

and energy development. If there is a poster child for the role that the energy sector can play in growing the economy, it is my State. Texas is a State where we are quite familiar with the oil and gas industry. We are not just sold on oil and gas because we do produce the most electricity from wind turbine of anywhere in the country. We are truly an “all of the above” State. But after years of anemic economic growth and the lowest workforce participation in four decades, does the President of the United States think this is an inconsequential piece of legislation? Why does he not work with us as opposed to remaining an obstruction to real progress the American people are crying out for?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is my first “Time to Wake Up” speech in the Senate as a Member of the minority. Being in the minority will give me the opportunity, for the first time, to use the tools uniquely available to Members of the Senate minority. On the issue of climate change, which is affecting all of our States but particularly Rhode Island, I intend to use those tools politely and persistently.

We have just left a period of partisanship and obstruction by the minority unique in the Senate’s history. I do not intend to return us to those days. My intent is to enliven the Senate and see to it that it does its duty, that we as Senators do our duty to our fellow Americans. My intent is not to blockade and degrade this great institution with obstruction for the sake of obstruction. My goal, in short, is Senate action, not Senate inaction.

Pope Francis recently spoke to the world about mankind’s care of God’s creation. He warned us against what he called negligence and inaction. I hope to be a constant spur in the Senate against negligence and inaction, specifically the negligence and inaction that is our present Senate standard of care for God’s Earth.

I know that powerful forces of negligence and inaction are arrayed against us. I know the Supreme Court’s reckless and shameful decision in the Citizens United case has empowered those forces as never before. I know there has resulted an unprecedented campaign by polluting interests of political spending and threats. It is plain to see that the polluters’ campaign has, for now at least, silenced meaningful bipartisan debate about carbon pollution. We can line up the Citizens United decision and the silence almost exactly. Coal and oil interests are enjoying massive economic subsidies—massive subsidies—and similar to any special interest, they will fight to protect those special benefits. But it can’t last. It can’t last. My confidence is

strong because our American democracy is ultimately founded in the will of the American people, and the American people understand the need to end our days of negligence and inaction. They want us to run the blockade that polluters have built around Congress.

Polling shows this. More than 80 percent of Americans say they see climate change happening right around them. Two-thirds say they would pay more for electricity if it would help solve this problem. Among Independents, that is 64 percent.

Even among young Republicans, voters get it—young voters, anyway. Under the age of 35, most Republican voters, according to polls, think that climate denial is ignorant, out of touch or crazy. Those are the words from the poll. Under 50 years of age, a majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning Independents support action against climate change. Among all Republicans of all ages, fully half support restrictions on carbon dioxide, and nearly half think the United States should lead the fight.

Trusted American institutions get it, too—from the Joint Chiefs of Staff of our military services to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, from all of America’s major scientific societies to the experts we trust day in and day out at NOAA and at NASA, and from the leaders of America’s corporate community—Walmart and Target, Apple and Google, Ford and GM, Mars and Nestle USA, Alcoa and Starbucks, Coke and Pepsi. From all of them and from many other respected voices comes the message that climate change is a serious threat. I have confidence that Congress will soon have to heed their voices.

We might mention the recent agreement in Lima where 194 countries all agreed to carbon reductions. Does the Republican Party in the United States of America really want to be aligned with Vladimir Putin, the great international climate denier?

My confidence also comes from necessity. This simply must be done. Our human species developed on this earth in a climate window that has always been between 170 and 300 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—always. For as long as human kind has been here on Earth, carbon concentration has wobbled up and down but always within that range—through our entire history, going back a million and probably more years. We have now rocketed outside that range and broken 400 parts per million, a condition on Earth that is a first, again, in millions of years.

Our oceans, as a result, are acidifying measurably at a rate unprecedented in the life of our species. One has to go back into distant geologic time to find anything similar. If you go back that far and look at what the geologic record tells us about what life was like on the planet in those primal eras, it presents a daunting prospect.

The scientific warnings about what this means are now starting to be

matched in our experience with unprecedented rain bursts and droughts, wildfires and heat seasons, sea levels and ocean temperatures. In the tropic seas, coral reefs are dying off at startling rates; in the Arctic seas, sea ice is vanishing at levels never recorded until now. Everywhere the oceans shout a warning to those who will listen. Rhode Island, as a coastal State, as the Ocean State, is particularly hard hit. We get the land problems such as the rain bursts heavily associated with climate change, which in 2010 brought unprecedented flooding along our historic rivers. We have the sea level rise. It is expected now to be several feet by the end of the century—by a warming sea that has also disturbed our fisheries and distressed our fishing economy. “It is not my grandfather’s ocean out there,” as one commercial fisherman told me.

This only goes one way. There is no theory of how this magically gets better on its own. Every theory—and now most observations—all point to all this getting worse and perhaps very badly worse. The time for negligence and inaction has passed.

In the Senate we need to begin a conversation about this. We have to begin at the beginning. We have to agree on a baseline of facts, principles, and laws of nature that can then inform our judgments about what to do. I do not think it is asking too much of the new majority in the Senate to begin an honest conversation about carbon dioxide and climate change. I don’t think that it is too much to ask the new majority in the Senate that we undertake this conversation in a serious and responsible manner. I do not think that is extreme or unreasonable. We need to begin at the beginning in this conversation, and I will make every effort to see to it that we begin. But even as we begin, we can keep the end in sight. That end is a world where polluters pay the costs of their pollution. That in turn creates a world where market forces work properly in our energy markets. The end is a world where it is America that seizes the economic promise of these new energy technologies, where we are builders—not buyers—of the energy devices of the future. The end is a world that turns back from the brink of a plainly foreseeable risk where the consequences of negligence and inaction could well be dire for us and for the generations that follow us.

In sum, we in this Senate have a duty before us, and negligence and inaction will not meet what that duty demands. For those of you with a coal economy or an oil economy in your States, I understand and I want to work with you. There are answers to be found. But please, do not pretend that this problem doesn’t exist. That is false and unacceptable.

I must, on behalf of my State and on behalf of our future, insist that we in the Senate meet our duty, even under this new Senate majority—and I will.

I yield the floor, and I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m. recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3:15 p.m. will be controlled by Senator HOEVEN or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to engage in a colloquy until 3:15 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, along with Senator JOE MANCHIN—and actually a total of 60 sponsors—I have filed S. 1, which is the Keystone approval bill. It is a very simple, straightforward bill. This is legislation we have seen before in this body. What it does, under the commerce clause of the Constitution, is authorize Congress to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline project.

I have this map in the Chamber to show you the project. It runs from Hardisty in Alberta, Canada, all the way down to our refineries in Texas along the gulf coast.

This project will move 830,000 barrels of oil a day. Some of that will be oil from Canada. Some of that will be domestic oil from the Bakken region in Montana and North Dakota.

This is part of building the infrastructure so we can build a comprehensive energy plan for our country. We are producing more and more oil and gas in our country from shale from places such as the Bakken in North Dakota and Montana, the Eagle Ford in Texas, natural gas from places such as the Barnett and the Marcellus in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

What we are working toward is—some people refer to it as energy independence, but really energy security for our country.

What does that mean? It means we produce more energy than we consume. Obviously, energy has a global market. The market for energy is a global market. We know that. The market for oil and gas is a global market.

But the point is, working together with our closest friend and ally, Canada, we can have North American energy security where we produce more energy than we consume.

Why is that important? That is important because it is about creating jobs. It is important because it is about economic growth. It is important because it is a national security issue.

Why do we continue to rely on oil from the Middle East? Why are we con-

tinuing to send dollars to the Middle East where you have—look at what happened in Paris today with an attack by Islamic extremists. One of the ways we fight back, one of the ways we push back is we take control of our own energy destiny. We can do it. We are doing it. Why are gas prices lower today at the pump? Is it because OPEC decided to give us a Christmas present? I do not think so. It is because we are producing far more energy than we ever have before. But to continue to produce that energy, we have to have the infrastructure to move that energy from where it is produced to where it is consumed. That means pipelines. That means roads. That means rail. For electricity, that means transmission. But we cannot have an energy plan for this country that really works without the infrastructure to move that energy safely and effectively. That is what this project is all about.

So why are we here talking about it today? It seems like a pretty straightforward proposition. After all, I think there are something like 19 different pipelines that cross the border. In fact, there are millions of miles of pipelines in this country. Here is a map I have in the Chamber of just some of them. We have millions of miles of pipeline in this country. A lot of them, as you can see, cross the border.

So why are we standing here today talking about another pipeline project? Because for the past 6 years—for the past 6 years—the administration has held this project up. They keep saying: There is a process. As a matter of fact, Josh Earnest, just yesterday, said: Oh, we have a process. Congress should not intervene in the Keystone XL Pipeline approval issue because there is a process. Really, Mr. President, there is a process? Let's see. The TransCanada company filed application to build the Keystone XL Pipeline in September of 2008—September 2008. If you do the math, that is more than 6 years ago. And there is a process somehow to get to a conclusion?

So that company, which has invested hundreds of millions already, wants to build, ultimately, an \$8.9 million project that will move 830,000 barrels of oil a day. And here they are 6 years later still waiting for approval. That is why today we are asking Congress to step forward and do what the American people want.

Keystone is not a new issue. The American people understand this issue. Poll after poll shows the American people, by a margin of about 70 percent to 20-some percent, support this project. Whom do we work for? We work for the people of this great country, and 70 percent of the people of this great country say: Approve the project. After 6 long years, where all of the requirements have been met, approve the project.

But the President, of course, continues to hold it up, and even yesterday issued a veto threat. Why? Why is he wanting to threaten a veto on a

project that 70 percent of the American people support? It is really hard to understand, isn't it? Because every time an objection comes up, we have worked to address that objection.

When there was an objection on the route, the company rerouted. So the President says: Well, it is an environmental concern. He says: Well, it is an environmental concern. Really? An environmental concern?

This is what his own study found. After 6 years of study, the State Department, in multiple environmental impact statements—three draft statements and two final environmental impact statements—this is what they found: no significant environmental impact, according to the U.S. State Department environmental impact statements.

That is not something I did. That is not something the company did. That is something the Obama administration did—repeatedly—and came to the same conclusion: no significant environmental impact. In fact, if you do not build the pipeline, you have to move that oil with 1,400 railcars a day.

Now, Canada is going to produce the energy. North Dakota, Montana, other States, are going to continue to produce the energy. So that energy is going to move. The question is, how and where? If we cannot build the pipeline, then it has to go by railcar. So do we really want 1,400 railcars a day moving that product around or do we want it to move more safely, more cost-effectively, with better environmental stewardship through a pipeline? Common sense.

Then there is this idea somehow: Well, Canada is not going to produce that oil if they do not have a pipeline. Wrong. They will move it by rail, and they will build other pipelines. Here are several that are already in the planning stages, as shown on this map. They will move it to the East Coast to refineries they have there or they will send it west and it will go to China.

Now, does that make sense? It does not make sense to the American public, which is why the American public wants to work with Canada as well as produce energy in our country to become energy secure. The idea that we would say no to our closest friend and ally, Canada: We are not going to work with you, we are going to continue to buy oil from the Middle East, and we are going to have you send your oil to China, makes no sense to the American people. And it should not. It should not. That is why they overwhelmingly support this project.

So here we are. We are starting the new Congress. I think, very clearly, in the last election, the people said: We support this project. You saw it time after time with candidate after candidate who supported this project who won their election. But on an even bigger issue, an even bigger message, the people of this great country said: We want the Congress to work together in a bipartisan way to get things done. We