

heads. They didn't have the dignity of clean water coming out of their taps. They had to use bottled water to drink, to make breakfast for their children, to make a pot of coffee—the things we all use water for and the things that all of us take for granted every single day. They will not have clean water until the pipes get replaced.

Up until now, we have had what we thought was a good series of negotiations. We thought we had an agreement. I have been very hopeful about the bipartisan discussions to help these families, and we have been incredibly flexible, Senator PETERS and I. We just want to get this done. We are not interested in the politics or making this partisan. We want to get something done for the people of Flint.

We understand that money doesn't grow on trees. Senator PETERS and I are willing in fact to support a proposal that was less than half of what we originally requested in order to be able to immediately get some help to the families of Flint. Now, we can't even get agreement on that because we are hearing procedural excuses—procedural excuses that are overcome every single day on this Senate floor when we want to. Lord knows, there were a whole bunch on the Transportation bill, all of which were waived because people wanted to fix the roads. I am left wondering what is going on. What is really going on here?

I am asking that we come together and understand that this is a serious, urgent issue and that we not accept procedural excuses. It is an urgent, severe, outrageous crisis, and we need to act now.

When we look at what has been said on the Senate floor, it is very concerning to me. One Senator yesterday said we are putting the cart before the horse by asking for money even before the government knew what this was going to cost. But, in fact, the Governor in writing requested from the President \$766 million to replace the pipes in Flint and another \$41 million in protective measures. So we are working within the numbers that the Governor of Michigan has identified and requested. While we truly don't know the full cost until work begins, as with any project, we need to begin to get this done immediately.

I think what is most important is for us to focus on what is happening to the children and families. No lead level is safe, and I have to say I know a lot more about lead than I have ever known before. Frankly, hearing about the damage done to children and what can happen to individuals is really frightening. We should all be doing everything we can to make sure we address this lead issue across the board.

The threshold set by the EPA and the Center for Disease Control is 15 parts per billion of exposure. The water filters that FEMA has provided to families in Flint are certified to protect lead up to 150 parts per billion. In many places, when they are provided

and used correctly, that is making a real difference. But, unfortunately, we look at the severity of this. Last week, a new round of tests showed that lead in some homes in Flint range from 153 parts up to 4,000 parts per billion. If they are saying 15 parts per billion is when we need to be worried, I can't even fathom 4,000 parts.

We are all looking at all the different numbers, but I heard one commentator in the news say that the exposure to children and families in those particular homes is actually higher than a toxic waste dump. And this is after the city switched back to the Detroit water system because of the damage that was done to the pipes. So this is severe and urgent. We have to act now.

Unfortunately, the same Senator also suggested we are putting the cart before the horse because this was a local issue. Come on. I am really glad that the people of the great State of Michigan didn't have that attitude when a fertilizer plant in West Texas exploded and we spent millions of dollars in Federal funding on that town. That was also a manmade disaster where safety procedures were lax. We all saw the horror of that situation, and we stepped in as Americans to support that community and those families. That is all we are asking. When floods hit South Carolina and Texas last year, we came together with \$300 million put in an omnibus for South Carolina and Texas for floods. And just last week, the same Member of the Republican leadership asked President Obama to grant a disaster declaration and funneled millions of dollars to his State.

We all know we have challenges in our States, and we need to be thoughtful. But we need to be supporting Americans around the country. This is a disaster. This is a situation where we need to show that we care about a group of people who did nothing. They did nothing, and they are in a situation where their entire water system is unusable. We should be lending a hand.

Right now, we have up to 9,000 children under the age of 6 in Flint—9,000 children—who are exposed to lead.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. STABENOW. I appreciate that I am running out of time. I will close. I will be back a lot today. I would just indicate to the President and to others that we want this fixed. We have been working in good faith. We thought we had an agreement working within the framework given to us by the Republicans working on this issue. We are not going to let procedural issues that are fixed every single day in the Senate get in the way of what is happening. I am not going to tell families, I am not going to tell children, I am not going to tell moms in Flint "Sorry, we can't help you" because of some bureaucratic procedural issue that folks don't want to fix when they fix them every single day.

I yield the floor, and I will be back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for the past week the Senate has been debating the way that America produces and uses our energy. We have talked about how these issues affect our economy, how they affect our communities, and how they affect the world—the world that we hope to leave to our children.

As Senators have come to the floor and offered their ideas, I have tried to keep one basic idea in mind, and that idea is that we want to make energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, as long as it doesn't raise costs on American families. I think that is the goal of many Members of the Senate with regard to this bipartisan legislation.

I want to talk today about two bipartisan ideas—ideas that some of us have offered to make this legislation even better. One of the first amendments the Senate took up on this bill was an amendment I offered, along with Senator SCHATZ, that passed by voice vote. He is a Democrat, I am a Republican, and it is something that both of us think is a very good idea.

This amendment creates a prize system to encourage new technologies that could remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and permanently sequester it. A lot of the Members of this body talk about reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Some of them want to reduce this by cutting the amount of emissions of carbon dioxide; some want to do it with a carbon tax; and some others want to do it by banning some of the energy sources that we need today to power our economy. The problem with that approach is that it severely reduces how much energy we as Americans can use, and it raises the cost of energies on hardworking families.

We just got the new economic numbers that are out in terms of economic growth in America for the last quarter of last year—0.7 percent. That is the last quarter of 2015. That is nowhere near the growth that we need in this country for a healthy economy. It is nothing.

Cutting back on the types of energy resources Americans can use by some of these proposals or by making energy much more expensive is not going to help our economy grow as we need it to in terms of having a healthy, strong economy.

The amendment that Senator SCHATZ and I have introduced looks at this issue from a very different direction. It looks at the carbon that is already in the atmosphere. The amendment says we should be looking much more at finding a way to remove some of that carbon dioxide. To get that done, America needs to invest more in developing new technology that can accomplish it, not just through more spending or more government research but by setting up a series of prizes for different technical breakthroughs. By doing that, we can turn to ingenuity

and to innovation to solve the problem. That includes the private sector, universities, and even just someone out tinkering in their garage and coming up with a great idea.

Prizes like this are not a new idea. Back in 1714 the British Government offered a big prize for the first person to invent a better way for measuring longitude. It was a clockmaker whose name was John Harrison. He won the prize, and his idea transformed the way that we sail the seas.

In 1927 Charles Lindbergh flew non-stop from New York to Paris. This helped create the new modern aviation industry. He took the flight to win a \$25,000 prize-sponsored by a New York hotel owner.

The prize created by this amendment—and there is more than one. There are several prizes. The prizes created by this amendment are meant to encourage that kind of new thinking, that kind of bold action. So that is one of the amendments, one of the bipartisan ideas.

Another amendment and idea that we have talked about, which is again bipartisan, is an amendment we voted on yesterday, amendment No. 3030. This was an idea that had bipartisan support. My lead cosponsor was my friend from North Dakota, Senator HEITKAMP. This amendment would have expedited the permit process for natural gas gathering lines on Federal lands, on Indian lands. Gathering lines are pipelines that collect unprocessed gas from oil and gas wells and then ship it to a processing plant. At the plant, the different kind of gases—methane, propane—are separated from one another. Then they are shipped out again by other pipelines to locations where they can be sold and used by people to power our country, to power our economy. That is what the producers want to do. The problem is, we don't have enough of these gathering lines to gather up this gas and send it to the processing plants. So a lot of times there is only one option, and that is to flare or vent the excess natural gas at the well. If there were more gathering lines, then we would have a lot less waste.

You don't have to take my word for it. Last month, the Obama administration proposed a new rule that restricts this kind of flaring of oil and gas operations on Federal land and on Indian land. In that rule, the administration admitted that the main way to avoid flaring “is to capture, transport, and process” that gas for sale, using the same technologies that are used for natural gas wells. It makes sense. The administration said that the rate of energy production in some of the areas outpaces the rate of development of this infrastructure to capture the gas. The administration said the production had overwhelmed the capacity of the gathering lines, and Senator HEITKAMP and I were talking about ways to deal with the problem. Even though the administration seems to recognize and give voice to the problem, its proposed

rule doesn't actually address the problem or provide a solution, and Senator HEITKAMP and I have a solution.

The rule doesn't do anything to speed up the permit process for natural gas gathering pipelines. The President ignores that component. Whether you agree with this new rule or you disagree with it, the only practical way to reduce the venting or the flaring of natural gas is to build more of these gathering lines. The rule will not work without them.

If we don't build the infrastructure to solve the problem, the administration's rule will end up pushing oil and gas production off of Federal lands, off of Indian land, and this is completely unacceptable. It is unworkable.

The Obama administration says this type of gas venting and flaring is bad for the environment. They say the government is losing royalty money because the gas isn't being sold. I agree. That is why the bipartisan amendment Senator HEITKAMP and I sponsored would solve both of these problems at once. Even though we weren't able to get that amendment adopted yesterday, this is an idea that all Republicans and Democrats should be able to support. It would help Americans get the energy we need and do it in a cleaner way and at a lower cost. That is the goal.

I know Senators on both sides of the aisle are going to keep talking about this idea, and we are going to keep trying to get it enacted into law. These are just two commonsense, bipartisan ideas Republicans and Democrats have offered to solve the energy challenges America is facing.

In my home State of Wyoming, people know we need to balance a strong economy and a healthy environment. They are in favor of using our natural resources responsibly. Part of that is remembering that these are resources and resources should be and can be used.

We should also recognize that the important resource we have in this country is American ingenuity. We should be investing in it. We should be cutting through the redtape that holds back innovation. Abraham Lincoln once said that when we face new and difficult challenges, we must think anew, and we must act anew. Lincoln knew the importance of setting a big goal, of unleashing the ingenuity of the American people to get it done. He had the vision for the transcontinental railroad. He also signed the original charter for the National Academy of Sciences. We must think anew; we must act anew.

It is not enough for environmental extremists to say that the resources have to stay in the ground. That is not realistic. That is not responsible. America can do better, and the American people are ready to be part of this solution. They are ready to make energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs on American families. They need us to help show the

way. With this kind of bipartisan solution I have been talking about today, I think we can take a step toward reaching that goal.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO ZIPPY DUVALL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, first of all, I am privileged and honored to commend Zippy Duvall, a great Georgian who just a few weeks ago was elected, in the 97th year of the American Farm Bureau, as its 12th president. Zippy has been the president of the Georgia Farm Bureau since 2006. He has been a leader in our State for decades, and I am so proud he will now represent agriculture throughout our country. He himself is a cattleman. He raises hay. He raises broilers. He has run the Farm Bureau and been a great advocate for agriculture and farming in our State.

He and his wife Bonnie have four children and three grandchildren. He serves on the Farmers Bank board. He serves as the president of the Georgia Farm Bureau. He serves on the local electric membership corporation board. He serves on the soil and water conservation board. He is a total public servant, and he is an outstanding advocate for agriculture and an outstanding representative of our State.

The best example of Zippy Duvall that I know is, if you ride through South Georgia—the heart of agriculture country in my State—and you look at all the bumper stickers on all the pickup trucks, you will see a unique bumper sticker—not mine, not a Member of Congress's, not the Governor's, but a bumper sticker that says very simply “Ditch the Rule.” Zippy Duvall was one of the leaders in our country who took on the EPA to stop from going into place the waters of the U.S.A. regulations that would hurt agriculture so desperately in our State. That bumper sticker became a slogan for agriculture all over the country, and farmers worked together to advocate on behalf of better agriculture without an overly oppressive EPA effect.

I am proud to come to the floor today and recognize a member of my State, a great farmer in Georgia, and a great citizen of our country. He will be the 12th president of the American Farm Bureau, and he will be the best president of the American Farm Bureau. I commend him and his family for all their sacrifice and effort. I wish him the very best of luck in his endeavors as president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF USO

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise to recognize another organization that is meaningful to all of us and in particular the Presiding Officer. It is called the USO—the United Service Organization—a private organization