

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and the rockets coming out of the Kennedy Space Center—because of all of those, you can't have oil rigs down there. For all of those reasons, it makes Florida incompatible with offshore oil drilling. An EPA Administrator with such close ties to the oil industry is deeply concerning for the people of Florida.

But Mr. Pruitt's ties to Big Oil aren't the only concern that we have in Florida. During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Pruitt said that he believes that his views on climate change are "immaterial" to the job of the EPA Administrator.

Whoa, the EPA Administrator is directly involved in things that involve climate change. I can't think of a more relevant issue for our EPA Administrator to be concerned with because Florida is ground zero when it comes to the effects of sea level rise.

These are not projections, not forecasts. These are measurements over the last 40 years in South Florida. The sea has risen 5 to 8 inches.

By the way, where is three-quarters of the population of Florida? It is along the coast. We are already seeing regular flooding at the mean high tide in the streets of Miami Beach, and they are spending millions on infrastructure in order to get those pumps working to get the water off the streets and raising the level of the streets.

We are seeing the saltwater, which is heavier than freshwater, seep into the ground where there is a honeycomb of limestone filled with freshwater, and the seawater is seeping into the freshwater. So cities are having to move their city well fields further to the west because of the saltwater intrusion, and it only gets worse.

The threat Floridians face every day is a result of this sea level rise that is very real. It is critical that we have an EPA Administrator that understands that there are things that are happening because of climate change. It is not immaterial to the job of the EPA Administrator; it is very relevant.

There is Mr. Pruitt's history of questioning science, especially when the facts conflict with his friends, whom he surrounds himself with, about the effects of science. So whether it is protecting Florida's livestock from deadly parasites or protecting the air we breathe, science informs policy decisions that affect all of us—clean water, clean air. It affects public health, national security, and the environment.

Yet we continue to see troubling reports about scientists being muzzled from the State level all the way up to the Federal level in the EPA. So it just seems that this is unacceptable. Our scientists should be free to publish scientific data and not be muzzled. They should be able to publish their reports without fear of losing their jobs or being censored for using phrases like "climate change."

That is why I recently sponsored legislation to protect our scientists from political interference. The Scientific

Integrity Act would ensure that Federal scientists can communicate their findings with the public. It requires Federal agencies to implement and enforce scientific integrity policies and ensure that procedures are in place so that if those policies are violated, it is known and there is a procedure to deal with that.

I conclude by stating that Floridians and the State of Florida cannot risk the health of our environment or our economy on an EPA Administrator who pals around with folks that do all of what I am talking about—they question our scientists, denying the true threat we face from sea level rise and climate change. Floridians can't afford such a risk, and they shouldn't be forced to take this risk. Therefore, I will vote no on Mr. Pruitt's nomination to be EPA Administrator.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postclosure debate time to Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today to recognize that the environment is critically important. One of the true issues States face is getting back to the promises of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act to make sure States enjoy primacy, and I think that is a critical component that is not being discussed today as we look at guaranteed clean water and clean air—making sure that those closest to those issues have the ability to have the input that was anticipated by almost every environmental statute. So I would remind my colleagues that when we focus many times on Federal issues and Federal appointments, one of the most important things that we can do is focus on the fact that these Federal agency heads need to work cooperatively with State organizations.

Scott Pruitt, who is a soon-to-be former attorney general, understands the State role, and I think that is a critical qualification and an important distinction to make.

EX-IM BANK

But I didn't come to talk about the appointment of Scott Pruitt. I came to talk about something we could all agree on, and in fact the President and I agree on this, and I think everyone agrees on this almost unanimously, which is that American jobs matter. Putting Americans back to work in manufacturing is one of the most critical things that we can do in the Senate, making sure that our people have an opportunity to succeed, participate, and have an opportunity to produce goods and services that can be exported and can grow the wealth of our country and grow the economy of our country.

Last week I joined President Trump in a small bipartisan lunch. We had a chance to talk about a variety of issues. There are very many issues that divide us, but this issue unites us. I

specifically talked with the President about the need to get the Export-Import Bank up and running. I also talked to him about the Export-Import Bank in December and talked about the importance of enabling this institution to function for the American manufacturing worker. The great news is that President Trump agrees, and he informed me that we can in fact say he supports the Ex-Im Bank and that he would be nominating someone soon to serve on the Export-Import Bank.

That led off a rash of discussion among the usual naysayers with the Ex-Im Bank, mostly driven by ideology and not fact. So I think it is important to come once again to reiterate the importance of the Ex-Im Bank.

I certainly appreciate the President's interest in making American workers a priority. He will be at Boeing in South Carolina on Friday. I don't know if he will make any announcement about nominating someone to the Ex-Im Bank. I hope he does.

There has been a lot of talk about supporting the economy and boosting American manufacturing jobs, but all that talk falls on deaf ears if we don't take action on the simple issues when we can accomplish those goals, and that simple issue is enabling the Export-Import Bank to function. For decades the Export-Import Bank has leveled the playing field for American workers and businesses. Yet heavy politics is enabling one Senator to put political ideology before the jobs and well-being of thousands of American workers across our country.

We worked very, very hard in 2015. We knew that we were going to be challenged to get the Ex-Im Bank reauthorized. In June of 2015, the Export-Import Bank expired and did not have a charter. It was not authorized for the first time in its more than 80-year history. I fought very hard to reauthorize it, as did a number of my colleagues. Finally, in December 2016, 6 months later, the Bank was given a charter, given an authorization. I want to point out something because I think way too often we think what stops this endeavor is partisan politics. Guess what. Over 70 percent of the House of Representatives voted for the Ex-Im Bank and over 60 percent of the Senate voted for the Ex-Im Bank. This is not a partisan issue. There is bipartisan support. Yet there is a narrow group of people who would rather put ideology ahead of American jobs. It is wrong on so many levels.

Despite the fact, unfortunately, that we finally authorized the Ex-Im Bank over a year ago with overwhelming support, we do not have a Bank that can authorize any credits over \$10 million. That is because it requires a quorum of Bank board members to make that decision. We only have two out of the five members of the board. That means that we don't have a quorum. So what has been happening is that there is \$30 billion—think about that, \$30 billion—of American exports waiting in the queue, waiting for approval, hoping desperately to get the

Ex-Im Bank up and running so those exports can receive the credit they need and receive the guarantees that those exports need and get people back to work.

Do you know what else has been happening since we haven't had a quorum on the Bank? Thousands of American jobs have been transported to places like France and Canada. We are losing thousands of jobs.

When I hear people say the Ex-Im Bank is the bank of Boeing or the bank of GE, trust me, I do not bleed for the executives of Boeing. I do not bleed for the executives of GE. They will do fine. In fact, they know how to get around this problem. They just move those manufacturing jobs to a country that will recognize the exports and will provide that export credit. That is what is happening. But guess what is happening to the American worker and families across these manufacturing facilities? They are getting pink slips. Why? Because this body refuses to give us a quorum on the Ex-Im Bank.

The President understands this. The President understands how important it is to get these American workers back together. Now I want you just to think about what \$30 billion of exports is worth to American employment. If we use the numbers that extrapolate, it is hard to know, but it is over 170,000 jobs. Think about the fact that 170,000 jobs are waiting in the wings for us to do the right thing. When we move forward with the Ex-Im Bank, I think we will have a good day—a good bipartisan day when the President of the United States joins with those of us who care about workers and manufacturing in this country—and we will get the Ex-Im Bank up and running. I think if we fail to do it and if we fail to send the signals that help is coming and that the Ex-Im Bank is going to be an effective institution that will once again play a role in American manufacturing and will be in that tool chest of trade opportunities—if we don't do it—then they are going to give up all hope, and they are going to find some other place to manufacture the products that will allow them to access the credit, that will allow them to sell their products overseas. So it is critically important.

I want to leave with one statistic. The Peterson Institute recently estimated that the United States is losing \$50 million in exports for every day that a nomination is not confirmed—\$50 million of new wealth creation for our country. It is a travesty.

Of all of the things I have seen here—the callous things—that sound so bureaucratic when you talk about the Ex-Im Bank, when you pick up the curtain and you look underneath, what we see are American jobs and American families and American opportunity and new wealth creation for our country and economic growth for our country. And because some institution that could give you a black mark in a political campaign says “We don't like it,” it doesn't get done. Shame on us.

Thank you to the President for agreeing to help us move the Ex-Im Bank forward. Thank you to all of my colleagues—64 in the last Congress—who stood with us to get the Ex-Im Bank reauthorized and the over 70 percent of the House of Representatives, on a stand-alone vote, who voted for the Ex-Im Bank, who know how critically important this is. We can get this job done, and we can stop the migration of these jobs to other countries.

I look forward to hearing more this week and hopefully early next week from the President. As a member of the Banking Committee, I look forward to pushing for a hearing and a vote on this nominee. And I look forward to the day that all of these exporters and these American workers can see that this institution can work for them, and that will be the day that those credits are approved at the Ex-Im Bank.

Thank you so much, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is postclosure on the Pruitt nomination.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise in support of the nomination of Scott Pruitt.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, will my friend from Mississippi yield the floor for one moment?

Mr. WICKER. I am delighted to yield.

Ms. HEITKAMP. I thank the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my postclosure debate time to Senator CARPER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I am delighted to rise this afternoon in support of Scott Pruitt, nominated for EPA Administrator, and to congratulate the leadership of this Senate and the administration for persevering on this nomination to the point where we will get a vote tomorrow afternoon and I think be able to end the week on a positive note.

My good friend, the Senator from North Dakota, had just called for a good bipartisan day on the Senate floor, and I support many of the remarks she made in that regard. I would hope we could begin having some good bipartisan days with regard to the administration's nominations for these important positions.

Sadly, it looks as though we will not have a bipartisan vote for Scott Pruitt. He will be confirmed but not nearly with the vote he should receive from Members on both sides of the aisle who know that there has been extreme overreach on the part of the EPA leadership under the Obama administration. The EPA needs a change in direction, and they need to become more sensible with regard to stopping pollution, while at the same time being

friendly on job creation. So we will get this nomination finished tomorrow and we will have a good Administrator, but regrettably it will not be on a very bipartisan basis.

This is the Scott Pruitt whom I have had a chance to learn about since he was nominated in January.

The Scott Pruitt I have had a chance to learn about took on the polluters as attorney general for his State of Oklahoma and finalized multistate agreements to limit pollution, and he did so working with Democrats and working with Republicans on a bipartisan basis across the political spectrum. I think we need that sort of person as EPA Administrator. Scott Pruitt negotiated a water rights settlement with the tribes to preserve scenic lakes and rivers, and I think he is to be congratulated on that, not scolded. He stood up to oil companies and gas companies as attorney general for the State of Oklahoma and challenged them when they were polluting his State's air and water. Then—something I applaud—when the EPA overstepped its bounds and its mission and ceased to follow the law, he challenged the EPA. I submit to my colleagues that that is exactly the sort of balance we need to return to as Administrator of the EPA.

In the hearing, which was rather extraordinary because of its length, Attorney General Pruitt demonstrated his knowledge, he demonstrated his intellect, and he demonstrated his patience. He was available all day long—an extraordinarily long hearing—answered more than 200 questions probed at the hearing, and then beyond that he has now answered more than 1,000 questions for the record. Yet, in spite of this, it is disappointing that some of my colleagues, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, have taken not only to disparaging his qualifications and his suitability for this position but also engaged in a slow-walking process designed to keep this nomination from even coming forward.

Every Democrat boycotted the committee meeting that was called to report this nomination to the floor so that we could even have an up-or-down vote. They walked out of the meeting. This is the sort of tactic we were able to overcome on a parliamentary basis, but it has given us what we now know is the slowest confirmation process in 225 years. The only President to have a slower confirmation process was the one who was getting it all kicked off to start with; George Washington's was a bit slower. We will see. Maybe if this keeps going, we could surpass the slowness of the confirmation process that occurred for our first President.

We need a change at EPA. The American people are ready for a change at EPA. We need an EPA Administrator who will listen to the environmentalists but also listen to the job creators. This means listening to the election but moving past the election and getting on to filling the positions that are

important to Americans, such as the EPA Administrator.

Most Americans believe we can protect the environment and still protect job creators, and so does Attorney General Scott Pruitt. Most Americans believe we can have clean air and water without destroying thousands upon thousands of jobs for Americans. That is what I believe. That is what Scott Pruitt believes.

I would quote from a recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal which William McGurn wrote in support of Mr. Pruitt but also generally in support of other nominations. With regard to Pruitt, Mr. McGurn says this: “The fierce opposition to Mr. Pruitt speaks to the progressive fear that he might help restore not only science to its rightful place but also federalism.” I think that is what Scott Pruitt is going to be about when he is confirmed tomorrow and finally gets down to working for us, the taxpayers, as Administrator of EPA.

This is about the 1-month mark in this administration, and we are slowly getting past this unprecedented slow-walk effort by our colleagues. I certainly hope that with the 1,100 other appointments that have to be submitted and have to be spoken to by this Senate, we can hasten the process so we can pass legislation and be about the business our constituents sent us here to do.

Approving Attorney General Scott Pruitt will allow us to move forward with the people’s business with a man who has demonstrated courtesy, intelligence, patience, and professionalism, and I will be honored to be one of those voting yes tomorrow when we confirm this outstanding candidate as EPA Administrator.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I would like to follow up on something our friend from Mississippi was just saying. I want to make it clear that I am not really interested in obstructing. I am not interested at all in obstructing. What I am interested in is getting to the truth about this nominee and others.

Two years ago, an organization called the Center for Media and Democracy petitioned, under the Oklahoma open records law—it is a FOIA-like law at the State level—they asked for access to thousands of emails that were sent from or to the attorney general’s office under Scott Pruitt. That was 2 years ago. They have repeatedly renewed that request over time, and it has not been granted.

Why might emails be germane? Well, they are germane because many of the emails were with industries that have differences with the EPA and in some cases are involved in lawsuits, a number of which were sponsored by or joined in by Attorney General Pruitt.

Two years after the request to see those emails was submitted to the attorney general’s office, they had not seen one of them. A lawsuit was filed earlier this month asking the court—I think it is called the district court of Oklahoma, a State court—asking to see the emails and asking that the court intervene so that the Center for Media and Democracy would have access to the emails.

The Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee wrote to the judge, and we shared our voice because we have been making the same request of the attorney general’s office—of the attorney general—as part of the nominations process. He has declined to provide the emails to the Congress, the Senate, and we have let the judge know that we appreciate her attention to this matter and hope she might even expedite it. Well, an expedited hearing is called for this afternoon on the sharing of these emails that have been blocked, stonewalled, for 2 years.

What we did as Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee is I met with the majority leader, and nine of us wrote to the majority leader, and we said: With all due respect, we suggest to give the judge time to make a decision, and if the judge says the emails should be opened up, allow us to have until a week from this coming Monday to look at the emails to see if there is anything inappropriate or untoward that could be revealed.

That request to the majority leader—he was very nice about it, but he basically said: We are not going to do that.

I renewed the request here yesterday on the floor, and he said: No, we are not going to do that.

I am generally one who thinks it is very important for us to communicate, collaborate, cooperate around here, as I think most of my colleagues would attest, but in this case, I don’t think we made an unreasonable request of the nominee. And I think to block access to these emails—even when petitioned under the Oklahoma FOIA law, backed up by our support—for nothing to happen is just wrong. That is just wrong.

So hopefully when the judge has this hearing later this afternoon—actually, in 2 hours—we will find out a bit more as to whether the AG’s office is going to be asked to turn these emails over and make them public with that information. I hope the answer will be yes. We will see.

I asked Mr. Pruitt 52 questions on December 28 and asked they be responded to by January 9. January 9 came and went, and we were told maybe we would get the responses at the hearing we were going to have on

January 18. We had the hearing on January 18, and some of the specific questions were answered, some not, but we submitted as a committee some 1,000 additional questions for the record. That is a lot of questions. I suggested to the committee chairman he give the nominee a reasonable amount of time to respond to those questions. The chairman, in the interest of moving things along, I think, gave the nominee 2 days, which is, in my view, not nearly enough.

If we go back several years ago, the last EPA Administrator was a woman named Gina McCarthy. She was asked a number of questions. She was actually asked more questions, I think 1,400 questions, which is several hundred more than Scott Pruitt but a lot of questions. She did not have enough time to answer the questions, and a little extra time, maybe a week or so, was granted. She answered the questions, as I understand, fully, completely, and directly. I will read some of the questions we asked of Scott Pruitt later today, later tonight, with examples of the kind of answers he provided. Some were reasonably complete, but too many were evasive, indirect, or just nonresponsive. Maybe that is because the chairman only gave him a couple days to respond. That is not the way we ought to be about the business.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I came to the floor today to oppose the nomination of Scott Pruitt to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. I thank my colleague from Delaware, whom I had the honor to serve with when we were both Governors, for his good work to point out why Scott Pruitt is the wrong person to head the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA was created by a Republican President in 1970, Richard Nixon. I remember very clearly when he did that. Across subsequent decades, support for this Agency and for its important mission has been a strongly bipartisan endeavor. Our Nation has benefited from the service of dedicated, highly effective EPA Administrators from both parties, but I am deeply concerned that Scott Pruitt is a radical break from this bipartisan tradition.

After reviewing Mr. Pruitt’s environmental record, I have to ask: Why was he nominated for this critically important position? He rejects the core missions of the Environmental Protection Agency at every turn. He has sued the EPA to block protections for clean air and clean water; he is an outspoken climate change denier; he seeks to dismantle the EPA’s Clean Power Plan, which was put in place to address climate change; and he opposes other efforts to slow the warming of this planet. Time and again, he has put private interests and their profits ahead of public interests and public health.

As attorney general of Oklahoma, he has sided with oil and gas companies, and he has failed to protect the people of his State from some of the worst impacts of hydraulic fracturing. He has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industries, and he zealously advocated for their freedom to pollute our air and water.

So again I ask: Why was Scott Pruitt nominated to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency? Well, I think it is clear Mr. Pruitt was nominated not to lead the EPA forward but to prevent it from carrying out its mission. Make no mistake, Mr. Pruitt and his extreme agenda are a threat to the environment, to the planet, and to our public health.

Christine Todd Whitman, a former Republican Governor of New Jersey and whom I also had the honor of serving with when I was Governor—Senator CARPER, Christie Whitman, and I all served as Governors together. She also was EPA Administrator during George W. Bush's administration. What she said about Pruitt I think is worth listening to. This is a Republican talking about Scott Pruitt: “I don’t recall ever having seen an appointment of someone who is so disdainful of the agency and the science behind what the agency does.”

People in the State of New Hampshire have no doubt about the reality of climate change. In the Granite State we see it. We experience it all the time. The steady increase in yearly temperatures and the rise in annual precipitation are already affecting New Hampshire’s tourism and our outdoor recreation economy, which accounts for more than \$4 billion a year and employs over 50,000 people. Each year, hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and wildlife watchers come to New Hampshire to enjoy our beautiful mountains, our lakes, our other natural resources, and our 18 miles of coastline, which we are very proud of. As I said, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation contribute more than \$4 billion to New Hampshire’s economy each year, but much of this is now threatened by the warming of our planet. Rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season, they are negatively affecting our snow- and ice-related winter recreation activities, including skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. An estimated 17,000 Granite Staters are directly employed by the ski industry in New Hampshire, and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services warns that those jobs are threatened by climate change.

Likewise, New Hampshire’s and indeed all of New England’s brilliant fall foliage is at risk. I wish to quote from a report by New Hampshire Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions. They say: “Current modeling forecasts predict that maple sugar trees eventually will be completely eliminated as a regionally important species in the northeastern United States.”

Climate modeling by the Union of Concerned Scientists projects that by the end of this century, New Hampshire summers will feel like present-day summers in North Carolina, 700 miles to our south. We have a map that shows what is going to happen to our red maples and the maple sugaring industry. We can see everything here that is in red, these are all those sugar maples. It is projected that by 2070 or 2100, they are gone. They are gone from New England, from the Northeast, and from most of the Eastern part of this country. If we fail to act on climate change, this could mean a steep loss of jobs. It could mean a loss of revenue. It will destroy our maple sugaring industry and will damage our outdoor recreation industry.

Maple sugar production is entirely dependent on weather conditions, and changes—no matter how modest—can throw off production and endanger this industry. Maple trees require warm days and freezing nights to create the optimal sugar content in sap production. The changing climate is putting more and more stress on sugar maples. As this map shows so well, it is already significantly affecting syrup production. If we fail to act on climate change, this could destroy our maple syrup industry. If you haven’t done maple sugaring in the springtime, there is nothing like maple syrup over snow. There is nothing else like it. To lose that and to lose the jobs that are there is a real change to one of the recreational activities we love in New Hampshire.

Climate change is also threatening our wildlife species and their habitats. The moose is an iconic feature of New Hampshire’s culture and identity, but as the results of climate change, we have seen a 40-percent decline in New Hampshire’s moose population. We can see clearly from these pictures why we are losing our moose: Because of milder winters, ticks don’t die off. It is really very tragic. The ticks multiply on a moose, they ravage it, and they eventually kill it. I don’t know if people can see, but what look like little balls on the end of that moose’s tail are ticks. This moose probably has brain worm, which is another problem the moose have because of winters that aren’t cold enough to kill off those parasites. Ticks multiply on a moose, they ravage it, and they eventually kill it.

We have seen modeling from the University of New Hampshire which suggests that by 2030, moose will be gone—not only from northern New Hampshire but from much of the northern part of this country.

Other newly invasive insects are harming wildlife species as well as trees. Of course, people are also suffering from the impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures increase the number of air pollution action days. They increase pollen and mold levels, outdoors as well as allergen levels inside, and all of these things are

dangerous to sensitive populations with asthma, allergies, and chronic respiratory conditions. In fact, New Hampshire has one of the highest rates of childhood asthma in the country because we are the tailpipe. All of New England is the tailpipe for the rest of the country. Pollution blows across this country from the Midwest and exits through New Hampshire and New England.

Rising temperatures facilitate the spread of insect-borne illnesses such as Lyme disease. We could see on that moose what the impact is. Those ticks aren’t just multiplying on the moose, they are multiplying in a way that affects people as well.

Fortunately, because we have seen the impact of climate change, New Hampshire and the other New England States are taking the lead in reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to a more energy-efficient, clean energy economy. We are one of nine Northeastern States participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative called RGGI. It is essentially a cap-and-trade system in the Northeast. New Hampshire has already reduced its power sector carbon pollution by 49 percent since 2008. That is a 49-percent reduction in less than a decade. Thanks to efforts by State and local communities, New Hampshire is on track to meet the Clean Power Plan’s carbon reduction goals 10 years early. In addition, we are using proceeds from emissions permits sold at RGGI auctions to finance clean energy and energy efficiency investments.

Unfortunately, Scott Pruitt seems to believe that reducing pollution and investing in a clean environment are somehow bad for the economy. He is just wrong about that. Our efforts in New Hampshire and across New England to fight climate change and promote clean energy have been a major boost to economic growth. We have seen jobs added as a result. During its first 3 years, RGGI produced \$1.6 billion in net economic value and created more than 16,000 jobs in our region. Nationwide, employment in the fossil fuel sector is falling dramatically, but job creation in the clean energy and energy efficiency sectors is exploding. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, more than 2 million jobs have been created in the energy efficiency sector alone and—if we can ever get Congress to move the energy efficiency legislation Senator PORTMAN and I have introduced—would create, by 2030, another 200,000 jobs, just on energy efficiency. Across New England, we are demonstrating that smart energy choices can benefit the environment and strengthen job creation and the economy overall.

So, again, we have to ask: Why does Scott Pruitt deny the science of climate change? Why has he urged States to refuse to comply with the Clean Power Plan? Why has he filed lawsuit after lawsuit to block enforcement of the Clean Air Act? Why does he deny

something as nearly universally recognized as the dangers of mercury pollution?

The bottom line, I believe, is that Scott Pruitt is first and foremost a fierce defender of the oil and gas industry. If scientists point to carbon emissions as the main cause of climate change, then he has to deny that science. If science and common sense point to hydraulic fracking as the cause of thousands of earthquakes in the State of Oklahoma, then he must deny that too. If the EPA's mission is to protect clean air and clean water from pollution caused by fossil fuels, then he has to sue the EPA and try to cripple it.

Scott Pruitt's nomination is not about shaking things up in Washington. It is about turning over control of the EPA to the fossil fuel industry and turning back the clock on half a century of bipartisan efforts—in Democratic and Republican administrations alike—to protect clean air and clean water and to pass on to our children a livable environment and an Earth that they can inhabit from future generations.

My office has been flooded with calls, emails, and letters from Granite Staters. They not only oppose Mr. Pruitt's nomination, they are genuinely afraid of the consequences of putting him in charge of the EPA.

I heard from Deb Smith from Hampton, NH. That is a small community on our coastline. She wrote:

I am a birder, love to walk on the beach and in the mountains, and rely on time spent in nature to cope with a [stage four] lung cancer diagnosis. Clean air is especially important to me! Pruitt's long history of suing the EPA and reversing decades of progress in improving the environment disqualifies him for this post. It is essential to continue to preserve and improve our natural environment for people, birds, and other wildlife!

Elizabeth Garlo of Concord writes:

New Hampshire, due to quirks in its geology and the Earth's rotation, is the "tailpipe" of the Nation with much of the air pollutants from the Midwest exiting to the ocean from here. The people of New Hampshire cannot sit back and watch our children suffer from asthma and be restricted from outside activities due to "bad air quality days." Mr. Pruitt will be a very significant detriment to the quality of life in New Hampshire.

Eugene Harrington of Nashua writes:

I am AGAINST the appointment of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA. He does not seem to support the purpose of the EPA. Now I hear that even scientific papers are being reviewed to be sure they support the current administration's view of "facts." Please do what you can to support a functioning EPA.

Christopher Morgan of Amherst, NH, writes:

This is my first message I have ever sent to my senator in my 32 years as a voting American. . . . As a registered Republican . . . I am vehemently opposed to Mr. Pruitt leading the EPA. He has consistently shown he does not believe in the threat posed by climate change. Climate change affects every citizen in this country and has a detrimental effect on the New Hampshire climate specifically. President Trump's willful dis-

regard for the safety and protection of all Americans cannot go unchecked.

Let me emphasize that I have heard from many Republican constituents who oppose Scott Pruitt's confirmation. My Republican friends point with pride to the fact that the EPA was created by a Republican President. After all, what could be more conservative than conserving our environment and preserving a livable Earth for future generations? For nearly half a century, protecting the environment has been a bipartisan priority and endeavor. That is especially true in the State of New Hampshire, where folks understand that clean air and water and fighting climate change are not and should not be partisan issues. We all have a profound stake in protecting the environment.

Unfortunately, with the nomination of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA, the Trump administration is willing to shatter this bipartisan tradition and consensus, and we must not allow this to happen. I appeal to all of my colleagues but especially to all of those on the other side of the aisle: Don't allow this nominee to destroy your party's hard-earned, commonsense efforts to protect clean air, clean water, and a sustainable Earth.

I urge us to come together—Senators on both sides of the aisle—to reject this effort to undo nearly five decades of bipartisan efforts to protect our environment and our planet.

The stakes are incredibly high for all of us. By rejecting this unsuitable nominee, we can reconsider our approach to the EPA. We can embrace this Nation's bipartisan commitment to protecting the environment for future generations. This is what the great majority of Americans want us to do. Let's listen to their voices, and let's say no to this nominee, Scott Pruitt, who is not only not qualified for this position, he is not committed to the EPA and its mission.

Mr. President, at this time I yield 30 minutes of my postclosure debate time to Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today, honored to speak after my colleague from New Hampshire and joining my other colleagues in opposing the nomination of Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Our beautiful natural resources define my home State of New Hampshire. From the White Mountains to the Seacoast, to our pristine lakes and our forests, our natural resources are critical to our economy, our environment, our way of life, and protecting these resources plays a critical role, as well, in protecting public health.

However, we are already beginning to see the real impacts of climate change in New Hampshire, and these impacts threaten to have major consequences

for our natural resources and families and businesses in every corner of my State. Recognizing that fact, members of both parties have come together in New Hampshire to enact commonsense bipartisan solutions to take on climate change and to grow and maintain our State's renewable clean energy sector. We have worked to protect our land, our air and water, and the health of our citizens.

Unfortunately, it is clear from Mr. Pruitt's opposition to the Agency he will be tasked to lead, his record of working to weaken critical environmental protections that our citizens need to thrive, and his unwillingness to fight climate change, that he is unfit to serve in this position.

The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency begins with protecting our environment and the health of all of our citizens. The EPA does critical work to protect the water we drink and the air we breathe.

In recent years, the EPA has used sound scientific evidence to take strong measures to protect our environment. Unfortunately, President Trump has made clear that he does not support this critical Agency. Throughout his campaign, the President has repeatedly attacked the EPA, calling for its elimination and saying that our environment would be "just fine" without it. The President has doubled down on his hostility toward this Agency by nominating Mr. Pruitt to serve as its Administrator.

As attorney general, Mr. Pruitt has been a vocal critic of the very Agency he has now been nominated to lead, and he has been involved in over 20 legal actions against it.

According to the Washington Post, Mr. Pruitt has "spent much of his energy as attorney general fighting the very agency he is being nominated to lead."

On social media, Mr. Pruitt has referred to himself as "a leading advocate against the EPA's activist agenda." He has questioned the role of the Agency, stating that "the EPA was never intended to be our Nation's frontline environmental regulator."

When asked by one of my colleagues if there were any clean air or clean water EPA regulations in place today that he could support, Mr. Pruitt declined to name a single one.

The foundation of a future where all Americans have an opportunity to thrive starts with a healthy environment and healthy families. The EPA serves an important role in protecting the health of our people. We must do better than having an Administrator who has fought so tirelessly to undermine the work that this Agency does.

I am also concerned by an EPA Administrator who has consistently voiced skepticism about the clear facts on climate change. Throughout my time in office, I have always fought to protect our environment and have been a strong supporter of curbing the impacts of climate change. As a State

senator, I sponsored legislation that allowed New Hampshire to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and I helped pass the State's renewable portfolio standard to maintain and grow New Hampshire's clean renewable energy sector.

During my time as Governor, I worked with members of both parties to strengthen and build on those efforts, signing legislation to update the renewable portfolio standard and to maximize the benefits of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

I am proud that my State has long led efforts to cut carbon emissions, and it is crucial that other States follow our lead and take responsibility for the pollution that they cause. That is exactly why I am a strong supporter of measures like the Clean Power Plan.

I also strongly support the Paris agreement on climate change and believe that the United States must take action to implement the agreement while also ensuring that our international partners fulfill their obligations.

Mr. Pruitt, however, has been a consistent skeptic on the role of climate change and the role that it has had on our environment.

Mr. Pruitt has stated that we do not know the extent of human impact on climate change and has called climate change a natural occurrence. He has said that climate change is “one of the major policy debates of our time.”

And he continued:

That debate is far from settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global warming and its connection to the actions of mankind.

Scientists are clear in their understanding of the climate change science. The American Association for the Advancement of Science says the scientific evidence is clear: Global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society.

The American Geophysical Union says that humanity is the major influence on the global climate change observed over the past 50 years.

The American Meteorological Society says it is clear from extensive scientific evidence that the dominant cause of the rapid change in climate of the past half a century is human-induced increases in the amount of atmospheric greenhouse gases.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that warming of the climate system is unequivocal and human influence on the climate system is clear.

The EPA is a science-based organization, and it is unacceptable for the EPA Administrator to be at odds with the well-established views of leading scientists. As the Agency's own website says:

EPA is one of the world's leading environmental and human health research organizations. Science provides the foundation for Agency policies, actions, and decisions made on behalf of the American people. Our re-

search incorporates science and engineering that meet the highest standards for integrity, peer review, transparency, and ethics.

Mr. Pruitt disagrees with well-established climate science. Simply put, that disqualifies him from leading an agency where “science provides the foundation for . . . policies, actions, and decisions.” If you refuse to believe research from the world's leading scientists, you cannot lead a science-based agency.

From protecting our environment to protecting public health, the EPA plays a critical role in protecting the health of Granite Staters and all Americans. We know that a cleaner environment plays a key role in the economy, for the economy of New Hampshire and our entire country. We should be building on the critical efforts the EPA has taken to combat climate change and protect public health, not rolling them back.

Mr. Pruitt's hostility to the basic functions of the Environmental Protection Agency and his work to undermine protections for clean air, land, and water make clear that he should not serve in this role.

I will vote against Mr. Pruitt's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

When Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee asked Scott Pruitt for critical information on his environmental record as attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt said no to the Environment and Public Works Committee.

When Democrats on the Environment and Public Works Committee asked our fellow Republicans to delay Mr. Pruitt's vote until he got that important information, the Republican leadership here said: No, we won't wait for that critical information so that all Senators and the American people can understand who is being nominated.

When I asked Scott Pruitt if he would recuse himself from all issues relating to the cases that he has brought against the EPA as Oklahoma attorney general, Scott Pruitt said no to me.

Today we are here to respond to these very serious issues that are being raised about his ability to be an impartial Administrator of the EPA because the question before the American people and the Senate is whether Scott Pruitt should be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and that answer is no.

The EPA is our cop on the beat, protecting the American people and our environment from harmful pollution, hazardous waste, and the impacts of climate change. But as attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt has tried to undermine the clean water rule and the Clean Air Act, putting the pub-

lic health of millions of Americans at risk.

Scott Pruitt questions the science of climate change. Scott Pruitt has accused the EPA of overestimating air pollution from drilling of natural gas wells in Oklahoma. Scott Pruitt has argued against President Obama's Clean Power Plan, which the EPA is supposed to implement. Scott Pruitt has sued to block the EPA from restricting mercury, a toxin that causes brain damage in children in the United States.

The only thing that Scott Pruitt is certain of is that he wants to represent the interests of the fossil fuel industry. He wants to change the environmental watchdog into a polluter lapdog. And today we are drawing a line out here on the Senate floor because it is critical that the American people understand the moral implications for the water Americans drink, for the air they breathe, for the mercury that could go into the blood systems of children in our country, for the amount of smog that is allowed to be sent into the air, the amount of haze that is created across our country, and why the nomination of Scott Pruitt leads inevitably, inexplicably toward more pollution, more unhealthy air, and more unhealthy water going into the systems of our families across our country.

That really goes to what the moral duty is of the Senate, the moral duty we have to ordinary families across the country. Do Americans really think the air we are breathing is too clean? Do people really believe the water we drink is too clean? Do people really want to water down those standards? Do they want to reduce the safeguards we have put in place?

One hundred years ago, life expectancy in the United States was about 48 years of age. In other words, we had gone from the Garden of Eden all the way to about 100 years ago, and we had increased life expectancy to about 48 years of age—not much progress. Now, it was always good for the Methuselah family. The wealthy always did pretty well. They could protect themselves from the things that would affect ordinary families, poorer families, from the Bible to 100 years ago. But then what happened? All of a sudden there was an awakening in our country that we had to make sure the sewage systems in our country were not going to be able to pollute families across our society. Then step by step, beginning with sewage and water, we in our Nation came to understand that we had to remove the majority of pollutants that were out there that were damaging the lives of ordinary Americans. That was a change that transformed not just the United States but, over time, the whole rest of the world.

Now, 100 years later, life expectancy goes out to age 80. In other words, we have added 32 years of bonus life to the average American over the last 100 years. And what did it? Well, it is no

secret formula; it is just that we looked around and we saw the things we had to put in place in order to protect families, and we took a moral responsibility to make sure that those industries, especially those that were not providing protections, were forced to provide protections for those ordinary people.

Here we are now considering Scott Pruitt as the new Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Here is what Mr. Pruitt has done as the attorney general of Oklahoma: He has sued the national Environmental Protection Agency for the State of Oklahoma 19 times, and the issues on which he has sued are almost a litany of the things that go right to the heart of the protections the American people want for their families.

There are still eight cases that he brought pending before the EPA.

I said to Scott Pruitt in the confirmation hearing: Attorney General Pruitt, will you recuse yourself from consideration of any of those eight pending cases during the time you are Administrator of the EPA if you are confirmed? And Mr. Pruitt said no. Well, as I said to him in the hearing, if you do not recuse yourself, Mr. Pruitt, that turns you into the plaintiff, the defendant, the judge, and the jury for all of those cases, and that is just an unconscionable conflict of interest. As a result, he would never be seen as an impartial Administrator at the EPA as he moved forward trying to repeal or weaken environmental protections through regulations that he originally sought to accomplish through litigation.

We all know that across our country, overwhelmingly, the American people want—in the highest possible polling numbers, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative—they want the EPA to protect clean air, clean water, public health. They don't want children unnecessarily being exposed to pollutants in the atmosphere that can cause asthma. Those numbers are going up. The goal in America is to see the numbers go down, but that will not be the agenda Scott Pruitt brings to the EPA if he is, in fact, confirmed.

This question of his fitness for this job also goes to the question of climate change. The science of climate change is now well established.

Pope Francis came to the Capitol a year and a half ago to deliver his sermon on the hill to us, and what Pope Francis said to us is very simple: No. 1, that the planet is dangerously warming and that it is something which is being caused by human activity largely and that those who are going to be most adversely affected are the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. As the Pope said, we have a moral responsibility to do something about it as the most powerful country in the world and, along with China, the leading polluter in the world. This is Pope Francis talking to us about climate change.

What does Scott Pruitt say about climate science? He says he is not quite

certain any actions really have to be taken in order to deal with that issue. Well, we have a Pope who actually taught high school chemistry and who delivered a science and morality lesson to the Congress. He told us that science is certain, and he told us that our moral obligation is unavoidable.

If we had a nominee for the Environmental Protection Agency who embraced that science and morality, I would be voting for him, but that is not who Scott Pruitt is. He is ignoring the impact the fossil fuel industry is having, and he is unwilling to commit to taking steps that can reduce that danger for our planet and for the most vulnerable on the planet.

So I stand in opposition to his nomination, as I will be standing out here all day and into the night. I don't think that we are going to have a more important discussion than the direction of the health of our planet and the health of the children in our country. I think it is something that the American people have to hear all day and through the night.

With that, I see the arrival of the Senator from Ohio. I know that he has time to speak on the Senate floor. So I yield back my time so that my good friend Senator PORTMAN can be recognized.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MR. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for yielding his time.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, I rise today to talk about this issue of opioids—heroin, prescription drugs, now fentanyl—coming into our communities. It is at epidemic levels. We have worked on this issue over the last year in a bipartisan way and have made some progress. But I come today to the floor to report bad news and also to report something that Congress could do to help to address a new problem.

There was a report recently that came out by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission—very disturbing. It said that there is a new influx of what is called fentanyl coming in from China. This is a synthetic form of heroin. It can be up to 50 times more powerful than heroin. Think about that.

The report says:

The majority of fentanyl products found in the United States originate in China. Chinese law enforcement officials have struggled to adequately regulate the thousands of chemical and pharmaceutical facilities operating legally and illegally in the country, leading to increased production and export of illicit chemicals and drugs. Chinese chemical exporters covertly ship these drugs to the Western Hemisphere.

So that comes from an official report from this Commission on the United States and China. It is confirmed, unfortunately, back home. I was home this week meeting with law enforcement on Monday. They told me: Rob, the top issue in our community is now

not heroin; it is fentanyl, and it is this synthetic form of heroin that is far more powerful.

At least in their minds, they think that it is also more effective at making people addicted because it is less expensive and the trafficking of it is more aggressive. So this is a big concern because we were finally, I thought, making some progress on the prescription drugs and the heroin, and now this fentanyl, Carfentanil, and U4—it goes by various names depending on the chemical compounds—are coming into our communities.

It is truly scary. The consequences are, I hope, obvious to everybody now. We are losing one American every 12 minutes. This speech will be about 12 minutes. We will lose another American to an overdose. But it is getting worse, not better. By the way, it is everywhere. Last year, in 2016, every single State in the Union had at least one forensic lab test positive for fentanyl.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of positive forensic tests for fentanyl in the United States doubled, in fact, from 2014 to 2015. We believe it is worse. We know it is worse than 2016 from the information we have. Unfortunately, even this year, this month and a half, we have seen more and more evidence of fentanyl coming into our communities.

According to the China Commission's report, the top destination for Chinese fentanyl, by the way, is my home State of Ohio. We had more positive tests for fentanyl than any other State. By the way, Massachusetts—to my colleague who has been involved in this issue and worked on this issue and helped to try to stop the overprescribing of prescription drugs—was No. 2.

We are talking about 3,800 positive tests for fentanyl in Ohio alone. I do believe this is something that is being confirmed at the local level, not just from my meeting on Monday but from what I am hearing from around the State. Just 2 days after the Commission's report came out, in Butler County, OH, police seized \$180,000 in fentanyl-laced heroin after suspected fentanyl overdoses killed five people in just 2 days.

Drug overdoses in Butler County, by the way, have nearly tripled since 2012. When I was in Dayton, I met with the Dayton R.A.N.G.E., which is a law enforcement task force—the Regional Agencies Narcotics and Gun Enforcement Task Force. They told me that this is now their biggest problem.

They said, because it is stronger, there are more overdoses and more deaths than there are with a similar amount of heroin or the number of people using heroin. They said that just over a 2-week period, they had seized more than 40 pounds of drugs off the streets, including 6 pounds of fentanyl last week. Now, 6 pounds of fentanyl, as I do the math, is at least 20,000 doses—20,000 doses in 1 town in Ohio.

I want to thank Montgomery County Sheriff Plummer, the task force, and