

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

want the Congress to work together in a bipartisan way to get things done.

So here we have legislation that has passed the House repeatedly with a bipartisan majority. Here we have legislation that has bipartisan support in this body. Here we have legislation that the American people overwhelmingly support, after clearly giving the message in the last election that they want us working together to get work done, and the President issues a veto message right out of the gates. Why? For whom? Whom is he working for?

So it is incumbent upon us to work together in a bipartisan way to get this legislation passed. The way we are approaching it—and I see my good friend and colleague from the great State of West Virginia is here. I want to thank him and turn to him, but I want to do it in the form of a question.

It was my very clear sense from the last election—and I think the very clear sense that we all got from the last election—that they want to see Congress working together in a bipartisan way, in an open process to get the important work of this country done.

So with this legislation, it is not just that it is about important energy infrastructure. It is also that we want to return to regular order in this body, offer an open amendment process, allow people to bring forward their amendments, offer those amendments, debate them, and get a vote on those amendments. If they have amendments that can add to and improve this legislation, great, let's have that process. Let's have that debate. Let's have those votes. Let's make this bill as good as we can possibly make it. Then the President needs to work with us. The President needs to meet us halfway and get this done for the American people.

So I would like to turn to my good colleague from the great State of West Virginia and say: Aren't we doing all we can here to try to make sure we are approaching this in a bipartisan way with an open, transparent process to try to build support for this legislation?

Mr. MANCHIN. I say to the Senator, he is absolutely correct. I thank him for this opportunity not only to work with him but also to bring the facts forward.

We have heard many times: We are all entitled to our own opinions, we are just not entitled to our own facts. If you start looking at what we are consuming today in America, at last count 7 million barrels of crude oil is purchased every day in America from other countries—7 million barrels of crude a day. So this line would possibly furnish 830,000 barrels of that dependency that we have.

Let's look and see where it comes from right now. Mr. President, 2.5 million barrels we are already purchasing from Canada—our best, greatest ally we could possibly have; the best trading partner and the No. 1 trading partner that 35 of the 50 States have. So it is not an unknown there.

But let's look at where we are purchasing some of the rest of the oil from. We purchase 755,000 barrels of heavy crude a day from Venezuela. Let's look at Venezuela, where it is an authoritarian regime. It impoverishes its citizens. It violates their human rights. It shows its willingness to put down political protests with horrific violence.

We also purchase 1.3 million barrels a day from Saudi Arabia. We all have our concerns about Saudi Arabia and a lot of the money we follow goes into the wrong hands. Forty-two thousand barrels a day from Russia—from Russia. We know their intent and what they have been doing with their energy policy. Their regime has invaded its neighbors and they armed pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine.

So when we start looking at what we are doing, those are the facts. This is not just hearsay. It is not just rumors. These are facts. We purchase 7 million barrels. When I first was approached on this 4 years ago when I came to the Senate, they said: What do you think about the Keystone Pipeline that will be bringing oil from Canada into America?

I said: Where I come from in West Virginia it is pretty common sense. We would rather buy from our friends than our enemies. I would rather support my friends, my allies, my trading partners more so than I would the enemies who use anything I buy from them—the money they receive from that product that I buy from them and use it against me.

It is pretty common sense, not real complicated. I know everybody is trying to make this complicated. Also, they talk about—we just had a caucus talking about what would happen to the oil. I know the Senator has been watching this very closely. But they said the Keystone Pipeline will strictly be just an avenue and a vehicle for exporting this oil out. They are just going to use America to bring that oil through.

We checked into that a little bit further. That is not true. Even the Washington Post gave it three Pinocchios that said it was untrue. We found out, basically, the crude oil from Canada is expected to be mixed with the domestic oil from the Bakken, from the Senator's region, North Dakota, and that the Canadian oil is a heavier crude, similar to Venezuelan oil. It will be mixed with the light crude from the Bakken, which enables it to flow much easier and be produced. Once it commingles, this oil is basically American oil. It lives and dies and basically is marketed with the policies of the United States of America. Our policy is not to export crude oil.

So I do not know why people are using this argument and scaring people that we will get no benefit. Then we talked about the jobs. They said there is not that many jobs. In West Virginia, you give us 42,000 jobs. We would be very appreciative. We will thank

you. These are all high-paying jobs. They said: Well, they are only contract jobs.

But yet I hear everybody talking, Republicans and Democrats, about building roads and building bridges. Those are also seasonal types of jobs. Those are also contracting jobs. They are not permanent jobs, but we are tickled to death to get them. That is the whole trade union. All the unions that I know of are supportive of this piece of legislation. Every working man and woman whom we keep talking about who supports themselves and their family supports this legislation.

Why we are running into such a road-block I have no idea. Then when we put the map up—the other map we had. I said: When I first heard about this pipeline, I thought it was an anomaly that we did not have many pipelines in America. Then we put up this map. This is what we have in America today. So this is not foreign to any of us in any State we have pipelines, many in West Virginia and all through this country.

Then we look at public support. We think: Here we are Democrats and Republicans. We look at the polls, and we live and die by the polls, they tell us, or we should. But the bottom line is that if we do believe in the polls, this has been a consistent poll. It has not varied for over 5 years. We have not seen the numbers fluctuate that much.

Overwhelmingly, we have Americans in all aspects of the political realm—whether you are a Democrat, Republican or an Independent—who overwhelmingly support this pipeline. So I cannot see the objections to it. I was very disappointed when the President said he would veto it—or the White House once we said we would go through this process.

I think the Senator and I talked about this. We thought this is going to be an open process. I was encouraged by my colleagues on the Democratic side who have some good amendments, I believe, that should be considered and I believe would pass and enhance the bill. We only need four more—four more Senators on my side of the aisle who can see the benefit of a good bill, a good process with good amendments to strengthen this bill, to put us in a position that is veto-proof.

That should be our goal. Basically, we should not be deterred by the White House or the President saying already that they are going to veto this bill. Let's see if we can make this bill so good that when we are finished with this product and this process 2 or 3 weeks from now, we will have a product that basically we are all proud of, that the American people are proud of and will support, and maybe, just maybe, the White House will change its mind.

I am hopeful for that. I appreciate all the effort and work. We are working very well together. At last count, we had nine Democrats working with our Republican colleagues. That puts us at

63. I am hopeful to get four more at least that will look at the virtues of this and the assets and what it will do for our country.

My main goal is this: Energy independence makes a secured and protected Nation. Anytime we do not have to depend on oil coming from other parts of the world—and the resources we give them when we purchase their product, they use those resources against us time after time again. We can see now, with the oil prices dipping, the benefits the consumers in America receive, the strength that gives our country.

I am so thankful for that, that we are getting a break. I think we can continue to make that happen for many years to come if we are able to be smart strategically in what we do today. I think the Senator spoke about the environment. He might want to touch on that again. But most of this oil is being produced now, some way or another, and it is also getting transported in different ways and means.

The bottom line is there is no significant environmental impact. I think the State Department has even done five studies that show that to be true. I said also 2.5 million barrels a day are being purchased from Canada today. Refineries in Illinois are now refining this product. They said we should not do it. We have been doing it for quite some time. We are using this product. With technology we are using it better. It has helped us be more independent of foreign oil.

That is No. 1, the security of our Nation. Being an American, and for West Virginians, the security of our Nation is first and foremost what we support. That is why I think we see a tremendous amount of people from the Mountain State, I say to the Senator, who support this piece of legislation.

We are going to work diligently. We have a long way to go, but I think the facts are on our side. We are all entitled to our opinions, but we cannot change the facts.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from West Virginia not only for his support on this project but for his willingness to work hard, to work together to find bipartisan solutions, whether it is this legislation or other legislation. That is what it is incumbent upon us to do. It is not easy, but we have to be willing to engage in the hard work it takes to get to this legislation, to get these solutions in place for the American people.

I again thank the Senator for his leadership. I look forward to continuing to work with the Senator and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come to good solutions. That is what this effort is all about.

I want to turn to the Senator from the State of Montana. The pipeline project goes right through his State. Here is somebody who has dealt with the issue on the House side of Congress and who has the project in his home

State. So he is talking on behalf of people where the pipeline is right there.

I would like to turn to him and ask: What are the people in Montana saying? It is fine for somebody far removed from a project to say I am OK or I am not OK with it, but how about the people who are right there on the site? They are directly affected. Tell us what is the sense in the Senator's home State? What is the Senator hearing when he talks to people?

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I applaud, first of all, the Senator from North Dakota for his leadership on this most important issue and his commitment to making it a priority for this Senate, the first bill introduced into this Senate. I also applaud the Senator from West Virginia; one example of, as we sit in this Chamber today, Republicans and Democrats discussing and supporting the Keystone XL Pipeline.

I reiterate many of the comments expressed by my colleagues and convey the importance of this pipeline, because as the Senator from North Dakota mentioned and showed on his map, the very first State the Keystone Pipeline enters as it comes from Canada is the State of Montana. Let me tell you something. It is not just a pipeline. This is also changing the way of life and economic stimulus for our great State.

I spend a lot of time traveling around the State in my pickup. As I drive around Eastern Montana, where the Keystone Pipeline will travel, I recognize this is a lifeline for many of our rural communities. In fact, Circle, MT—Circle, MT, is a small town of around 600 people. It is located in McCone County. It is one of six Montana counties that the Keystone XL Pipeline will run through. Circle, similar to a lot of small communities in Montana, has experienced the same economic and population declines that other towns have faced in recent years.

In fact, the county has significant infrastructure needs that have gone unresolved in the wake of a shrinking tax base. For towns such as Circle, the Keystone XL Pipeline is not just about energy. It represents economic opportunity and hope for the future. You see, McCone County alone would see \$18 million in property tax revenue from the Keystone Pipeline construction. That is just in the pipeline's first year of operation. That is money for neighborhoods. It is money for roads, not to mention the influx of jobs for the area.

Another \$45 million would be distributed among five other Montana counties, and \$16 million would go to Montana's schools and university systems. You see, the Keystone XL Pipeline means lower energy costs for Montana families, for our senior citizens, and for small businesses.

In Glasgow, MT—I remember traveling in my pickup into Glasgow. I met with the NorVal Electric Co-op. They told me that if the Keystone Pipeline is approved, they will hold electric rates flat for their customers for the next 10

years. That is several thousand Montana families up in the northeast part of our State.

The reason for that is because they will supply electricity to these pump stations on the Keystone Pipeline. If the Keystone Pipeline is not approved, those ratepayers will see an approximate 40-percent increase in their utility rates over the next 10 years. That is a potential increase of \$480 per year for the average household in Montana.

As the Senator from North Dakota mentioned, 100,000 barrels a day of the oil traveling through the Keystone Pipeline will be Montana and North Dakota oil. That supports the Bakken formation. With the revolution of hydraulic fracturing, what it is creating now is lower gas prices at the pump today.

Montanans know this pipeline is not just a lofty idea or some kind of DC-based rhetoric. It is hope for the people of my State. It is a tangible result and a solution that Montanans deserve. I have to tell you, that is why it is so disappointing that once again we are seeing the President and some Senate Democrats playing political games and perpetuating the 6 years of gridlock that have held back this job-creating project.

Rather than putting the American people first, the President has threatened to refuse the people of Montana their right to determine their economic future. It took the Canadians just 7 months to approve their end of the Keystone Pipeline. It has taken this President more than 6 years. That is 6 years without the hundreds of good-paying jobs that will be created in Montana and thousands more across the Nation.

That is 6 years without millions of dollars in critical revenue for Montana schools, for infrastructure, for teachers. That is 6 years without the answers and actions that Montanans deserve. I think the pipeline checks every box of common sense. It is environmentally sound, it creates jobs, it is economic opportunity, and it is going to help us move toward North American energy independence.

So the question is: Why are we still waiting? The people of Montana, the people of this country have said they have had enough. That is why we are here today speaking in support of this important project. I am proud the Senate is taking steps to move forward with the Keystone XL Pipeline. I know the House intends to do the same shortly. President Obama can continue to obstruct progress on American jobs and American energy independence, but the American people have sent a strong message that they are ready to remove any roadblocks that President Obama intends to put in the way.

The time for partisanship, the time for political games is over. It is time the Congress and this government gets to work for the American people and starts getting results for this country.

The polls are clear. Sixty-seven percent of the American people want the Keystone Pipeline approved.

Seventy-five percent of Montanans want the Keystone Pipeline approved. Prior to serving in Congress, I spent 28 years in the private sector, where we were focused on getting results in the real world. It seems only in DC are we outside of the real world of doing something and getting results on behalf of the American people. That starts with approving the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mr. HOEVEN. I would like to thank the Senator from Montana again. We are hearing from somebody who is there, who is talking to people, where this project is going to be located, one of the States it would pass through. I thank the Senator for his perspective and for his hard work and commend him for being here and for his continued efforts not only to work with our caucus but to reach out to the Democratic caucus as well and find common ground on this important issue—something the Senator from West Virginia said a minute ago; that is, let's focus on the facts. I think the more understanding we create as to what the facts are, the more this gets done on the merits.

I turn to the Senator from Wyoming—somebody who has long experience with energy, somebody who comes from an energy State, a State that produces a variety of sources of energy, and pose the same question to him. In terms of focusing on the facts, whether it is the environmental aspect, whether it is the jobs, whether it is making our country energy secure, talk to us a little bit about the importance of this kind of vital infrastructure—projects such as Keystone—for our country.

Mr. BARRASSO. First let me thank and congratulate the Senator from North Dakota for his dogged determination in fighting for these American jobs and for energy security for our country. I am so grateful for his hard work. He has really been tenacious in this fight to get this bill past the Senate and to the President's desk.

I also congratulate my friend and colleague from Montana. Last fall the American people elected 12 new Republican Senators to work in this body, and he is one of them. I have had the opportunity to travel with him in Montana. He has a great background. He is innovative, and he is energetic. He is going to do a tremendous job not only for his State and the Rocky Mountain West but for the entire United States as a Member of the Senate. He just took his oath yesterday. We were able to hear from him today, and he is going to be a remarkable addition to this body.

I know that all of these dozen new Republican Senators are as eager as the rest of us in the new Republican majority to start fulfilling our obligation to the people we represent. Americans elected a Republican Congress because they wanted a change. They wanted to change the direction that

President Obama and Democrats have taken the country.

Under the Democratic leadership over the past several years, the Senate was a place of dysfunction and gridlock. More than 40 jobs bills passed by the House of Representatives in the last Congress never even came up for a vote in the Senate. Many of those bills had overwhelming bipartisan support, just like this one we are debating today. Those days are over. That is a completely unacceptable way to run the Senate.

All of us here in the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, have been given an opportunity to work together and to get things done. That is what the American people told us on election day, that is what they are expecting from us, and I believe that is what they are demanding of us.

The poster child for the gridlock and dysfunction of Washington has been the Keystone XL Pipeline. For more than 6 years it has been a symbol of out-of-control Washington bureaucracy. The State Department has absolutely refused to do its job and to make any kind of decision on the pipeline's application.

The Keystone XL Pipeline has also been a symbol of gridlock in the Senate. A small group of extreme environmentalists with deep pockets has bullied Democratic Members of the Senate to block a bill that would move this important jobs project further.

According to the latest figures, America's labor force participation rate is woefully low; it is just 62.8 percent. Are Democrats in this body satisfied with that number? Is the President of the United States, President Barack Obama, satisfied with this pathetic participation in America's labor force? I can say that people in my State, Republicans all across the country—they are not satisfied. That is why we are determined to push job-creating legislation such as this Hoeven bill to advance the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The President said there is no benefit to this important infrastructure project. During a press conference last month, President Obama actually claimed that the project is "not even going to be a nominal benefit to U.S. consumers." Apparently, that is what the President believes. Well, he is wrong. Just ask the Obama administration's own State Department. It says the pipeline would support more than 42,000 jobs. Some of those are construction jobs. Some of them are in the transportation field and the manufacturing field. It includes jobs at warehouses, restaurants, and motels along the route. Does President Obama think that a good job is not even a "nominal benefit" to the Americans who could get those 42,000 jobs from this pipeline?

According to the Congressional Research Service, there are already 19 pipelines operating across U.S. borders. Why is this the one that suddenly offers not even a nominal benefit, according to President Obama? Why does

President Obama refuse to make a decision about whether to approve the pipeline? Well, the President has taken a position on this bipartisan bill—according to the White House Press Secretary on Tuesday, the President will not sign this bill once Congress passes it.

The State Department has done one study after another showing that the pipeline would create jobs and that it would have no significant environmental impact. President Obama has been downplaying those benefits and threatening to veto the bill. That is not Presidential leadership.

Now Republicans are going to show the leadership that the American people have been asking for and that they voted for last November. We are going to bring a bill to the floor and force the President to finally do something by putting it on the President's desk.

Democrats have been playing politics with this pipeline bill. The Republican majority will now get it done. We are going to allow a vote on this project. We are going to allow Senators to offer amendments. What a unique situation in the Senate. We are going to let everyone say which side they are on. This will be a bellwether decision. Are Members of the Senate in favor of 42,000 jobs for American workers or are they in favor of more Washington delay? Democrats will have a chance to make their arguments. The extreme opponents of this project will make misleading claims to try to discount the pipeline's benefits, and they will try to stoke people's fears. We have seen it all before.

At the end of the day, here is what this all comes down to—four things:

No. 1, the Keystone XL Pipeline will support more than 42,000 jobs in the United States.

No. 2, it will be a private investment of \$8 billion—not taxpayer spending, private spending.

No. 3, it will have minimal effect on the environment.

No. 4, the pipeline is actually safer than other methods of getting that oil to market.

Congress should approve this pipeline and pass this bill and the President should sign it.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is a job creator. It has bipartisan support. It has been stuck in Washington's bureaucratic gridlock.

It is interesting. When I listen to and think of the President and his comments about jobs and what the impact is going to be, it makes me think of what the president of the Laborers' International Union of North America said in the summer 1 year ago. He was scheduled to testify today at the Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing—a hearing that now the minority, the Democratic acting leader, Senator DURBIN, objected to having yesterday. He objected to just a hearing and a discussion.

It is interesting. There was a press release from the president of the union,

who was quoted on the subject of the economic benefits associated with the construction of the pipeline. Terry O'Sullivan said:

The President [President Obama] seems to dismiss the corresponding economic opportunities that would benefit other laborers, manufacturers, small businesses, and communities throughout Keystone's supply chain.

He said:

The Washington politics behind the delay of the Keystone XL pipeline are of little concern to those seeking the dignity of a good, high-paying job. We renew our call to the President [President Obama] to approve this important, job-creating project without delay.

This is what a job is. It is about someone's dignity, their identity, and their self-worth. People take a lot of personal pride in their work and in their job. I think we ought to approve it. I am ready to vote for it.

The American people have been clear: They are tired of Washington's gridlock and delay, and they are tired of the direction President Obama has been taking this country. The American voters demanded change, they demanded action, and this Republican Congress is going to deliver just that.

So I say to my friend and colleague from North Dakota—and I see that the chairman of the Senate energy committee has arrived—thank you both for your leadership. To the Senator from North Dakota, former Governor there, thank you for your leadership on energy in North Dakota. And to the senior Senator from Alaska, the chair of the energy committee, thank you specifically for your leadership. I look forward to working with both of you specifically on this project and on additional issues that will bring American energy security and jobs to our Nation.

Mr. HOEVEN. I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his comments today and for his continued hard work in support of the issue. I look forward to working with him again to get this done for the American people.

I turn to our leader on the energy committee, the chairman of the energy committee, the Senator from Alaska, who understands energy. She is from another State that produces a huge amount of energy for this country, wants to produce more, and can produce more but only with the infrastructure to do it. Isn't that what we are talking about here today? This country can have more jobs, more economic growth, and more energy that we produce right here at home. But, Senator, don't we need the infrastructure to move that energy as safely and as cost-effectively as possible?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. To my friend and colleague from North Dakota, it is all about infrastructure.

In Alaska, my home State, we have boundless supplies of oil and natural gas, but until we were able to build that 800-mile pipeline across two mountain ranges to deliver oil from Alaska's North Slope to tidewater in Valdez, that oil didn't do anybody any good.

Today, the oil pipeline in Alaska is less than half full.

So we are working to try to figure out how we can do more as a State to contribute more to our Nation's energy needs, to allow us as a State to be producing more for the benefit not only of our State but of the Nation as well, but we are held back by policies that limit us. So it is policies and it is infrastructure. It is absolutely infrastructure.

We are trying to move Alaska's natural gas to market as well. But, again, if we don't have the infrastructure, it sits. It stays. It doesn't benefit consumers, it doesn't create jobs, and it doesn't help any of us out.

So Keystone truly is about infrastructure. I thank my colleague from North Dakota for leading on this issue for years now and for reintroducing the legislation, S. 1, the first bill to be filed in the Senate this year. It will be among the first bills to pass in this new Congress and appropriately so. This is a measure that not only enjoys bipartisan support in the Senate, it enjoys broad support over in the House, and it enjoys support across our Nation for great reason. So why are we where we are? Why are we looking at this situation and saying there is so much frustration going on?

Senator McCONNELL has promised to allow open and full debate on the Keystone XL Pipeline project, the legislation in front of us. I think we are looking forward to it. As the chairman of the energy committee, I am looking forward to robust debate on Keystone XL and what it will provide for this country in terms of jobs and in terms of opportunities.

We are all frustrated. We are all frustrated by a President's decision—or unwillingness, really, to make a decision about this pipeline. It has been 2,301 days and counting since the company seeking to build it submitted an application for this cross-border permit—2,301 days. That is more than 6 years ago.

Yesterday the President was finally able to make a decision. He issued his statement of administration policy. In his statement he says that by advancing this measure, it would cut short consideration of important issues.

Excuse me, Mr. President—cut short a process that has been underway for over 6 years? That is amazing to me. Again, when we talk about decisions, let's get moving with this.

The President seems to be advancing some pretty interesting things when it comes to the energy discussion. He was quoted in an interview just this morning in the Detroit News. He basically told Americans that we are enjoying lower energy prices right now, but we had better enjoy them fast because they are not going to last.

He said we have to be smart about our energy policy. I am with you there, Mr. President. We do have to be smart about our energy policy. But to think the suggestion is just enjoy low prices while they last, take advantage of the

sunshine—no. Mr. President, your energy policies need to make sense for today, for the midterm, and for the long term. For the long term and for the short term we need to make sure we have infrastructure that will allow us the energy supply that is so important to this country. It amazes me we would be so defeatist with this approach.

We have an opportunity in this Congress. We had an opportunity this morning in the energy committee. We had scheduled a hearing on the Keystone XL Pipeline. We were going to hear testimony on original legislation to approve Keystone XL as we did last year on a bipartisan basis. But as Members in the body know, there was objection to that unanimous consent. We had to postpone the hearing. I quite honestly was surprised. It would have been nice to know an objection was coming before we had organized the hearing, before we had invited witnesses, before we had completed all the preparation. We are going to do our best in our committee to adhere to regular order. I hope our colleagues will work with us.

I wish to introduce for the RECORD some of the testimony we received from the three witnesses who graciously agreed to participate in our hearing we had scheduled for this morning.

Andrew Black, president and CEO of the Association of Oil Pipe Lines, described pipeline safety issues and the gains Keystone XL would bring to the American economy in terms of jobs and payrolls. An excerpt from his testimony is as follows:

While there is much controversy associated with the Keystone XL Pipeline, the facts are that pipelines are the safest way to transport crude oil and other energy products. A barrel of crude oil has a better than 99.99 percent chance of reaching its destination safely by pipeline, safer than any competing transportation mode.

A second witness we had invited was David Mallino, legislative director of the Laborers' International Union of North America. In his testimony he explored the positive jobs impact of the pipeline and responded to some environmental concerns. Here is an excerpt from Mr. Mallino's testimony:

Regardless of characterizations by the project's opponents, it is indisputable that jobs will be created and supported in the extraction and refining of the oil, as well as in the manufacturing and service sectors.

We also invited Greg Dotson, vice president for energy policy at the Center for American Progress. He submitted his testimony in opposition. We made sure we had opposition testimony presented as well. He discussed climate change. He responded to the arguments in favor of Keystone. While he may be an opponent of the pipeline and as usual would have been outnumbered by the supporters of the project, I will still reference his testimony for the RECORD.

A copy of the testimony of Mr. Black, Mr. Mallino, and Mr. Dotson

may be found on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee Web site.

I do believe that had we been allowed to hold the hearing this morning, we would have heard very strong bipartisan statements in support of Keystone XL from many members of our committee. The majority of our committee supports this pipeline and is already cosponsoring this bill.

I will close my comments by assuring members of this body, we are in day 2 of this 114th Congress. This is not going to be our only debate on energy legislation over the years. I know it has been a long 7 years since we have had comprehensive energy legislation. A lot has changed. A lot of people have great ideas to improve and reform our policies, and I welcome those ideas. I am looking forward to the debate, to advancing these proposals through the energy committee. I think we can make significant progress on supply and infrastructure, on efficiency, on accountability. Those areas in particular should be the forum or the focus of an energy bill that we would hope to report out.

We are going to work hard on the energy committee. We are planning on legislating. Keystone XL is a natural point for this Congress because it has been delayed for so long, 2,301 days. It is clear this President is not going to make a decision on this, so the Congress needs to make it instead.

I look forward to coming back to the floor in a couple days when we have S. 1 officially in front of us. We are going to have good debate on it. I look forward to working with my colleague who has been so determined on this issue for so long. His leadership has been key in getting us here, but we need to finish it. We need to make the connects so we can move the resource and provide jobs for this country and for our allies and friends in Canada.

I again thank my friend and look forward to these next couple days and the next couple weeks where we will have an opportunity to put this before the American people on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Alaska for her leadership on the Energy Committee and also for her willingness to work in an open way on these important issues.

Across this body, on both sides of the aisle, there should be a deep appreciation for her willingness to bring these bills forward so we can debate them and we can offer amendments and we can build the kind of energy future for this country our people so very much want to have.

The Senator from Alaska is somebody who lives and breathes this topic when we talk energy—somebody who is truly committed to it but truly committed to an open dialogue on all types of energy, giving everybody an opportunity to weigh in and build the best energy plan for our country that we possibly can.

So I extend my thanks to her and also my appreciation, and likewise say

I look forward to working with her on this issue and on so many important energy issues.

I wish to turn to my colleague from the State of North Dakota and ask her for her perspective on why this project is so important for our country and for the energy future of our country.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota.

I rise to join my colleagues on the other side who represent States that know a little bit about energy and certainly my colleague from North Dakota who has led this effort from the first day he arrived in the Senate.

It is no big surprise because we know we can have much oil out there and we can know where the reserves are, but if we don't have the infrastructure to move that oil to market, what it does is drive up prices. I haven't checked today, but oil price is below \$40 a barrel. If someone doesn't think that is supply-demand economics 101, they don't understand what is happening. The fact is we have known reserves in places such as North Dakota and Alaska, we have producable reserves in Canada, and we have an opportunity to continue to develop these resources in a way that benefits in an incredible way American consumers.

Think about what is happening for the average American family today when they fill up at the pump, and think what that means and how that will ripple through our economy as discretionary income grows. But that is only possible when we have a known supply that is moveable, it is transportable, it is in fact capable of reaching its market or reaching the refinery. That is what we are talking about when we are talking about North American crude oil.

We are going to hear a lot of stories about this debate about how this crude oil is more dangerous to the environment, how it is different than Bakken crude. Guess what. It is different than Bakken crude, but it is not different than the crude refined in refineries in Texas, where we will be displacing crude that is refined from Venezuela, and we are going to be replacing it with crude that is produced by our friends to the north, Canada.

So infrastructure is a huge part. In fact, that is why, when Secretary Moniz declared the Quadrennial Energy Review, he looked at not just where is the supply and the future of supply of energy, he focused on transportation of energy because that is a huge part of our challenge.

As we look at the Keystone XL Pipeline—and we say Keystone XL because a lot of people don't know we already have a Keystone Pipeline. We already have a pipeline that is bringing oil sands from Canada into the United States for refining. A lot of people don't realize this is the second pipeline that will be named Keystone, and it is a pipeline that has been in process for literally a decade, from their planning process to the time they actually ask for a permit.

I am going to address some of the concerns of some of my colleagues as we hear them so we can kind of lay the groundwork.

We frequently hear the Keystone XL Pipeline will be exporting, and all of the oil that is coming down will find its way directly into China. That gets said all the time, and guess what the Washington Post gave it: three Pinocchios. It is not true.

It is going to get refined. It is going to get refined in the United States of America, it is going to displace Venezuelan crude, and it is going to find its way into the American markets and continue to provide that supply that is in fact today driving down costs. So let's get rid of the first argument that this is going to somehow not benefit American consumers, that this is going to somehow find its way onto a barge immediately upon arrival into the gulf. That is the first thing we need to be talking about, which is let's actually have a fact-based discussion about what this pipeline is.

The second argument we will hear is that this somehow will have a huge effect on climate and on climate change, and for those reasons alone it ought to be rejected. Let's take a look at what the experts who have repeatedly looked at this very issue—because one thing we know that I think is beyond dispute when we talk to the officials in Canada, is that we are going to produce oil sands oil from Canada, regardless of whether we build a pipeline. That oil is going to find its way into the transportation system and quite honestly is going to burden our rail transportation system because we haven't figured out how to build a pipeline.

So all those who want to confuse the issue about the pipeline versus the development in Canada of the oil sands, let's separate it. Let's look at what in fact is the decision before the United States of America; that is, the decision of whether it is in our national interest to approve a permit for a pipeline.

I will say this over and over again as we pursue this debate: This is a pipeline and not a cause. So many people have talked about it, and I think in some ways this process has gotten exaggerated on both sides. I mean it is going to be a panacea and prevent all unemployment or it is going to be the worst thing—an Armageddon for the environment. And you know what, this is a pipeline. This is a transportation system. This is an essential part of the infrastructure to bring an important fossil fuel into our country so that it can be refined and utilized by the American people. And by the way, knowing those reserves are there, knowing that we have the reserves we have in the Bakken, and knowing that we are developing more untraditional sources of supply has driven the price down and has created the situation we have today that is saving consumers millions and billions of dollars in our country.

The second thing I want to say is people say we have to respect the process. I respect the process as part of what I have done my whole life—I am a lawyer. So you hear repeatedly about due process and having to go through due process. Occasionally, the process is broken—6 years to site a pipeline.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The time reserved for the Senator from North Dakota has expired.

Mr. HOEVEN. I ask unanimous consent to exceed for 5 minutes to wrap up the colloquy.

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

Ms. HEITKAMP. Back to the process. When you look at 6 years, we fought World War II and defeated the greatest evil known to mankind, Adolf Hitler, in 4 years, and we cannot site a pipeline in 6 years. The process is broken.

The other issue that is raised is that the pipeline is somehow going to disrupt what is happening in Nebraska. I think the Senator from North Dakota was absolutely correct to put as part of this bill a provision in that says that all bets are off if Nebraska reverses the decisions that were made in Nebraska. But somehow that is getting forgotten in this debate.

So we are going to have a lot of hours of debate, I think, on Keystone XL Pipeline. We are going to have a lot of amendments.

I am grateful for the opportunity to go back to regular order. I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about amendments. But I want so badly for us to have a reasoned and fact-based debate—not an emotional debate but a debate that basically puts this pipeline issue in perspective.

I want to congratulate my colleague from North Dakota for the success in raising this issue and bringing this issue to an early debate. I hope that we will be able to move this along and that we will be successful in getting enough people to provide the momentum to achieve ready approval.

Finally, I want to say why it is so important that we do it now. Those of us who live in the northern tier, we know what construction season is, and you cannot put pipeline in the ground in September and October—not without a lot of additional costs with which we have already burdened this pipeline. We need to get this decision done, get this going in the spring as early as possible so plans can be made and people can begin their construction season and we can begin to rationally address the infrastructure needs for development of our energy resources in North America.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. HOEVEN. I want to thank my colleague from North Dakota for speaking on the important points she made, and that is that the energy we are producing in this country is helping consumers at the pump by bringing down prices.

I want to turn to my colleague from Kansas who wants to close this colloquy and address the very point that we need this infrastructure to keep doing that, to benefit our consumers at the pump.

Mr. ROBERTS. I thank my colleague, Senator HOEVEN, for leading this colloquy and I thank the distinguished Senator from North Dakota for her remarks.

In the Washington Times today, Jack Gerard, the President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute said:

Falling oil prices have empowered the United States and weakened OPEC and Russia. The result is that increased U.S. production in North Dakota has “fundamentally reordered the world’s energy markets.”

This is a national security issue. This is an issue where Russia—I think the break-even point for them is about \$110 a barrel. Right now it is at \$48. They never dreamed this would happen. Their entire economy is at stake, and hopefully it will cause Mr. Vladimir Putin to start thinking about some of his adventuresome antics around the world.

In addition, the pipeline represents not only everything that the distinguished Senator has brought out but it is a symbol that says that we are going to go ahead with all of our energy production. We are going to go “all of the above” here. This is not either-or with green projects or fossil fuels or whatever. So if you vote for the pipeline you are voting for something that really affects our national security.

Think about potential exports to Europe. They could be less dependent on Russia and so Vladimir does not have his choke hold on them, if you will. There is a lot going on with regard to this issue that people haven’t thought about.

Additionally, the President told us at a meeting with a group of Republicans 2 years ago—2 years ago—that he would make a decision between 2 and 3 months and that it was just a matter of tying down some legal matters. Now he says he is not for it and obviously he will never be for it. You can make whatever conclusion you want to make about that, but it is not a good conclusion. I thank the Senator.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from Kansas, and with that we will wrap up the colloquy. I would like to thank my colleagues, and we will be back.

Again, we are looking to work with all of our colleagues here in an open process to offer amendments and pass legislation that is important for the American people.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and with that I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order the time until 4:15 p.m. will be controlled by the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. President. I take this time—and some of my colleagues will be joining me—to ex-

press concerns about the first major bill that has been brought to the floor under the Republican leadership dealing with the Keystone Pipeline.

I want to start first by talking about the so-called urgency for us to take this issue up and circumvent the normal process. The normal process would be for this matter to continue through the regulatory review, which is there to protect the public interest. To short-circuit that in an unprecedented way and for Congress to approve a site for a pipeline is not the way it is done.

In order to consider this there must be some urgency. First, let me just share with my colleagues what the American people are experiencing with the price of gasoline at the pump. It is at a historic low over the last 5 years, with \$2.19 the average price for gasoline at the pump. So there is certainly no urgency if we are talking about trying to get more oil in the pipelines for the cost of energy. By the way, I think we all understand that our actions here in this Congress will have very little to do with the availability of oil in the near term. It would take some time to construct the pipeline and for it to have an impact on the level of oil that is available.

The second issue that I find somewhat puzzling with regard to the urgency of this issue—and some of my colleagues have pointed it out on both sides of this issue—is that there is already a pipeline that is available that could be used. Admittedly, it is not as efficient as what they are trying to do with the Keystone, and that is to make tar sand, the dirty oil we have, more economically available and feasible to be transported. That makes little sense under today’s economics and the price of gasoline makes it even more hard to understand. Construction of this pipeline and the approval of this Congress will have very little to do with the consumer availability of energy here in the United States.

Now, compound the fact that we are talking about Canadian oil, the dirtiest oil—the tar sand oil—that is being transported through the United States because Canada doesn’t want to transport it through their own country because of their concerns on the environmental side and which ends up in Texas at the Port Arthur, TX, refinery. Now for those who are not familiar, that is a foreign tax zone which is tax-free. So, therefore, the oil can go into the international marketplace in a very easy manner. Valero, which is one of the potential users—consumers of this oil—is building export facilities in order to handle more exports to the international communities. None of us can speak with any definitive judgment as to how much of this oil will in fact end up in the United States, but the fact that they are transporting it to a southern port—they are not transporting it to a refinery in the Midwest, which would be a lot closer and a lot cheaper—is a clear indication this oil will end up in the international marketplace and will have very little to do

with energy security in the United States. I think we have to make that clear.

We are bypassing the normal process to allow Canadian oil to enter the international marketplace more efficiently with risk to the United States and very little benefit. Why are we doing this? We hear it will give us jobs. I am for job creation. I would like to see us work on a transportation bill where we could create millions of jobs in a far more harmonious way than we can with Keystone. I am for clean energy policies which will create great permanent jobs in the United States. But the job creation estimates for the Keystone Pipeline are that it will create literally a few thousand temporary construction jobs. They are not permanent jobs. There are only a handful of permanent jobs. So it isn't about creating jobs, and it is not about energy security in the United States.

What is this all about? There is very little benefit compared to the risk factors in the United States. Let me talk about the risk factors which give most of us concern. The environmental risk factors have us the most concerned. Tar sand is a multitype of product that is literally mined and processed into a crude oil which is very thick and dirty. There are different ways to get to the tar sand, but one way to get to the tar sand is to take the topsoil off the property and mine it through a strip mining process. That has been done in Canada, and it is still being done in Canada, causing tremendous environmental damage. It is, in and of itself, a process that most of us would want to avoid. Yet this legislation does nothing to prevent that type of processing of the tar sands. Tar sands produce a very thick oil product that can only make its way through the pipeline by it being processed, and it creates additional risk factors because of the way it is processed.

There have been oil spills of the tar sands product. We have seen it in Arkansas and we have seen it in Michigan. It caused devastating damage. It is not easy to clean up. It is not like normal crude. It causes permanent-type damage to a community, as we saw most recently in Michigan. So there are risks associated with taking Canadian oil in an effort to make it easier to reach the international marketplace, unlikely to end up in the United States, creating few permanent jobs. Frankly, a lot of us don't quite understand this.

As I said, it is dirty. The use of this tar sands oil produces a much larger carbon footprint than other crude oil, causing additional problems in dealing with climate change. We have a serious issue with what is happening to our environment. I am proud to represent the State of Maryland. Most of the people in my State live in coastal areas. They know the consequences of global climate change. They understand it. They know what is happening along the coast, and they know we are at risk.

They understand the fact that we have inhabitable islands in the Chesapeake Bay that have disappeared and are disappearing. They understand that our seafood crop, the blue crab, is threatened because the warming water affects the sea grass growth which is critically important for juvenile crabs to survive. They understand the risks and want us to be responsible in dealing with climate change. They also know that we are getting a lot more extreme weather in the east coast of the United States and throughout our country.

They know on the west coast. They are getting dry spells and wildfires. They understand the risks. They understand the cost to America of not dealing with climate change issues. The costs involve not only direct damage that is caused but also in the global consequences of climate change.

So we are worried about our carbon fingerprint. We are proud the United States is joining other countries in dealing with climate issues.

I applaud the work of President Obama, in the most recent international meetings, when he dealt with climate change issues. We need to do a better job.

Why are tar sands an issue? Because tar sands produce more carbon emissions than other types of oil. It is about 81 percent higher than the average use of crude oil and 17 percent higher than the well-to-wheels basis of producing oil. That is a concern. That translates into millions and millions of cars—the difference between that and having millions of cars on the roads. It is an important part of our leadership.

If we are trying to establish international credibility and then we facilitate more of this dirty tar sands oil, what message does that send? What type of cooperation should we expect to receive?

I am trying to figure out why this is the new priority of the leadership in the Senate. Why is this the very first bill to come to the floor of the Senate when, as I pointed out earlier, there seems to be no urgency. I have been told it has been delayed and delayed and delayed. The reason it was delayed is because the construction operating firm changed the routes of the pipeline. They had one route mapped out—and no alternative routes—but didn't check to make sure it didn't violate State laws. Now they are wondering why it is taking so long. It is taking so long because they had to change the route. It is not the governmental process that is slowing this down, it is the fact that the proposers of this route did not have their ducks lined up in a row before they submitted the route that could be approved. We are still not sure about that.

As I said earlier, for Congress to dictate where a pipeline should be is wrong. That is not our role. We should let the regulatory process, which is there to protect the public, go forward. It would also trample on States rights.

There are some serious legal challenges pending in State courts as to the actions of a Governor dealing with a location issue. That should be resolved by the courts, and we are pretty close to having that ruling. It is very unclear to me what impact this legislation would have on States rights as it is currently being litigated in the State court. Why are we doing that?

The delays have been caused because of the way this pipeline was suggested. The regulatory process that would protect the public safety is moving forward. Considering oil and gasoline prices at the pump there is no urgency. There are serious environmental risk issues.

I understand the State Department report has been mentioned frequently. Look at the State Department report and look at what it is saying about the price for oil. The per barrel price of oil was a lot higher when they did that report. Lower costs have a major impact on what we are talking about here.

I urge my colleagues to let the process go forward. I thank the President for spelling out his concerns and his desire to let the regulatory process reach its conclusion, let the State court decision go forward as to what the State believes is the right thing to be done here. I believe all of that will give us a much better process than us trying to substitute our judgment for what should be done through a regulatory process.

I am going to close by quoting from one of the individuals, Ben Gotschall, from Nebraska, who has been very active on this issue. He said:

The Cowboy Indian Alliance shows our cooperation and our working together in mutual respect. That shared bond proves that we pipeline fighters are not just a few angry landowners holding out, or environmentalists pushing a narrow agenda. We are people from all walks of life and include people who have been here the longest and know the land best.

I think that is pretty instructive. This is a broad coalition that is concerned about the actions that are being contemplated in the Senate—actions that would overrule landowner rights, actions that would take away State rights, actions that would shortcut regulatory process, actions that help private companies directly without taking into account the regulatory protections that are provided under law.

It seems rather unusual that this would be the very first issue where we could work together in a bipartisan way to expand opportunities for energy in the United States. Clean energy produces a lot more jobs, and we could be talking about incentives so we could have a larger production of clean energy in the United States. Democrats and Republicans would clearly work together to come up with ways we could have more efficient use of energy.

Democrats and Republicans could clearly work together in that regard. There are so many areas where we could work together and show the

American people that we understand their frustration with Congress's failure to deal with many of the issues in the last Congress, but instead it looks as though we are picking an issue that is more about special interest than it is one that will help deal with an energy problem in the United States and has the potential to broaden our environmental challenges in the United States.

For all of those reasons, I hope my colleagues will reject this approach and let us go back and work together to find a common way to help us deal with our environment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the issue we are going to be debating over the next 2 weeks in the United States is really a story about two gasoline stations.

In July of 2008, the average price of gasoline in America was \$4.11 a gallon. In January of 2015 in the United States of America the price is \$2.21 a gallon. That is great for every driver across our country, and that is great for Americans who buy home heating oil. They are saving a lot of money this winter and the predictions are that it will continue throughout the rest of this year. That is great.

However, it is not great for the oil companies. It is not great for the Canadians. It is not great for Wall Street. They are not happy with this incredible benefit that is now flowing to Americans all across our country who now have a gasoline station that has \$2.21, on average, as to what people will pay.

What does the Keystone XL Pipeline truly stand for? It truly stands for the Keystone "export" pipeline. That is right. What the Canadians want to do is to basically construct a straw through the United States of America, bring that straw down to Port Arthur, TX, which is a tax-free export zone, and then export the oil out of the United States.

Why would they want to do that since they advertise that it is all about North American energy independence? There is a simple reason. The price of tar sands oil in Canada right now is getting \$13 less per barrel than it would get in the United States, but it is \$17 less than if they can get it into ships and send it around the world. That is the very simple economic strategy of the Canadians.

How do I know this? Because during a hearing in the House of Representatives I asked the head of the pipeline for TransCanada: Would you accept an amendment to keep all of the oil here in the United States of America? He said: No.

By the way, I asked the same question of the head of the American Petroleum Institute. He said: No.

There is a lot of false advertising going on here. On one hand they say this is great for American energy independence. On the other hand, when we say let's have an amendment on the floor of the Senate that will keep the Keystone oil here in the United States, they say: Oh, no. They are absolutely opposed to that.

Logically, we have to reach the conclusion that their goal is to get the extra \$17 per barrel which they will get if they can start selling it to China, Latin America, and other parts of the world. That is the plan. There are no two ways about it.

By the way, that should be their plan. That is what their responsibility is—it is to the shareholders of their companies.

What is the strategy for the American driver? That is whom we have a responsibility to. We need to make sure they get the lowest possible price. My goodness. They have been tipped upside down and had their money shaken out of their pockets at gas stations all across our country for years, and finally the day of deliverance has arrived and they have \$2.21, on average, for the price of a gallon of gas, and now we are told the price of oil is too low. We have to get it back up again. Of course, the best way of accomplishing that is to start exporting oil because the less there is in North America, the higher the price will be for American drivers and for American home heating oil consumers. It is a very simple plan.

It is not about helping Americans at the pump. It is about pumping up the prices so oil companies will have new profits. It is very simple. If it is not that, then just accept an amendment that keeps all the oil here. It is a simple thing to do, and then the rhetoric matches with the reality of what is going to happen. The oil should stay here, but they will not accept that, and they have made that clear.

This is all part of a wish list we are going to see on the Senate floor for the rest of this year. This is the Big Oil wish list of 2015. We start with the Keystone "extra large export" Pipeline to take oil and send it out of the country. Then they want to lift the ban on the exportation of U.S. crude oil, which is now on the books—a ban on U.S. crude oil. This is Canadian oil. There are no laws against that. Then they want to begin exporting our natural gas, even as consumers and businesses and natural gas vehicle firms are enjoying record-low prices, which in turn is transforming the American manufacturing sector and our relationship with natural gas in America. They essentially want to declare war on the Environmental Protection Agency and their authority to protect Americans against pollution and to make sure the fuel economy standards of the vehicles which we drive continue to rise and rise.

Honestly, if we want to tell OPEC we are serious and keep them awake at night, then we should keep the oil here

so the prices will drop, and we also need to increase the fuel economy standards and consume and import less oil. But that is not going to be the agenda that comes out here on the Senate floor from the majority. It is going to be just the opposite. In a way, that is why this first debate is actually a preview of coming attractions of what will be happening out here on the floor of the Senate throughout the course of this entire year.

There is kind of a Keystone kabuki theater that is debuting this afternoon on the Senate floor. The reality is this bill will never become law. The President is going to veto this bill. There are not enough votes to override the veto. So instead what we have is just a preview of this entire agenda, notwithstanding the fact that they are not going to be supporting a national renewable electricity standard or dramatically increasing the energy efficiency laws in our country or making sure the Canadians finally have to pay their taxes for the oil liability trust fund which they are now exempt from. American oil companies have to have a trust fund—in the event there is an oil spill in the pipeline—but the Canadians don't have to have a trust fund. Over 10 years, that is \$2 billion that American companies have to pay, which Canadians don't have to pay, to make sure that something is done to protect against oil spills.

Back when the Democrats took over the House and Senate in 2007, we worked together to put together a comprehensive energy bill. What was in it? Dramatically increasing the fuel economy standards of the vehicles in our country, having a new biofuels law to expand that production, and making sure that energy efficiency in America was enhanced dramatically. We worked on a bipartisan basis, and President Bush, a Republican, signed that bill because it was done in a bipartisan, "all of the above" approach.

That is not what this is all about. This is not "all of the above"; this is "oil above all." That is the strategy the Keystone Pipeline embodies—shouts. It is not balanced. It is not where we should be as a country.

So I say let's have an amendment to the bill that keeps the oil here in the United States. Let's have this debate here on the floor. Let's match up the rhetoric of the oil stays here with protection of the American economy and the American driver within the reality that we voted for that to keep it here. Let's have that debate. I think it is important because otherwise the Canadians and the American Petroleum Institute will continue to engage in false advertising about where this oil is going to be used.

So from my perspective, this is the dirtiest oil in the world that is going to contribute mightily to an expansion of global warming. We know that 2014 was the warmest year ever recorded in history—notwithstanding the fact that it snowed here in Washington, DC, yesterday—the warmest year in history. That

is what I think the green generation out there knows as they look at this issue. What are we going to do to make sure we avoid the catastrophic consequences of a dangerously warming planet?

We have to engage in preventive care of this planet. There are no emergency rooms for planets. We have to engage in preventive care to make sure we do not pass on this ever-increasing danger to future generations. We are going to get a chance here to debate this. The Keystone Pipeline is a good example of how there is not, in fact, a balanced policy.

I asked for an amendment on the floor so that we can debate whether the oil goes through a pipeline from Canada—the dirtiest oil in the world—like a straw, potentially causing environmental catastrophes across our country, and then gets exported around the rest of the planet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. MARKEY. I think this is the kind of debate the American people expect the Senate to engage in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the truth is that despite our rather big egos, much of what we do in the Senate is pretty quickly forgotten. People have a hard time remembering what we did 2 months ago or yesterday, let alone last year. But I have a feeling that the Keystone Pipeline bill we are now discussing and decisions that will be made about that bill will not soon be forgotten—not by our children or our grandchildren and not by people throughout the world and, in fact, not by history. I believe that decades from now our kids and our grandchildren will scratch their heads and they will say: What world were these people—Members of Congress—living in in 2015 when they voted for this Keystone Pipeline? How did it happen that they did not listen to the overwhelming majority of scientists who told us we have to cut greenhouse gas emissions, not increase them? I think our kids and our grandchildren will be saying to us: Why did you do that to us? Why did you leave this planet less habitable than it could have been?

The issue we are dealing with today is of huge consequence. I fear very much that a majority of the Members in the Senate and in the Congress are poised to make a very dangerous and wrong decision. In that light, I am more than delighted that President Obama has indicated he will veto this Keystone Pipeline bill if it is passed.

Climate change is one of the great threats not only facing our country but facing the entire planet. It has the capability of causing severe harm to our economy, to our food supply, to access to water, and it raises all kinds of international national security issues.

Let me read an excerpt from a letter sent to the Senate back in October 2009:

Observations throughout the world make it clear that climate change is occurring, and rigorous scientific research demonstrates that the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are the primary driver. These conclusions are based on multiple independent lines of evidence, and contrary assertions are inconsistent with an objective assessment of the vast body of peer-reviewed science.

Moreover, there is strong evidence that ongoing climate change will have broad impacts on society, including the global economy and on the environment. For the United States, climate change impacts include sea level rise for coastal states, greater threats of extreme weather events, and increased risk of regional water scarcity, urban heat waves, western wildfires, and a disturbance of biological systems throughout the country. The severity of climate change impacts is expected to increase substantially in the coming decades.

This statement was signed by virtually every major scientific organization in this country, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Meteorological Society, and many other scientific organizations.

Scientists are not the only people warning us about the danger of climate change. Hear what the Department of Defense has to say about the impact of climate change on international and national security. What they point out—and I think what every sensible person understands—is that when people are unable to grow the food they need because of drought, when flood destroys their homes, when people throughout the world are forced to struggle for limited natural resources in order to survive, this lays the groundwork for the migration of people and international conflict. That is what the Department of Defense tells us.

Now, given all of the scientific evidence and given the concerns raised by our own Department of Defense and national security experts all over the world and given the fact that the most recent decade—the last 10 years—was the Nation's warmest on record, one would think that when the National Climate Assessment warns us that global warming could exceed 10 degrees Fahrenheit in the United States by the end of the century—can we imagine this planet becoming 10 degrees Fahrenheit warmer and what this means to the planet? When sea levels have already risen by nearly 7 inches over the last century and are expected to rise another 10 inches to 2.6 feet by the end of the century—when all of that is on the table, one would think this Senate would be saying: All right, we have an international crisis. How do we reverse climate change? Instead, what the debate is about is how we transport some of the dirtiest oil in the world and thereby cause more carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

I suspect our kids and our grandchildren will look back on this period and say: What world were you living in? Why did you do that to us?

It would seem to me that what we should be debating here is how we impose a tax on carbon so that we can break our dependence on fossil fuel. That is what we should be discussing, not how we increase carbon emissions. We should be discussing what kind of legislation we bring forward that moves us aggressively toward energy efficiency, weatherization, and such sustainable energies as wind, solar, and geothermal. That is the kind of bill that should be on the floor. We should be having a debate about legislation that makes our transportation system far more efficient, that expands rail and helps us get cars and trucks off the road. We should be having a debate about how we can create the kind of automobiles that run on electricity and make them less expensive and how we can get cars running 80 to 100 miles per gallon. Those are the kinds of debates and that is the kind of legislation we should be having on the floor, not how do we expand the production and the transportation of some of the dirtiest oil on the planet.

In my view, the U.S. Congress in a very profound way should not be in the business of rejecting science because when we reject science, we become the laughingstock of the world. How do we go forward? How do we prepare legislation if it is not based on scientific evidence? And to say to the overwhelming majority of scientists that we are ignoring what they are telling us and we are going to move in exactly the wrong direction I think makes us look like fools in front of the entire world. How do we go forward and tell China and India and Russia and countries around the world that climate change is a huge planetary crisis at the same time as we are facilitating the construction of the Keystone Pipeline?

So I am delighted the President will veto this legislation if it happens to pass the Congress. Our job now is not to bring more carbon into the atmosphere; it is to transform our energy system away from coal, away from oil, away from fossil fuel, and toward energy efficiency and sustainable energy. That should be the direction of this country, and we should lead the world in moving in that direction.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BURR, and Mr. KING pertaining to the introduction of S. 108 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MEDICARE/MEDICAID
ANNIVERSARY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in his first legislative message to the 89th Congress in 1965, 50 years ago I believe this month, President Johnson laid out what would become a key marker in the legislative fight for Medicare and Medicaid. Ultimately, the bill was passed in July 1965. President Johnson signed it in Independence, MO, I believe at the home of former President Truman.

President Johnson, in his legislative message to the House and Senate in 1965 said:

In this century, medical scientists have done much to improve human health and prolong human life. Yet as these advances come, vital segments of our population are being left behind—behind barriers of age, economics, geography or community resources. Today, the political community is challenged to help all our people surmount these needless barriers to the enjoyment of the promise and reality of better health.

Fifty years later we have made historic improvements to our health care system, thanks in large part to a couple of things: No. 1, medical research, funded both by taxpayers and often by drug companies, foundations, universities, and others; and No. 2, because of social insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Before the passage of Medicare—listen to these numbers—30 percent of our Nation's seniors lived below the poverty line, only half our Nation's seniors—at this time 50 years ago, early in 1965, had health insurance, and insurance usually only covered visits to the hospital in those days.

Now, thanks to Medicare, 54 million seniors and people with disabilities have access to guaranteed health care benefits.

Let me share a letter a constituent named Donald, from Toledo, OH, wrote to me last Congress, when the House of Representatives threatened to turn Medicare into a voucher program as part of its budget proposal. Donald wrote:

Thank you for your efforts to keep Medicare from being privatized. At the age of 63, I am going to be eligible for Medicare before too long and looking at the affordability of health care is critical. If Medicare is privatized, we will not be able to afford it any more than we can afford private insurance today.

That is the whole point. The reason there is a government health care program, the reason there is social insurance, is because people, as in 1965, only half the people in the country had any kind of health insurance.

It is a little disconcerting to know that after working all our lives and living comfortably, that in our retirement years we will either have to try to find full-time employment to be in a position of affording Medicare, privatized Medicare. I am sure I don't need to tell you how difficult finding a

job is these days when you are an older citizen.

I know normally I am writing you from the opposing side, but this time we definitely see eye to eye.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 150 or 160 years ago, said that history has always been a fight between conservatives and innovators. There is a legitimate place in society for both, creating the tension that moves our country one way or the other. Conservatives want to protect the status quo. They want to preserve privilege and want to hold on to their wealth. Conservatives fundamentally don't believe the government should be involved in ensuring a decent standard of living. Innovators—what we might call today progressives—understand our society is only as strong as its most vulnerable members.

If we go back to the key congressional votes—the key congressional votes, not necessarily final passage—to advance debate of a Medicare bill in 1965, most Republicans voted no. Then it was the John Birch Society that opposed it. Today, 50 years later, it is the tea party that opposes social insurance.

Some of the most privileged interest groups in Washington opposed the creation of Medicare. But they were wrong. As I said earlier, 30 percent of seniors lived below the poverty line prior to Medicare. Medicare helped to cut the poverty rate in half by 1973, only 8 years after its passage.

We see the same attacks today. Budgets proposed in the House of Representatives over the past several years have tried to dismantle Medicare, by and large by privatized vouchers, to help offset the cost of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. They would privatize the program and undermine its guaranteed benefits.

Ohio's seniors have worked hard, they have paid into Medicare, and they deserve a program that truly meets their health care needs. They deserve better than the underfunded voucher that would put them at the mercy of the private insurance industry. Thankfully, we have been able to block this plan in the Senate. We will continue to do that.

Interestingly, the Affordable Care Act has provided significantly enhanced benefits for Medicare beneficiaries. In my State alone more than 1 million Ohio seniors have gotten free—meaning no copay, no deductible—preventive care benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

If you are on Medicare and your doctor prescribes an annual physical or asks that you be given an osteoporosis screening, a diabetes screening—all the things doctors order for their patients for preventive care—those are provided under the Affordable Care Act and under Medicare, no copays, no deductible.

Many of the efforts to privatize and voucherize Medicare mean taking away preventive care, taking away prescription drug protections added to Medi-

care under the Affordable Care Act. Others want to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67.

I was in Youngstown, OH, a couple of years ago at a townhall. A woman stood up and said: I hold two jobs, and I am barely making it.

I think the two jobs were close to minimum wage, so she was probably making \$8 an hour in one and \$8.50 in the other. She was a home care worker and doing something else. She had tears in her eyes.

She said: I am 63 years old. I need to stay alive until I can get health insurance.

This was maybe 5 years before we passed the health care law. Imagine being 63 years old and your goal in life is just to find a way to stay alive so you can have health insurance.

Some geniuses in the House and maybe in the Senate think it is a good idea to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67. Just because we dress like this and have jobs that aren't all that physical other than walking back and forth from our offices to the floor, just because we have this kind of lifestyle and just because we are privileged enough to get to dress like this and get paid well and get to do these incredibly privileged jobs as Members of the Senate—there are a whole lot of people in this country whose bodies won't last until they are 67. They can't work until they are 67 to get Medicare. They are working at Walmart, standing on floors all day, they are home care workers, they are working at fast food restaurants, they are construction workers.

Both my wife's parents died before the age of 70 in large part because of the work they did, the kind of heavy, strenuous work, and the chemicals they were exposed to and all that. So when I hear my colleagues propose to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67—and I know they say we can't sustain these entitlements, whatever that means. What they really want to do is raise the eligibility age. To raise the eligibility age for Medicare to 67, they need to take Abraham Lincoln's advice. His staff wanted him to stay in the White House and win the war, free the slaves, and preserve the Union. President Lincoln said: No. I need to go out and get my public opinion bath.

What did he mean by that? He meant: I have to go out and talk to people. So when I hear Senators say they want to raise the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 67—whether they are in Gallipolis or Troy or Zanesville, OH—when I hear people say they want to raise the retirement age or the Medicare eligibility age—what I think when I hear Senators say that is they are not out talking to real people.

We know we can do a number of things to improve and strengthen these programs so future generations can continue to move into retirement years with a sense of security.

Last Congress I was an original co-sponsor of the Medicare Protection