

public health crisis. I hope Republicans who have had difficulties in the past and have requested Federal aid for their States won't turn their backs on the people of Michigan.

If a Federal Government response is necessary for natural disasters, shouldn't the Federal Government help respond to these manmade disasters? The examples I gave in Texas and Florida were not manmade disasters; this is.

We remain committed to giving the people of Flint, MI, what they need during this crisis—help from the Federal Government to restore clean, safe water. But the Federal Government cannot do it all. The people of Flint, MI, should understand that the Governor of Michigan is costing them a lot of money, and it is going to cost the taxpayers of Michigan a lot more because the Federal Government cannot do it all.

Senator STABENOW and Senator PETERS have proposed an amendment to the bill before us that provides emergency relief to address the Flint water crisis. I support that. The people of Flint have been poisoned. We owe our fellow citizens swift action to address this medical emergency.

I urge my colleagues, especially my Republican friends, to support the Stabenow-Peters amendment to give the people of Flint the relief they so desperately need.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Utah.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state her parliamentary inquiry.

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, is it a fact that the Senator from Utah will have 10 minutes and then the floor will be open for other Senators at that time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The order for business is every Senator is entitled to speak for up to 10 minutes each until the hour of 11 a.m.

Mrs. BOXER. Well, that was my parliamentary inquiry. So each Senator has 10 minutes, and then at the expiration of 10 minutes, the floor would be open; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Absent any consent agreement to the contrary, the Senator is correct.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you so much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

JUDICIAL REDRESS ACT

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to emphasize the importance of the Judicial Redress Act. This is a bill that the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported last week by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 19 to 1.

As I speak, the Senate majority and minority leaders are in the process of clearing this legislation by unanimous consent. I am optimistic the Senate will pass the Judicial Redress Act in the coming days and that ultimately we will send this legislation to the President's desk.

I thank Senator CHRIS MURPHY for introducing this important bill with me and for the broad support we have built among both Republicans and Democrats.

I also wish to acknowledge the good work of Representatives JIM SENSENBRENNER and JOHN CONYERS for their efforts in the House. They have been stalwarts in advancing this important legislation in the House of Representatives. It has been a true bipartisan, bicameral event.

Simply stated, the Judicial Redress Act would extend certain data protections and remedies available to U.S. citizens under the Privacy Act to European citizens by allowing them to correct flawed information in their records and, in rare instances, the option to pursue legal remedies if Federal agencies improperly disclose their data.

Our legislation fights an inequity—a reciprocal benefit that has been withheld from our European allies with little justification. Cross-border data flows between the United States and Europe are the highest in the world. Today most countries in the European Union affirmatively provide data protection rights to Americans on European soil. Our European allies and their citizens should likewise have access to the core benefits of the Privacy Act when in the United States. It is the right and fair thing to do. Passing the Judicial Redress Act is critical to ratification of the Data Privacy and Protection Agreement, commonly called the “umbrella agreement.” This agreement allows for data transfers between European and American law enforcement officials for the purpose of fighting and investigating crime, including terrorism.

European officials have said they will not ratify the umbrella agreement until Congress provides EU citizens with limited judicial redress. Our bill is key to providing reciprocity to our European allies and will serve as the catalyst to finalizing the long-awaited data protection deal.

The U.S. Department of Justice, which supports this legislation, states that failure to finalize the umbrella agreement “would dramatically reduce

cooperation and significantly hinder counterterrorism efforts.” Given the global state of affairs, we simply cannot risk losing the critical benefits of the umbrella agreement.

As chairman of the Senate Republican High-Tech Task Force, I am always seeking ways to keep our American technology industry at the forefront of the global economy. I am convinced that passing the Judicial Redress Act will build much needed good will with our European allies. We are currently negotiating a new safe harbor agreement—an international agreement that allows U.S. technology companies to move digital information between the European Union and the United States.

For years, safe harbor rules have benefited U.S. technology companies that provide cloud services to their European customers. Without a safe harbor agreement, however, U.S. cloud-based companies seeking to do business in Europe would be forced to negotiate with 28 individual countries in the European Union over how their citizens' data is collected and stored. Such a requirement would disrupt and chill transatlantic business operations, jeopardize countless American jobs, and stifle American domestic innovation.

Indeed, businesses of all sizes and in all sectors would face profound consequences if we do not conclude a new safe harbor agreement.

The economic damage would be significant and relatively immediate, and the consequences could be catastrophic, especially for small enterprises. Failure to reach an agreement would impact the economies of both the United States and our friends in the European Union.

If we are unable to reach a final safe harbor agreement soon, Congress must be prepared to take appropriate action to ensure that these negative consequences do not come to fruition.

In the meantime, it is critically important that Congress pass the Judicial Redress Act. I am pleased that the Senate is swiftly moving toward this end, and I am optimistic that we will have a successful resolution in the coming days.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the floor for their support in this effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

FLINT, MICHIGAN, WATER CRISIS AND ALISO CANYON NATURAL GAS LEAK

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I am on the floor to talk about a situation that is occurring in my home State with a leak—a natural gas leak that is

creating havoc in one of my communities. But before I do, I wish to comment on the issue that my Democratic leader talked about, which is the poisoning of children in Flint, MI, due to lead in the drinking water.

Maybe I am old-fashioned, but I believe that when you hurt a child, that is the lowest thing you can do. There is nothing lower in life than hurting an innocent child. That means if you abuse a child, if you taunt a child—but when you poison a child and their brain is damaged for the rest of their life—that is the lowest thing an adult can do. Any adult who knew that these children were being poisoned and looked the other way, in my view, is liable. You don't hurt a child. You don't hurt a child—let alone for life—and destroy their mind.

I know that Senators STABENOW and PETERS are working hard with the Republicans to come up with something to help the people there, and I hope that it will work out. I know that in my committee on the environment we have been working with them, along with Senator INHOFE, so we can do something. But it is after the fact. It is not as if you can make this damage go away.

What shocked me was that on the heels of this tragedy and travesty in Flint, MI, we were marking up a bill, and the Republicans, to a person, supported the ability of people spraying pesticides into drinking water not to have to get a permit anymore and to take away the authority of the EPA to require a permit if you are going to spray harmful pesticides with toxins into a drinking water supply.

This is what my Republican friends did in the environment committee. I think they ought to change the name of that committee to the pollution committee. What is that? In addition, the underlying bill says you can never regulate the lead in fishing tackle under TSCA. Lead. Hello? We now know what lead does when it gets into drinking water. If there are ways to have less toxic fishing tackle, shouldn't we try to make that happen if it is available?

So here we have a bill called the sportsmen's bill. Lots of things in there are wonderful and I support wholeheartedly, but now we are going to say you can never regulate the lead in fishing tackle under TSCA? Then you are going to say you don't need a permit to spray pesticides into a water supply? You have to be kidding.

We talk a lot about defending the American people. We have to do it abroad and at home because dead is dead. It is a serious issue when you expose people to toxins. They get cancer. They have brain damage.

I am hopeful we can do something for the people of Flint and stand with them, but I will tell you it is not going to let people off the hook. Anybody who knew this was happening and turned away or said: Who cares? It is a poor community, they will be punished

at some point, even if in their own heart. We cannot disconnect from that incident to what we are doing today in saying you no longer need a permit to dump pesticides into drinking water. What are people thinking? Are we so beholden to special moneyed interests that we can't tell them they have to have responsibility? Defending our people means having a smart policy to defend them from terror, which I support, but it also means protecting and defending them with reasonable rules and regulations so we don't poison them here at home or hurt the brains of their kids.

I want to show something that is happening in my State as we speak. This is quite a picture. It shows what a gas leak looks like: plumes of methane gas above a community. This is an infrared camera. This is what is happening from a natural gas leak. It didn't happen yesterday and it didn't happen a month ago. It happened on October 23, and it is still out of control. I have submitted an amendment on behalf of myself and Senator FEINSTEIN today to get some of the brightest minds from the Department of Energy—and there are very bright minds over there—to take a look at what the heck is happening and why it is that this is running amuck. It is now burning longer than the BP oil spill. I remember so well because I worked so hard on the committee with all of my colleagues, with Senator Landrieu and others, to get to the bottom of why it was happening, and we sent Stephen Chu, who was then Secretary of Energy. Guess what. In the BP spill, he figured out a better way to track the spill and therefore contain it by using gamma rays, as I remember.

As of last week, almost 3,700 households have been relocated to hotels and other temporary housing because the residents who live right here are experiencing headaches, nausea, dizziness, nose bleeds, and other side effects stemming from the rotten egg smell, the chemicals that give the natural gas its artificial odor.

This is Aliso Canyon. Schools have temporarily closed because the kids and teachers can't stand the smell all day. People's homes, their furniture, everything they have left behind are becoming infused with this horrid smell and the chemicals. It is a disaster for these residents and for many local businesses struggling to stay afloat. We see here, this is the Aliso Canyon leaking well site, but the plume is all over this community.

I want to share a couple of other photos because we know a picture is worth a thousand words. These are children, sick of being sick at school. This is a mom who is having serious headaches. That is why this amendment is so important because this is what is happening and, by the way, could happen probably anywhere where there are these natural gas storage sites. There are 400 in America—400, in America. This is the first, and we had

better deal with it and figure out how to deal with it because right now it is running amuck.

One of my constituents said: My husband and I moved there over 3 years ago. We poured a lot of money into this home, our dream home, thinking it was a perfect area to move. I am expecting. We had difficulties trying to conceive. The joy has been robbed from us because we have had to relocate twice. I am fearful to bring my newborn baby back to Porter Ranch.

That is the community here, Porter Ranch. She said: I am fearful to bring my newborn baby back to Porter Ranch when the time comes and they say the coast is clear.

Another one. This particular individual, Scott McClure, was quoted in the L.A. Times:

I can't go outside and play baseball with my sons. I can't go on walks with my family. My youngest son has been moved to another school. My property value has dropped dramatically. I get headaches, stomach aches. . . .

The California Air Resources Board estimates that more than 86.5 million kilograms of methane—a powerful greenhouse gas—have been emitted into the atmosphere. So we move from a disaster for our families—reflected in this woman's face—to a disaster for the environment because it is, so far, 2.2 million tons of carbon dioxide. That is the equivalent of the methane that has poured into the atmosphere. That is more greenhouse gas than 468,000 cars emit in 1 year. Just think, in over 3 months this one leak has emitted as much as half a million cars do in an entire year. We have worked so hard across party lines here to make sure our cars have good fuel economy and don't emit so much of this greenhouse gas, and now we have seen as much as half a million cars in an entire year. That is what has come into the atmosphere.

This leaking well is 8,600 feet deep. The leak is thought to be around 500 feet below the surface. The gas company has unsuccessfully attempted to kill the well seven times by plugging it with brine and gravel. They are now attempting to drill a relief well down to the reservoir and cut the resisting well at its base, but this may not be completed in another month. If it isn't successful, they will have to start over again.

So—October 23. We are now starting February, and these people have lived with this extraordinary disaster over them. I pray that this nightmare will be over and people can move back to their homes and that they have the peace of mind that their homes are clean and their air is clean and the community will return to normal. In the meantime, we have to figure out what caused this leak and how to prevent it from happening again at Aliso Canyon and everywhere around the country where there are 400 similar sites.

On January 6, 2016, the Governor of the State of California declared an

emergency for Los Angeles County due to the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak. State regulators have been working with the gas company and with Federal PHMSA and EPA. PHMSA is hazardous pipeline. They check to make sure those hazardous pipelines—the pipelines that carry this hazardous material—are safe. They have been working as they have been providing consultation.

I want to say that the working group on climate change called in the Federal people who were working in PHMSA and the EPA. They are doing conference calls and they are working, but it is not enough. It is not enough. We need the best minds—the best minds—and that is why Senator FEINSTEIN and I have offered this amendment today. It is at the desk.

Under the amendment, the Department of Energy Secretary would lead a broad review of this leak, including the cause, the response, and the impacts on communities and the environment. They will issue a finding to all of us, all of our committees, as we listen, and to the President, within 6 months, but if they find something in the course of their investigation that can solve this leak or prevent another leak—in the Presiding Officer's State or anybody's State—they would have to come forward and make it clear and report that finding.

The task force includes representatives of PHMSA—the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration—Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the Department of Commerce. We have a small task force here. Is it now seven? Seven. The reason is, we don't want some big bureaucracy. We want a small task force to meet, headed by Secretary Moniz, who is an outstanding scientist, and we want them to help solve this crisis and provide relief for the thousands of affected residents when they come in with their analysis. We want to make sure—we want to make sure—this doesn't happen again in anybody's State, because when you have a constituent like this in your State who comes out and says: My God, I don't know what to do, that is what is on this face. I don't know what to do. I am scared. My kids are breathing this. I am breathing this. Where do I go? So we need our brightest minds, absolutely, dealing with this, and that is what our amendment does.

Again, we have more than 400 underground natural gas storage facilities. We have nine in California. This is a public health and public safety issue that is critical for people not only in my State but across the Nation.

Again, we know our most sacred responsibility is to keep our people safe. Whenever we say that, people right away think about what is happening abroad and homeland security and taking on ISIL and doing everything we have to do to keep our people safe. We

have the Super Bowl coming up in my beautiful State. Believe me, we are focused on that. This is a great nation. We know how to take care of our people. Therefore, when we see a woman or children like this saying they are sick and we see this—and this is what the people of California are seeing in their living rooms, the picture of this out-of-control plume going on since October 23—we think: Wait a minute. This is the greatest country in the world, with the greatest minds in the world, the greatest science in the world. We have so many wonderful things, and we can't stop this leak? My God. It is ridiculous.

I was frustrated after I had that meeting because we are very much alike in many ways. We want to solve a problem, and we don't want bureaucracy to get in the way. We want to get the best people. Who cares who gets the credit? Sit around and get it done. When I had this meeting with those Federal officials who were on these conference calls, I got a clear sense, after all my years of experience—and I have had a lot. When I started out, I didn't have all this gray hair.

The bottom line is, I know from experience that it doesn't feel like somebody is truly in charge. That is why Senator FEINSTEIN and I are giving this amendment all of our heart and soul. We hope that our friends on the other side will sign off on it because I know the Democratic side has. I believe they will. We are working with them right now on a couple of issues.

If this passes and becomes the law of the land, we will finally have someone in charge here at the Federal level, someone so bright, so smart—Secretary Moniz. I have a lot of faith in him. I think a lot of us do. He is in it for the right reasons. I think if he goes in there and they start to take a look at this, they may well find something right away that has been overlooked that could stop this horrific leak.

I want to close with this: Californians are leaders in so many areas—technology, entertainment, and trade. We would be the seventh or eighth largest economy in the world.

I don't want to be a leader showing the way to the future with this kind of a travesty. I want to solve the problem. I want to tell my friends here in the Senate that we have the technology to solve it; we have leak-detection systems to find these problems before they happen. This particular yard started in the fifties. If you built a house in the fifties, you have to keep making improvements. I don't know the history of all of this, and I am not getting into that now. We are where we are. But I would suggest that if this natural gas yard was set up in the fifties, I don't think there were a lot of homes around at that time. Let's be clear. We have to think about these things, where we place these facilities. If I were in another State right now—and I am going to do this in California: I am going to look at the eight other facilities in my State. God forbid, if they have a leak,

what is going to happen and how can we prevent it? Maybe there is an easy way to maintain these pipes in a way that makes sense. If we can find that out, we can stop this. We can say: This was horrible. We stopped it, and we are going to be able to prevent other explosions like this from happening. And if they do happen, we will know how to deal with it.

We are not going to subject kids to this where they have to go out with signs—and, by the way, masks around their necks—that say “relocate our school” and “sick of being sick at school” and dislocate these kids, and they have been dislocated. They have been dislocated from their school. You know how it is for a kid. You have your world. Your world is your home. Your world is your school. Your world is your family. That is it. When you disrupt that, it is very difficult on our children.

I hope and pray that we will get this done today and that we will get the Department of Energy ready to go on this. Even if we pass it here and we don't get it quickly to the House and they don't do it quickly, I think we will send a signal to the Department of Energy that they can look at this now and help in a way where they would have the confidence that we would all be behind that here in the Senate.

I am looking forward to a vote on this. I hope we have a voice vote. We don't need a recorded vote on something like this. I am going to continue to work with the Republican leaders on this. I hope we can move forward.

I thank you so much for your patience and your time.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, one of the things the Republicans were determined to do when we took the majority in the Senate last January was to get the Senate working again for American families.

Under Democratic control, the Senate had basically ground to a halt. The Democratic leadership spent its time pushing partisan show votes instead of putting in any real work on the challenges that are facing our Nation. Republicans were committed to changing that. Since we took the majority last January, we have worked hard to once again make the Senate a place for serious debate and serious legislation. We have succeeded.

Last year we passed a number of significant bipartisan bills, including a