

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the Arctic contains 22 percent of the world's undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and gas resources. The Federal Government projects that the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas alone contain an estimated 23.6 billion barrels of oil and 104.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Yet, despite that prolific potential, the Obama administration spent much of the past 8 years systematically putting the region off limits.

It began with the cancellation of lease sales scheduled for our Arctic Outer Continental Shelf. It continued with critical habitat designations, the imposition of burdensome new rules, and a constantly shifting administrative approach that seemed designed to make commercial operations impossible. We saw new withdrawals in our Arctic OCS in early 2015, followed by a decision by President Obama, just days before he left office, to withdraw nearly all of the region from future leasing. Those decisions ran directly contrary to the views of the vast majority of Alaskans, who overwhelmingly support the responsible development of our Arctic OCS. Those decisions ran contrary to the promises made to Alaskans, at statehood and repeatedly in the years since then, that we would be allowed to access our resources to help build our State. Those decisions have already cost Alaskans jobs and revenues and today continue to deprive us of a golden opportunity to provide for our families, end our economic recession, and refill our Trans-Alaska Pipeline System.

Our bill, the OPENS Alaska Act, recognizes our needs and opportunities in Alaska, it rejects the heavy-handed decisions made against our State in recent years, and it puts our policies for the Arctic OCS on a better track.

First, it repeals President Obama's so-called 12(a) withdrawal of nearly all of the offshore Arctic. This is a simple necessity, before leasing can occur. It is not a statement about the President's current legal authority to amend, modify, or revoke a withdrawal made under section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. I believe our new President has all the authority he needs to revoke the Alaska withdrawals, and I hope he will do just that. If he does, precedent will be on his side. In the meantime, our legislation makes clear the position of Alaska, which is that we do not support the withdrawal and want it gone by any possible legal means.

Next, our bill would create a new nearshore Beaufort Planning Area. The State of Alaska currently conducts annual lease sales in the area from zero to 3 miles offshore. The establishment of a separate planning area in the adjacent nearshore zone will provide a real, near-term opportunity to provide vital throughput into the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, known as TAPS, because of its proximity to existing infrastructure. Projects in this area are easier, faster, and less expensive.

Our bill would also provide for additional lease sales in the Nearshore Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet Planning Areas. By lifting the withdrawals in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, those areas would be eligible for leasing in the next Five-Year OCS Leasing Program or a supplement to our current program. Frequent and predictable lease sales are needed to create stability and certainty for investors, Alaska, and the United States.

It is also important that Alaska and Alaskans receive fair compensation for any exploration, development, and production that occurs in the Arctic OCS. Under current law, no matter how much energy we provide for the rest of the Nation, Alaska will receive none of the revenues. That arrangement is widely recognized as unfair, and so my bill devotes a reasonable share of the revenues that will only be generated as a result of this bill, and as a result of the waters that are only part of the United States by virtue of Alaska, with our State.

We have divided revenue sharing into two time periods, from 2017 to 2027 and from 2027 onwards, to reflect our differing needs during the exploration, development, and production phases. During the initial 10-year period, our bill proposes that 7.5 percent of the revenues be shared with the State and 7.5 percent of revenues be divided between coastal political subdivisions. The division between coastal political subdivisions is based on distance from the lease tracts, with 90 percent of the funds going to areas within 200 miles and 10 percent reserved for coastal political subdivisions that are beyond 200 miles but determined by the State of Alaska to be staging areas.

In addition, our bill would allocate 2.5 percent of the revenues it generates to fund competitive grants for workforce development in support of OCS development, 2.5 percent to fund the North Slope Science Initiative, 2.5 percent to the Secretary of the Interior to support offshore development and the establishment of pipeline rights-of-way on Federal land associated with Beaufort and Chukchi development, and 2.5 percent to the Tribal Resilience Program established by the act. The remaining 75 percent would go to the U.S. Treasury, to help pay down our national debt.

Following the initial 10-year period, we propose to divide the revenues slightly differently, with 50 percent going to the Treasury, 30 percent to the State, 7.5 percent to coastal political subdivisions, and 12.5 percent to the Tribal Resilience Program established by the act. These divisions do not apply to what is known as the 8(g) zone, such as the Nearshore Beaufort, where Alaska currently receives 27 percent of revenues.

The Tribal Resilience Program established by our bill, which is national in scope, would provide grants for a number of critical purposes. These funds could be used to relocate villages or

communities experiencing or susceptible to coastal or river erosion, to construct infrastructure to support emergency evacuations, to restore or repair infrastructure damaged by melting permafrost or coastal or river erosion, to install and manage energy systems that reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, and to construct and maintain social or cultural infrastructure that supports resilient communities.

The OPENS Alaska Act will allow our home State to produce more of its vast offshore energy resources, which is a priority for the vast majority of Alaskans. It will help us create good jobs, generate billions of dollars in new revenues, and ensure a stable footing for our State for generations to come. I urge the Senate to recognize the improvements this bill makes to our current policies and to join Senator SULLIVAN and I in supporting its passage in this Congress.

102ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, last Thursday I had the honor of joining my friends from the Armenian National Committee of Rhode Island in my hometown of Cranston, RI, to raise the flag of Armenia in remembrance of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Over a century ago, the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian community leaders and intellectuals, beginning an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre.

By 1923, an estimated 1 and a half million Armenians were killed, and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, throughout the world.

The survivors of the Armenian genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve and went on to greatly contribute to the lands in which they found new homes and communities, including the United States.

This genocide has been denied for far too long. That is why I have joined with several of my colleagues on resolutions over the years to encourage the U.S. to officially recognize the Armenian genocide.

But as we remember our history, we must also look to the present and to our future.

Recent efforts to bring Azerbaijan to the negotiating table have injected new momentum into the push for a lasting agreement in Nagorno Karabakh. It is critical that the United States, along with our regional partners, continue to press for a peaceful resolution to the conflict that respects the rights of all stakeholders and allows for a more stable and prosperous future for Armenia.

As ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, I remain

committed to supporting efforts to provide assistance to Armenia to strengthen security, promote economic growth, and support democratic reforms and development.

We also must find a way to come together to recognize our past and to show our unwavering support to those facing persecution today.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MASSICK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we often hear about the term “Greatest Generation” in describing the people who endured the Great Depression and persevered in World War II. Today I am proud to talk about one of those people who is a part of the Greatest Generation, my constituent John Massick.

John was born, quite fittingly, on Veteran’s Day in 1915. Last November, John celebrated his 101st birthday.

Mr. Massick enlisted in the Army in 1941, serving the H Company 378th Infantry Division. During his time in the Army, John was promoted to the rank of sergeant. John served in combat, including multiple battles in France during 1944. Mr. Massick’s service concluded upon his honorable discharge in 1945. He earned several decorations in the line of duty, earning the Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Service Ribbon, two Bronze Stars, and others.

After John’s discharge from duty, he returned home to Davenport, IA, where he still lives. John and his late wife, Velma, raised two boys.

Our country can’t thank Mr. Massick enough for his service. We will never truly be able to repay the debt owed to those who put their lives on the line in defense of freedom, not just for Americans but for those around the world. While I may not ever be able to thank Mr. Massick enough for his service, I do hope that shedding light on his incredible service may serve as a symbol of this body’s gratitude.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL SCOTT JACKSON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to thank COL Scott Jackson for his exemplary service and outstanding leadership as the chief of the Army’s Senate Liaison Division. During his tenure with the Office of the Chief Legislation Liaison, Scott was able to bring more than 24 years of experience in various leadership and staff positions to provide superior support to the work of the U.S. Senate. Additionally, I congratulate Scott on his recent selection to command the Army’s first Security Force Assistance Brigade at Fort Benning, GA.

In support of the global war on terror, Scott has deployed to Iraq three times, for a cumulative 41 months. In 2003, he served as the lead operational planner for the First Cavalry Division, writing the initial counterinsurgency campaign plan for Baghdad; subsequently assigned as the executive officer for 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry Regi-

ment and participated in its assault into Najaf, Iraq, August 2004, and Fallujah, Iraq, November 2004. In 2006–2008, he served as the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, First Cavalry Division, deputy brigade commander with duty as the deputy team leader, Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team, where he was the governance team leader and senior coalition adviser to the governor of Diyala, providing daily coaching, mentorship, and liaison to the provincial governor.

In April 2008, Scott assumed command of 1st Battalion 5th Cavalry Regiment and deployed his battalion in January 2009, assuming responsibility for coalition operations in the Baghdad districts of Adamiyah, Rusafa, and Taji. During this deployment, his battalion executed the coalition withdrawal from the cities and transition of responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces.

Following command, Scott was selected to be the assistant chief of staff, G3, Operations and Plans, for the First Cavalry Division and subsequently selected as an Army War College fellow at the MIT Lincoln Laboratory. While at Lincoln Laboratory, Scott focused his research on how technology enables the application of strategy, producing an original research project entitled, “An Operational Design Concept for Wide Area Persistent Biometric Surveillance.”

Following the War College, Scott served as the 3rd Infantry Division, Rear chief of staff, while the headquarters was deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He then went on to assume command of the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, SPARTANS, at Fort Stewart, GA, from 2013 to 2015.

Scott’s humble character rarely does justice to his accomplishments and accolades. However, he does speak very proudly of his wife, Valerie, and their sons, Benjamin and William. Military families are true testaments of both strength and pride. They are constantly challenged by deployments, changes in duty stations, and uncertainties. These hurdles create resiliency that the Jackson family patriotically embodies. Scott’s family are his pride and joy and will equally be missed by everyone they have inspired during their time here.

While we will miss having Scott’s support and counsel here in the Senate, I know that he will be moving on to greater things. I want to again thank Scott and his family for their service to our great Nation and congratulate him for his selection to command the Army’s newest brigade at Fort Benning.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE L’AMBIANCE PLAZA COLLAPSE

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, yesterday was Sunday, April 23.

In Connecticut, April 23 is a solemn day. It is the day when we pause to remember and reflect upon the lives lost and the lives forever altered by one of the worst workplace disasters in Connecticut history, the collapse of the L’Ambiance Plaza construction site in Bridgeport.

On almost every April 23, I have stood with laborers, families, officials, and others at the L’Ambiance memorial park to recognize the heart-breaking loss. It is a somber, sobering moment.

On that day—30 years ago yesterday—workers were constructing a 16-story apartment building using a process known as the lift-slab method. This method allows floors to be built at the base of a building and then hoisted up, one by one, using hydraulic lifting technology. This process was at work at L’Ambiance Plaza when things went horribly wrong. Due to shortsightedness and failures by the building’s developers, the massive concrete slabs that formed several upper floors gave way, crushing the floors below like pancakes, all within seconds.

Twenty-eight workers lost their lives. Nearly 2 dozen others were seriously injured. Those who survived the collapse demonstrated tremendous bravery and unity in the days afterward as a massive rescue and recovery operation ensued. The techniques deployed in that operation were later put to use at the World Trade Center on 9/11.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, the lift-slab method of construction used in Bridgeport ended nationwide, thankfully. Still, however, the pain and grief continues for the families who lost loved ones.

Today, in recognition of this grave anniversary and in memory of the victims, I enter into the RECORD their names: Michael Addona, Augustus Allman, Glenn Canning, Mario Colello, Francesco D’Addona, William Daddona, Donald Emanuel, Vincent Figliomeni, Herbert Goeldner, Jr., Terrance Gruber, John Hughes, Joseph Lowe, John Magnoli, Rocco Mancini, Richard McGill, Mario Musso, Nicholas Nardella, John Page, Guiseppe Paternostro, Angelantonio Perugini, John Puskar, Jr., Anthony Rinaldi, Albert Ritz, Michael Russillo, Reginald Siewert, William Varga, Frank Visconti, and Scott Ward.

We must honor their lives—and the lives of many other American workers killed or injured in the workplace—by ensuring that employees are able to work at facilities that are safe and secure, free from needless dangers and hazards. We can achieve that realistic goal through strong regulations, meaningful oversight, and effective enforcement.

On this day, I pledge to continue fighting for workers and workplace safety. I pledge to fight against efforts to roll back safety rules and against efforts to hamper agencies tasked with enforcing those rules.