(E) contract for goods or services; and

(F) undertake to be a catalyst for any other activity that furthers the Heritage Area and is consistent with the approved Heritage Area management plan.

(2) **DUTIES.**—The local coordinating entity shall—

(A) in accordance with subsection (f), prepare and submit a Heritage Area management plan to the Secretary;

(B) assist units of local government, regional planning organizations, and nonprofit organizations in carrying out the approved Heritage Area management plan by—

(i) carrying out programs and projects that recognize, protect, and enhance important resource values in the Heritage Area;

(ii) establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits and programs in the Heritage Area;

(iii) developing recreational and educational opportunities in the Heritage Area;

(iv) increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area;

(v) protecting and restoring historic sites and buildings in the Heritage Area that are consistent with Heritage Area themes;

(vi) ensuring that clear, consistent, and appropriate signs identifying points of public access, and sites of interest are posted throughout the Heritage Area; and

(vii) promoting a wide range of partnerships among governments, organizations, and individuals to further the Heritage Area;

(C) consider the interests of diverse units of government, businesses, organizations, and individuals in the Heritage Area in the preparation and implementation of the Heritage Area management plan;

(D) conduct meetings open to the public at least semiannually regarding the development and implementation of the Heritage Area management plan;

(E) for any year that Federal funds have been received under this Act—

(i) submit an annual report to the Secretary that describes the activities, expenses, and income of the local coordinating entity (including grants to any other entities during the year that the report is made);

(ii) make available to the Secretary for audit all records relating to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds; and

(iii) require, with respect to all agreements authorizing expenditure of Federal funds by other organizations, that the organizations receiving the funds make available to the Secretary for audit all records concerning the expenditure of the funds; and

(F) encourage by appropriate means economic viability that is consistent with the Heritage Area.

(3) **PROHIBITION ON THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.**—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds made available under this Act to acquire real property or any interest in real property.

(4) **COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.**—The Federal share of the cost of any activity carried out using any assistance made available under this Act shall be 50 percent.

(f) **HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the local coordinating entity shall submit to the Secretary for approval a proposed Heritage Area management plan.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The Heritage Area management plan shall—

(A) incorporate an integrated and cooperative approach to agricultural resources and activities, flood protection facilities, and other public infrastructure;

(B) emphasize the importance of the resources described in subparagraph (A);

(C) take into consideration State and local plans;

(D) include—

(i) an inventory of—

(I) the resources located in the core area described in subsection (b); and

(II) any other property in the core area that—

(aa) is related to the themes of the Heritage Area; and

(bb) should be preserved, restored, managed, or maintained because of the significance of the property;

(ii) comprehensive policies, strategies and recommendations for conservation, funding, management, and development of the Heritage Area;

(iii) a description of actions that governments, private organizations, and individuals have agreed to take to protect the natural, historical and cultural resources of the Heritage Area;

(iv) a program of implementation of the Heritage Area management plan by the local coordinating entity that includes a description of—

(I) actions to facilitate ongoing collaboration among partners to promote plans for resource protection, restoration, and construction; and

(II) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any government, organization, or individual for the first 5 years of operation;

(v) the identification of sources of funding for carrying out the Heritage Area management plan;

(vi) analysis and recommendations for means by which local, State, and Federal programs, including the role of the National Park Service in the Heritage Area, may best be coordinated to carry out this Act; and

(vii) an interpretive plan for the Heritage Area; and

(E) recommend policies and strategies for resource management that consider and detail the application of appropriate land and water management techniques, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency cooperative agreements to protect the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area.

(3) RESTRICTIONS.—The Heritage Area management plan submitted under this subsection shall—

(A) ensure participation by appropriate Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, including the Delta Stewardship Council, special districts, natural and historical resource protection and agricultural organizations, educational institutions, businesses, recreational organizations, community residents, and private property owners; and

(B) not be approved until the Secretary has received certification from the Delta Protection Commission that the Delta Stewardship Council has reviewed the Heritage Area management plan for consistency with the plan adopted by the Delta Stewardship Council pursuant to State law.

(4) DEADLINE.—If a proposed Heritage Area management plan is not submitted to the Secretary by the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the local coordinating entity shall be ineligible to receive additional funding under this Act until the date that the Secretary receives and approves the Heritage Area management plan.

(5) APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of receipt of the Heritage Area management plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary, in consultation with the State, shall approve or disapprove the Heritage Area management plan.

(B) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—In determining whether to approve the Heritage Area management plan, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(i) the local coordinating entity is representative of the diverse interests of the Heritage Area, including governments, natural and historic resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, and recreational organizations;

(ii) the local coordinating entity has afforded adequate opportunity, including public hearings, for public and governmental involvement in the preparation of the Heritage Area management plan; and

(iii) the resource protection and interpretation strategies contained in the Heritage Area management plan, if implemented, would adequately protect the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area.

(C) ACTION FOLLOWING DISAPPROVAL.—If the Secretary disapproves the Heritage Area management plan under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall—

(i) advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons for the disapproval;

(ii) make recommendations for revisions to the Heritage Area management plan; and

(iii) not later than 180 days after the receipt of any proposed revision of the Heritage Area management plan from the local coordinating entity, approve or disapprove the proposed revision.

(D) AMENDMENTS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall approve or disapprove each amendment to the Heritage Area management plan that the Secretary determines make a substantial change to the Heritage Area management plan.

(ii) USE OF FUNDS.—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds authorized by this Act to carry out any amendments to the Heritage Area management plan until the Secretary has approved the amendments.

(g) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(2) CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.—The head of any Federal agency planning to con-

duct activities that may have an impact on the Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity to the maximum extent practicable.

(3) OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Nothing in this Act—

(A) modifies, alters, or amends any law or regulation authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;

(B) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of the Heritage Area; or

(C) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

(h) PRIVATE PROPERTY AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), nothing in this Act—

(A) abridges the rights of any property owner (whether public or private), including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the Heritage Area;

(B) requires any property owner to permit public access (including access by Federal, State, or local agencies) to the property of the property owner, or to modify public access or use of property of the property owner under any other Federal, State, or local law;

(C) alters any duly adopted land use regulation, approved land use plan, or other regulatory authority of any Federal, State or local agency, or conveys any land use or other regulatory authority to the local coordinating entity;

(D) authorizes or implies the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(E) diminishes the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the Heritage Area; or

(F) creates any liability, or affects any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on the private property.

(2) OPT OUT.—An owner of private property within the Heritage Area may opt out of participating in any plan, project, program, or activity carried out within the Heritage Area under this Act, if the property owner provides written notice to the local coordinating entity.

(i) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the Heritage Area, the Secretary shall—

(A) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the Heritage Area; and

(B) prepare a report in accordance with paragraph (3).

(2) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A) shall—

(A) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(i) accomplishing the purposes of this Act for the Heritage Area; and

(ii) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved Heritage Area management plan;

(B) analyze the Federal, State, local, and private investments in the Heritage Area to determine the leverage and impact of the investments; and

(C) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the Heritage Area.

(3) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Based on the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall prepare a report that includes recommendations for the future role of the

National Park Service, if any, with respect to the Heritage Area.

(B) REQUIRED ANALYSIS.—If the report prepared under subparagraph (A) recommends that Federal funding for the Heritage Area be reauthorized, the report shall include an analysis of—

(i) ways in which Federal funding for the Heritage Area may be reduced or eliminated; and

(ii) the appropriate time period necessary to achieve the recommended reduction or elimination.

(C) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—On completion of the report, the Secretary shall submit the report to—

(i) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(j) EFFECT OF DESIGNATION.—Nothing in this Act—

(1) precludes the local coordinating entity from using Federal funds made available under other laws for the purposes for which those funds were authorized; or

(2) affects any water rights or contracts.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$10,000,000, of which not more than \$1,000,000 may be made available for any fiscal year.

(b) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this Act shall be determined by the Secretary, but shall be not more than 50 percent.

(c) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this Act may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services.

SEC. 5. TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If a proposed Heritage Area management plan has not been submitted to the Secretary by the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Heritage Area designation shall be rescinded.

(b) FUNDING AUTHORITY.—The authority of the Secretary to provide assistance under this Act terminates on the date that is 15 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 631. A bill to exempt National Forest System land in the State of Alaska from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, rise today to introduce legislation that I have cosponsored for a number of years, that will remedy the problems that have been created by this administration's decision to apply the, Inventoried, Roadless Area Conservation Rule to Alaska, especially in Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest, and also in the Chugach National Forest of Southcentral Alaska. I am joined today in introducing that bill by my Alaska colleague Senator DAN SULLIVAN.

Back in 2001 the Clinton administration promulgated the Nationwide Inventoried Area Roadless Conservation Rule. Initially the rule did not cover the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, which has been the subject of congressional review and special legislation twice in the past 35 years, first in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which reduced the allowable timber harvest in

the 16.9-million acre forest from nearly 1 billion board feet a year to a 450 million board foot harvest level, and later by the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990, which further reduced the allowable harvest level to 267 million board feet annually. Congress in 1980 created 5.75 million acres of wilderness by creating 14 wilderness areas in the forest, and in 1990 further reduced the lands available for timber harvesting by creating five additional wilderness areas totaling 296,000 acres and 12 Land Unit Designation 11 areas of 727,700 acres that increased the protected acreages in the Tongass to more than 6.4 million. With the passage of the Sealaska lands bill in 2014, total protected acreage in the Tongass has risen to 6.55 million acres.

Lands classified for potential timber production have been drastically reduced since the 1980 Act's passage. In the Tongass Land Management Plans, TLPM, crafted after ANILCA's passage, 13.3 million acres of the forest, nearly 80 percent, have been restricted from resource development. Of the 9.5 million acres of commercial timber lands in the Tongass only 3.4 million were open for development after 1980 and only 800,000, including previously logged areas, were permitted/planned for harvest over a prospective 100-year timber rotation, harvesting limited to about 8,250 acres a year—4 percent of the total land area. That included about 400,000 "new" acres of new timber lands over a century on top of the roughly 425,000 acres harvested since modern timber activities in Southeast Alaska began in the 1950's and allowed in part for reentry in the future. Since passage of the Tongass Timber Reform Act, and since imposition of the Inventoried Roadless Rule, potential harvesting has dropped even further.

The 2001 Inventoried Roadless Areas in the Tongass include 9.5 million acres, 57 percent of the entire forest, while 5.4 million acres, 99 percent, of the Chugach National Forest in Southcentral Alaska were placed in protected status. In the Tongass 7.4 million acres are in the highest protected status of inventoried roadless meaning that not only can't roads be built for forestry, but that access is not allowed for other uses such as renewable energy development. Overall, between the Inventoried Roadless Rule and other land protections, fewer than 176,000 acres of "new" timber lands are planned for harvest over the next 100 years, cutting the allowable sale quantity below 267 mmbf. The drop in employment in the region has been chilling. According to the Forest Service, total direct timber sector employment fell from a high of 3,543 average annual employees in 1990 to 402 in 2007. Tongass employment in logging and sawmilling has declined from 409 in 2001, the first year of the roadless rule, to 114 by 2007. The drop off in timber activity would actually be higher except the State of Alaska, to the degree that it could, increased State timber

sales. In 2002, for example, 73 percent of all timber cut in Southeast came from Federal forest lands, while by 2007 the percentage stood at barely half coming from Federal lands.

Without changes in the roadless rule to allow some additional timber harvest areas and other energy and mineral development, no more than about 3 percent of the Nation's largest forest will ever be developed and Southeast Alaska will be forced to depend solely on fisheries and tourism as economic engines, potentially returning the region to its impoverished economy of the 1940s.

Today I am introducing legislation to simply exempt Alaska from the Inventoried Roadless Rule. That will not permit economic development on all 9.5 million acres of IRA lands in the Tongass or many of the lands in the Chugach. They will continue to be protected by the terms of the national forest plans for both forests. What it will do is permit land planners the flexibility to propose more rational land planning decisions in the future. It would allow the Forest Service the ability to permit road and electric transmission lines to be placed to tap the region's huge hydroelectric potential—there being 300 megawatts of hydropower available from known sites, if distribution lines can be built at reasonable cost to get the power to markets.

Adding some timber back to the timber base would allow a timber industry to again help the region's economy. But that would not harm the environment and wildlife. Already of the 537,451 acres of productive old-growth, POG, trees left in the Tongass, 437,000 are in permanent conservation areas—81 percent.

The roadless rule may make sense in the contiguous states since there are at least some roads and utility lines that cross those States' national forests. In Southeast Alaska, however, there is no transportation network except a marine ferry system, and no permitted electrical transmission system. It simply made no sense in 2001 for the Inventoried Roadless Rules to apply to Alaska. The rule is not needed since by existing plans and regulations, even without IRA's, 96 percent of the Tongass will remain protected. An exemption from the rule will simply allow Alaskans an opportunity to make thoughtful decisions on development in a region 18 times larger than the state of Delaware, but with 1,300 miles of road in the entire region, 1/10 of the road miles of tiny Delaware.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LEE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 638. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act with respect to exceptional event demonstrations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I thought I would rise to discuss legislation de-

signed to address the bureaucratic overreach in the Environmental Protection Agency's air regulations.

Since I last introduced these bills in June of 2014, EPA's failures in this area have become even more glaring. At present, air regulations are stifling to both businesses and private citizens, and they are negatively impacting our economy.

Let me say from the outset, we all want clean air. We are always in favor of protecting the environment and the air we breathe. I think we are not in favor of an EPA that places real regulations over common sense.

Today I am introducing S. 638, S. 639, and S. 640, the CLEER Act, the ORDEAL Act, and the Agency PAYGO for greenhouse gases.

The CLEER Act eases the regulatory burden on States, including desert States such as Arizona that are home to so-called exceptional events such as dust storms.

Dust storms in Arizona are not caused by man. They are naturally occurring events, just like tornadoes or blizzards in other parts of the country. When these dust storms occur in Arizona, they can cause a spike in the dust, or the PM-10 level. This is nothing the State can control. Yet this blip can cause Arizona and other affected States to fall out of compliance with Federal air quality standards. Again, this is through no fault of their own. It can lead to a loss of transportation dollars, even from the Federal Government.

Thanks to EPA rules, States end up wasting vast amounts of manpower, countless work hours, and lots of taxpayer dollars on reviews and appeals for events they cannot control or avoid.

For example, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the Maricopa Air Quality Department, and the Maricopa Association of Governments in 2011 and 2012 spent \$675,000 and 790 staff hours just to prove a spike in PM-10 levels was caused by a dust storm, not pollution.

These EPA reviews are arbitrary, cumbersome, and costly. They lack an appeals process that further defies common sense. The EPA has continually assured me it would issue a rule to help ease the burdens on States, all the States that have to weather forces of nature such as this. Yet despite these promises, the EPA has continued to backtrack and shift deadlines, and to date has not issued a workable proposed rule.

My legislation on the CLEER Act would require the EPA to move forward with a rulemaking, and it would require decisions on such events be based on a preponderance of evidence, and will accord deference to States' own findings of when such events happen.

It would also require the EPA to review the States' exceptional-event documentation within a reasonable time period of 90 days instead of dragging

out the process. Part of the cost is due to the fact that the EPA drags out the process. These practical fixes will alleviate the undue hardship States are having to deal with and when we have to deal with the effects of these natural events.

Secondly, the ORDEAL Act is an attempt to overhaul the EPA's unnecessary ozone standard reduction until 2018. When the EPA reduced permitted ozone standards in 2008, counties across the country that were in nonattainment were forced to enact expensive and complicated compliance plans.

Relying on a dubious scientific basis, the EPA has proposed lowering the ozone emissions standards even further to 65 parts per billion, while accepting comments on lowering it to 60 parts per billion. By some estimates, this proposal to lower the ozone level may be the most expensive regulation in EPA history—and that is saying something—costing as much as \$1.7 trillion. Lowering ozone standards from 75 parts per billion to 65 parts per billion will cost a whopping \$140 billion annually. Yet EPA's own science advisers disagree on the very basis upon which this regulation is built.

The ORDEAL Act will stop shaky facts and assumptions from being used as a basis for long-term public policy, and will give States the flexibility and the time to implement their own innovative and proactive measures.

The bill would also extend air quality standards reviews, including ozone, to a 10-year timeline instead of the current 5 years.

Third, Agency PAYGO. This administration has set its sights on reducing carbon emissions, most recently putting draconian regulations on existing powerplants, despite the inevitable job losses and spikes in energy costs. It has placed a mandate on Arizona to reduce 52 percent of its carbon emissions by 2030. This is unattainable, unless Arizonans are forced to greatly reduce their standard of living.

The Agency PAYGO Act I am introducing would simply give the EPA a taste of its own medicine by requiring the Agency to offset the Federal cost of any greenhouse gas rules to an equivalent reduction in Agency spending. If the EPA proceeds without offsetting these costs from its own budget, the final greenhouse gas rule must be approved by Congress, simply saying if you cannot do this as an offset within your own budget, bring it to Congress and let's approve it. This bill specifically forbids the EPA from denying costs to Federal agencies by passing on costs to the Federal agency's ratepayers. If capital costs are imposed by a greenhouse gas rule, the EPA must offset those costs or get Congress's approval.

The EPA has a history of implementing costly and stringent standards for negligible and even questionable benefit. All three of these bills—the CLEER Act, ORDEAL Act, and Agency PAYGO Act—provide more certainty

than presently exists to States and counties and businesses that have to deal with the EPA and will hold the Agency accountable for its decision-making process.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting these measures.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 94—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Mr. KAINÉ (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 94

Whereas a competitive global economy requires workers trained in skilled professions;

Whereas according to a report by the National Association of Manufacturers, 80 percent of respondents indicated a moderate to severe shortage of qualified skilled production employees, including front-line workers, such as machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians;

Whereas career and technical education is a tried and true solution to ensure that competitive skilled workers are ready, willing, and capable of holding jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (commonly known as “STEM”) disciplines, nursing, allied health, construction, information technology, energy sustainability, and many other fields that are vital to keeping the United States competitive in the global economy;

Whereas career and technical education helps the United States meet the very real and immediate challenges of economic development, student achievement, and global competitiveness;

Whereas 14,000,000 students are enrolled in career and technical education, which exists in every State and includes programs in nearly 1,300 public high schools and 1,700 2-year colleges;

Whereas 10 of the 20 fastest growing occupations in the United States require an associate's degree or a lesser credential, 13 of the 20 occupations in the United States with the greatest number of projected new jobs require on-the-job training and an associate's degree or certificate, and nearly all occupations in the United States require real-world skills that can be mastered through career and technical education;

Whereas career and technical education matches employability skills with workforce demand and provides relevant academic and technical coursework leading to industry-recognized credentials for secondary, post-secondary, and adult learners;

Whereas career and technical education affords students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials needed to secure careers in growing, high-demand fields;

Whereas secondary school students participating in career and technical education are significantly more likely than students not participating in career and technical education to report that they had developed skills during high school in problem solving, project completion, research, mathematics,

applying to colleges, work-related contexts, communication, time management, and critical thinking;

Whereas students at schools with highly integrated rigorous academic and career and technical education programs have significantly higher achievement in reading, mathematics, and science than students at schools with less integrated programs; and

Whereas the Association for Career and Technical Education has designated February as “Career and Technical Education Month” to celebrate career and technical education across the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education Month;

(2) recognizes the importance of career and technical education in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in the United States; and

(3) encourages educators, counselors, and administrators to promote career and technical education as an option for students.

SENATE RESOLUTION 95—DESIGNATING MARCH 3, 2015, AS “WORLD WILDLIFE DAY”

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 95

Whereas wildlife has provided numerous economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits during the course of human history, and wildlife preservation will secure these gifts for future generations;

Whereas each plant and animal species plays an important role in the stability of diverse ecosystems around the world, and the conservation of this biodiversity is critical to maintain the delicate balance of nature and keep complex ecosystems thriving;

Whereas observation of wild plants and animals in their natural habitat provides individuals with a more enriching world view and a greater appreciation of the wonders of the natural environment;

Whereas tens of millions of individuals in the United States strongly support the conservation of wildlife, both domestically and abroad, and wish to ensure the survival of species in the wild, such as rhinoceroses, tigers, elephants, pangolins, turtles, seahorses, sharks, ginseng, mahogany, and cacti;

Whereas the trafficking of wildlife, including timber and fish, comprises the fourth largest global illegal trade, after narcotics, counterfeiting of products and currency, and human trafficking, and has become a major transnational organized crime with an estimated worth of approximately \$19,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas increased demand in Asia for high-value illegal wildlife products, particularly elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns, has recently triggered substantial and rapid increases in poaching of these species, particularly in Africa;

Whereas trafficking of wildlife is the primary threat to many wildlife species, including elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers;

Whereas many different kinds of criminals, including some terrorist entities and rogue security personnel, often in collusion with corrupt government officials, are involved in wildlife poaching and the movement of ivory and rhinoceros horns across Africa;

Whereas wildlife poaching presents significant security and stability challenges for military and police forces in African nations that are often threatened by heavily armed poachers and the criminal and extremist allies of such poachers;