

that we like and not working with the collaborative process that has involved both Republicans and Democrats, both on the committee and off the committee, to bring a bill to the floor that enjoyed 65 votes in support until this afternoon. Politics is being played here—pure and simple, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

I object to the Senator's request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, who I know considers the efforts of the Commerce Committee as great, hard work, and I appreciate his hard work. As I mentioned, I did not support the bill as it came out of committee.

I know there are things we are trying to work on to keep this process moving. But I would say to my colleague, the small vessel discharge bill has been something that has been part of an exemption process related to this for a long time. It has been considered many times over. Our fishermen need the certainty of this.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

I have a bill at the desk related to the application of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and ask unanimous consent that, as in legislative session, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would simply say this is peeling out pieces of the bill that one Senator in this Chamber likes and basically telling every other Senator on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats who negotiated this, to go pound sand: We don't like the provisions that have been negotiated on both sides, very carefully, over months.

I might add, this bill has been introduced and dealt with at the committee level during five different Congresses—five different Congresses. This year, it has passed not once, but twice, out of the Senate Commerce Committee by a voice vote.

It seems to me, at least, that even after it came out of the committee, the fact that we negotiated this with the Senator from Washington and multiple Senators on the other side of the aisle, both on and off the committee, to come up with a balanced package that enjoyed broad bipartisan support—65 votes—until this afternoon, suggests to me this is purely politics being played with this legislation.

This is an important bill. This is the Coast Guard. This is VIDA. VIDA was referred to the Commerce Committee by the Parliamentarian. We have worked with the Commerce Committee; we have worked with the EPW

Committee; we have worked with the EPA. The EPA is supporting the solution. This is not the political-level EPA; these are the career folks at the EPA who support the solution we have come up with. Yet we run into these objections that are all of a sudden—all of a sudden—coming up out of thin air.

So, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I see my colleague from the Midwest is on the floor, and I am sure he has something to say about this. But I would just say to the chairman of the Commerce Committee: You are right. Years and years of discussion about ballast water has been a challenge.

The question tonight is whether we are going to hold up other legislation just to get that language or to push through a proposal that really doesn't give security for our waters not to be polluted or to be greatly impacted or to threaten the sea life and the opportunities for a vibrant waterway in many parts of the country.

All I am trying to do, as I have always tried to do, is be constructive in the process—both in the Commerce Committee with this issue and for the very issues that affect the Coast Guard and the Pacific Northwest.

I know this will not be the last time we hear about the fishing vessel issue. I am sure we will hear about it many times because it has been on the calendar. So we will continue this discussion, but I thank him for at least coming here tonight to discuss these issues. There are other issues that are being held up as hostage in this legislation, and they shouldn't be held hostage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank both Senator THUNE and Senator CANTWELL for their exchange back and forth. I especially appreciate Senator CANTWELL's work. I grew up an hour and a half away from Lake Erie and saw, in the 1960s, what that lake looked like. For 10 years, I lived in a home near Lake Erie, and I saw the improvements we made. This bill, unfortunately, with that amendment sets us back.

We need to keep invasive species out of Lake Erie, and we need to pass a Coast Guard bill. There is no reason we can't do both. I want to speak to that in a moment.

First, I want to speak on how vital Lake Erie is to my State. Fifty percent of the fish in all the Great Lakes consider Lake Erie their habitat. The water is critical to farming, clean energy development, industry, and regional economic competitiveness. From tourism in Catawba and Put-in-Bay, to fishing in Marblehead, to vacations and family reunions at Maumee Bay State Park, Lake Erie benefits our communities and creates jobs in Ohio.

For more than half a century—I am going back to when I was a kid in the 1960s and saw what Lake Erie looked like—keeping our lake healthy has been a constant struggle. Where I lived on Lake Erie, the lake was about 50 to 60 feet deep. Moving west toward Toledo, the lake is about 30 feet deep. Contrast that with Lake Superior, which is 600 feet deep, and you can see the challenge of keeping Lake Erie clean, and you can see the vulnerability of that lake. That is the reason for the algal blooms. That is the reason that Lake Erie has had the most difficult issues facing its aquatic life. Runoff that causes harmful algal blooms and invasive species are threats we battle every year.

That is why Senator PORTMAN and I came to this floor and fought back against the President's budget 2 years in a row when the President was going to cut close to \$300 million from the Great Lakes Initiative. Two years in a row, Senator PORTMAN and I fought back against it because we know that cleaning up Lake Erie is something we did in the sixties, but keeping Lake Erie clean is something we do in the seventies, eighties, nineties, into this century, and into this millennium.

The Great Lakes are home to more than 185 non-native species. By some estimates, invasive species cause \$5 billion in damages to the Great Lakes every single year. A provision that would make our fight against invasive species harder has been added to the bill to reauthorize our Coast Guard. That is why I voted no earlier today.

As much as I want Coast Guard reauthorization, my first responsibility, other than looking out for working families in Ohio every day, is to keep the greatest natural resource in the country clean—my part of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie, the part that borders Ohio.

This provision would make it easier for invasive species to enter our lakes, harm our drinking water, and threaten local jobs that depend on boating and fishing. Every year, I meet with the Lake Erie sea captains, boat captains. They talk about the beauty of the lake and the importance of the lake to their businesses and to all of us in Northern Ohio. This provision doesn't belong in the Coast Guard bill. The Senate did the right thing by blocking it.

Again I say I strongly support the Coast Guard reauthorization. I want to see it passed. I agree with Senator THUNE. I want it to be law. That is why it is critical that this provision be removed from the bill so Congress can move forward with supporting our Coast Guard without threatening the Great Lakes. Members of the Coast Guard surely think the same thing.

This provision would eliminate the ability of Great Lakes States, such as Ohio, to set separate water quality standards to keep out invasive species. Tankers and cargo ships carry something called ballast water with them to help with stability and smooth sailing.

When they load on more cargo, they let out some of the water, and it flows out into whatever body of water they happen to be in at that time.

Think about these ships. In some sense, they are luxury liners for invasive species. They might be picked up off the coast of Japan. They might be picked up in the Indian Ocean. They might be picked up in the South Atlantic Ocean. They end up coming down the Saint Lawrence Seaway carrying this water with invasive species from around the world, and they release them into Lake Erie or into Lake Ontario or Lake Michigan or Lake Superior or Lake Huron.

It may not sound like a big deal if a ship takes on water with zebra mussels in the Caspian Sea off the coast of Russia and lets them out in Lake Erie, but those little mussels do major damage to our lakes and our economy. Local governments and taxpayers end up paying the price. This affects the beauty of Lake Erie and the cleanliness of its water. That is so important. It affects the economy because it costs local taxpayers money to clean up from these invasive species. They clog up water intake pipes. They spike costs for local ratepayers. They make toxic algal blooms worse. When drinking water gets contaminated, the local water utility has to clean it up, and they pass on the cost. The fishing and tourism industries rely on Lake Erie and feel that pain.

As I said, I remember how polluted Lake Erie looked when I was growing up. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has made a real difference. We have made real progress cleaning up the lake's tributaries, from the Black River, to the Cuyahoga River, to the Ashtabula River, to the Grand River, to the Maumee River, the largest tributary feeding into any of the Great Lakes, draining 4 million acres west and south of Toledo. It has been a bipartisan success story.

The Great Lakes region contains 84 percent of North America's surface freshwater and provides drinking water to tens of millions of Americans. It generates billions in economic activity. Why would we risk that? Why would we risk that by voting for this bill? That is why Senator CANTWELL was right. We need to pass a Coast Guard bill. We need to keep invasive species out of Lake Erie. We can do both by stripping this provision from the bill right away and move it forward and pass it.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, when we think about climate change—

something we don't do much of in this body—we often think about rising global temperatures and heat waves, and we think of changing weather patterns, stronger storms, or sea level rise threatening coastal communities. We actually see these effects unfold across the United States and around the world as heat records fall, winters shrink, and waters creep ever higher along our coastlines.

We also see the economic consequences of climate change. Just last year, the United States suffered a record 16 separate billion-dollar weather disasters, adding up to well over \$300 billion in damages. Acidifying seawater has devastated shellfish harvests in the Pacific Northwest. Rhode Island fishermen struggle as their traditional catches move farther north and offshore. Insurers and bond rating agencies warn that coastal regions are becoming too risky to build homes and infrastructure.

Among those various hazards, there is another hazard: the effects of climate change on public health. The Rhode Island Department of Health has produced this guide for Rhode Islanders to help them understand the health risks they face from climate change and to better learn how to protect themselves from what are often new risks.

Perhaps the most obvious effect of climate change on public health is increased heat-related illness and mortality. This link has been well studied across the country, often cross-referencing temperature records and death certificates. Work has been done by a lot of places; one of them is Rhode Island's own Brown University.

Here is the Rhode Island Health Department report. Over the last century, Rhode Island's average temperature has already increased by more than 3 degrees Fahrenheit, and temperatures are expected to keep on climbing due to climate change. Currently, Rhode Island sees on average only about 10 days of 90-plus degree temperatures. Starting in the next decade and running through the end of the century, the number of days that the heat index will hit at least 90 degrees will rise to between 13 and 44 days each summer. That is as much as 6 weeks in a summer of heat in the nineties. That increase of hot summer days caused by climate change puts many Rhode Islanders at risk, particularly those who don't have air conditioning, either because they can't afford it or because, right now, they don't need it. Heat waves are the leading cause of extreme weather-related deaths in the United States, causing an average of more than 600 deaths a year and thousands more hospitalizations. Rhode Island, even though we are in the Northeast, is not spared, and with climate change, it will only get worse.

Hot days pose a health risk to many different groups of people, as shown here in Rhode Island's Department of Health report. Children, the elderly,

people who work outdoors, athletes, the disabled, pregnant women, and folks who are on medications that reduce their bodies' ability to dissipate heat are just some of the many people who are especially at risk from heat waves. Because of the nature of their responsibilities, emergency responders are particularly vulnerable.

When I visited Phoenix, AZ, I was told by their emergency response leadership that they are having to restructure the duty schedules to protect firefighters from being overcome, if they are out fighting fires or responding to an emergency in daytime temperatures, because they overheat. So you have to rotate them through much faster and add cooling and hydration teams to support the fire crews as they speed through their heightened rotations.

An ER doc from the Lifespan health system in Rhode Island visited my office and told another story about an older woman who was treated for a heat-related illness. She had just been sitting outside on a hot day, in the Sun, enjoying herself. Perhaps she didn't feel the need to hydrate herself. Perhaps some routine medication that she was on made her more susceptible, but she was not aware of how quickly she was overheating. When her husband returned home from work, he found her lethargic and unable to move, with a body temperature of 107 degrees.

Hotter temperatures are bad on their own because of the effects they have on people's bodies and because of the added deaths that they cause, but they also work to create more ozone. Ozone is dangerous. Ozone is dangerous for children. It is dangerous for the elderly. It is dangerous for anyone with asthma or other breathing-related difficulties. Again, from Rhode Island's health report, Rhode Island's asthma rates are 33 percent higher than national averages for adults and 40 percent higher for children. So asthma is pretty serious for us, and people go to the hospital for this.

This is not just an inconvenience. In Rhode Island, we have heard air quality alerts on morning drive-time radio. You are going in to work and listening to the radio, and the announcer is saying, "Kids, seniors, people with breathing difficulties, you need to stay indoors today." It is a sunny, perfect summer day, it seems. Ozone is not visible, but because it is there and because of what it does to lungs and to asthma, people in Rhode Island are told they can't go outdoors that day. That kind of bad day alert, because it is for ozone, is going to become more frequent as climate change warms up our climate and produces more ozone.

It works this way. Our air in Rhode Island is polluted, primarily, by midwestern powerplants. Out in the Midwest, they run the emissions up supertall smokestacks. The pollution is then injected up into the atmosphere and is carried away on prevailing winds. Guess what. It bakes in the Sun,