

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,

turns to ozone, and it lands on us—not them, us. It is their pollution, our lungs.

Thanks a bunch, guys.

Our air is also worsened by smoke from forest fires, even from as far away as Canada, and the warming climate, as the Presiding Officer knows, has created an extraordinary fire situation out West. Changing precipitation patterns have produced more fires, and that means more smoke in downwind States, and we are a downwind State.

The result of all of this is that Rhode Island's air quality receives only a C from the American Lung Association. This poor grade is largely because of ozone, most of which comes from out of State. We end up with grade C air because of, primarily, out-of-State pollutants. This is not just some minor inconvenience. Across the country, air pollution—much of it made worse by climate change—is responsible for a staggering 200,000 premature deaths each year.

Pollen is another problem. Shifting seasons produce a longer pollen season. Increased pollen levels, particularly with increased air pollution, kick in allergies, which takes us into another risk. The warmth of earlier springs and later falls also means that tick and mosquito season in Rhode Island lasts far longer than it used to, and that moves us to yet more health risks and diseases.

Rhode Island already has the fourth highest rate of Lyme disease in the country. We have over 900 cases a year, and as temperatures increase, we are likely to see the number of ticks in Rhode Island increase, which would be expected to lead to even more cases of Lyme disease. In States not too far north of us, the tick situation has gotten so out of control that they are actually seeing moose calves die off because they are so swarmed with ticks. I am sorry. I know this is a little bit gross, but calves are dying when their bodies can't support both their own metabolism and feeding the ticks that have crawled up onto them in the thousands—in some cases, over 10,000 ticks. So we have to be concerned about this not just for ourselves but for the wildlife around us.

Warmer temperatures also provide a longer breeding season for mosquitoes. More downpours—yet another result of climate change—result in more standing water, which is habitat for mosquito larvae. Rhode Island has been up 76 percent in extreme downpours since 1950. That is the largest increase in extreme precipitation events out of all 50 States. Of course, these little critters, the mosquitoes, carry the West Nile virus, the Eastern equine encephalitis, and other illnesses we didn't used to see in our State.

As if all of this were not bad enough, climate change is also worsening another natural hazard that threatens public health—harmful algae blooms. Algae naturally occur in lakes and oceans, but in certain conditions, algae

populations can explode. These blooms, they call them—blooms of algae—can slime waterways and overwhelm ecosystems, eating up nutrients, and they can deplete oxygen in the water and in the oceans so completely that no other life can exist, so that other creatures—fish—actually suffocate in the water. Algae are often, therefore, the reason behind massive fish kills.

Some kinds of algae even produce toxins. People can become sick from exposure to the contaminated, toxin-filled water and even from the air if you get enough surface turbulence and churning of waves that it aerates the toxins, and then it is inhaled. The toxins can get into our food chain. They end up in shellfish and seafood on our dinner plates. Depending on which toxin it is, the consequences for people, for pets, and for wildlife can range from rashes and skin irritation, to pretty severe neurological and gastrointestinal symptoms, to respiratory arrest, and even death.

In 2016, New England was hit for the first time by a Pseudo-nitzschia bloom—a kind of algae that produces a toxin, domoic acid, which caused large swaths of Narragansett Bay to be closed to shellfishing. The Providence Journal reported: “In the more than 15 years officials have tested for [domoic acid], Rhode Island . . . never had a bloom reaching dangerous levels.” In March of 2017, Rhode Island was forced, once again, to institute emergency shellfish closures in Narragansett Bay—stuff that did not used to happen before this—when algae produced dangerous levels of domoic acid.

This may seem funny to my western colleagues, but people make their living doing this stuff, so it is not funny to us in Rhode Island when climate change is warming our oceans and creating these risks. Harmful algae blooms have also been advised for ponds in Portsmouth, Cranston, Greenville, and Tiverton.

In all of these ways—from heat-related illnesses, to respiratory disease, to allergies, to tick- and mosquito-borne illnesses, to toxic algae blooms—climate change has serious and wide-ranging effects on public health. Rhode Island's Department of Health has done an excellent service with this report—in helping Rhode Islanders learn how to be aware and to protect themselves. It was supported, by the way, by a grant from the CDC, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in its Climate and Health Program. It was a small \$10 million program, but it helped this project's report come to fruition in Rhode Island. We appreciate it. It is a wise investment to help prepare Americans for unfamiliar diseases that are being driven into our neighborhoods by a change in climate.

As I conclude, I know that there are colleagues here who do not care to listen to environmental groups, but they might want to listen to the American Medical Association. The American Medical Association writes: “Scientific

surveys have shown clear evidence that our patients are facing adverse health effects associated with climate change.”

Colleagues might listen to the American Lung Association, which writes: “Climate change seriously threatens our wellness—especially our lung health.”

Perhaps colleagues might consider the opinion of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which writes: “Tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century.” They write that because here is the problem: “Climate change poses threats to human health, safety, and security, and children are at particularly high risk.”

We may disagree about a lot around here, but when the American Academy of Pediatrics is telling us that climate change poses serious threats to human health, safety, and security and that children are at particularly high risk, it is a very callous thing to pay no attention. It is time to wake up. Our constituents' health and well-being actually does hang in the balance, and this Rhode Island report shows it for our State at least.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for his leadership and his outspokenness—how he has shown the importance of the Senate actually doing its job on both climate change and campaign finance and how much they are related to each other because of the stranglehold the oil industry has on the Republican Party and the hundreds of millions of dollars they spend. Senator WHITEHOUSE has been on this floor well over 100 times to talk about that. The country certainly listens, and the country is, certainly, in the same place he is and a lot of us are. Unfortunately, the special interest groups in this town continue to control this Senate.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. President, right now, American manufacturers and American workers are not competing on a level playing field with foreign competitors. The Export-Import Bank is a vital tool for manufacturers in Ohio. In other States, it is helping them export Ohio products around the world. It is helping them compete in the global marketplace. Yet, for an unbelievable 3 years, the Export-Import Bank has been forced to stop most of its work.

I am joined on the floor today by Senator HEITKAMP of North Dakota, who will make the case, as I do, that it makes no sense that some special interest groups have stopped and some ideology way out in right field has stopped the Senate from doing its job with the Export-Import Bank.

Over these 3 years, 95 export credit agencies around the globe, including China's massive export credit agencies, have been aggressively helping foreign