

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 226 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Harris	Nelson
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Jones	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markay	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

NAYS—50

Alexander	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Capito	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Corker	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Isakson	Scott
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Kyl	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Tillis
Enzi	Lee	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Toomey
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Flake	Murkowski	Young

The resolution (S.J. Res. 63) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote with respect to the Clark nomination occur at 2:15 p.m. today.

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

RECESS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as if under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m., and was reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COTTON).

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jeffrey Bossert Clark, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Mitch McConnell, James Lankford, John Hoeven, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, David Perdue, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Lamar Alexander, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that Jeffrey Bossert Clark, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 227 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Gardner	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Capito	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Corker	Isakson	Sasse
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Crapo	Kyl	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Thune
Daines	Lee	Tillis
Enzi	Manchin	Toomey
Ernst	McCaskill	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young
Flake	Moran	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Jones	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Smith
Carper	King	Stabenow
Casey	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markay	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	

NOT VOTING—3

Heitkamp	Nelson	Wyden
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The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey Bossert Clark, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

S. 3021

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise to convey my strong support for the America's Water Infrastructure Act, which passed Congress earlier today.

With communities throughout Massachusetts and the country working to improve the quality of their drinking water, bracing for rising seas and more intense storms, and seeking to be more competitive in the global economy, this legislative package will provide welcome relief and support for critical infrastructure.

I have long focused on providing resources needed to improve the maritime linchpin of my State's economy: Boston Harbor. But this economic engine needs direct Federal funding to fire on all cylinders, especially as we transition to a new, supersized shipping era.

Two years ago, the Panama Canal completed an expansion project that allows bigger vessels, called post-Panamax ships, to pass through the canal. These ships, which are the length of aircraft carriers and can carry more than three times as much cargo as their competitors, are too large to dock at Boston Harbor today. That is why, in the 2014 Federal water resources bill, I fought to authorize \$216 million in Federal funding for the Boston Harbor improvement project, which will deepen the harbor to accommodate those post-Panamax ships. I am pleased that my provision dedicating an additional \$16 million to this crucial project was included in the 2016 water resources bill.

The Boston Harbor improvement project is projected to double the harbor's container volume, protect and grow 7,000 jobs, and generate \$4.6 billion in economic activity throughout the New England region. It is a simple formula: Larger ships mean more cargo, more cargo means more commerce, and more commerce means more jobs for Boston and the State of Massachusetts.

I am pleased that the Corps has to date allocated \$91 million of funding to this critical project thus far, but deepening the harbor alone does not ensure that the Port of Boston can accommodate these new, gargantuan giants of the seas. We must also deepen the berths, the area where the ships dock. That is why I am proud to secure a provision in this bill that will allow the port to construct more expansive berths, and I am pleased to help secure

a \$42 million Federal grant to expand these berths.

By no means is Boston Harbor the only coastal gem in Massachusetts. In 2020, we will be celebrating the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the *Mayflower* and the settlement at Plymouth, but the celebration won't be complete if the ships can't get into and out of Plymouth Harbor. Regrettably, Plymouth Harbor has filled up with so much sand that ships are having trouble navigating—including the centerpiece of the celebration, the newly restored *Mayflower II*. That is why I secured a provision in this bill requiring the Corps to dredge this important landmark for the 400th anniversary. Just a few months ago, I helped secure \$14.5 million needed to ensure that this hallmark of American history is swiftly deepened.

With this statutory requirement and funding, Plymouth Harbor will be able to host a great birthday party in 2020—one that Americans from all corners of the country and people from around the world are going to attend. But those Bay Staters living on Cape Cod will most likely experience a little traffic on the way to the event because Cape Cod is only accessible by two bridges, which span the Cape Cod Canal. If Cape Cod is the arm of Massachusetts, then these two bridges are the vital arteries delivering the island's lifeblood. The strength of those two bridges will determine the strength of the island's economy and health and well-being.

Regrettably, these two 80-year-old bridges, which are owned by the Army Corps, are structurally deficient. That is a problem for businesses that need an uninterrupted flow of commerce and residents who must have a safe means of evacuation in the event of an emergency. Imagine if there were an accident at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station or the equivalent of a Hurricane Maria. These two bridges are the only way for many Cape Cod residents to escape to safety.

I am proud that this bill includes my provision directing the Corps to replace these critical evacuation routes, helping preserve the very safety of island residents. In a time of emergency, Massachusetts residents shouldn't have to think twice about the best way to get their families to safety.

The bill also includes legislation that I have authored to help protect consumers from unjust and unreasonable increases in their electricity rates. Right now, if the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has a vacancy—as is currently the case—and deadlocks 2 to 2 on whether to improve a rate increase, the increase goes forward. To make matters worse, the public can't even challenge a decision in this circumstance. That is exactly what happened in New England in 2014, leading to a \$2 billion increase for our region's consumers.

My legislation would fix that by allowing the public to bring a challenge

when FERC deadlocks, as they can for every other FERC decision. In sports, a tie isn't a loss, and the Fair RATES Act will ensure that a tie at FERC won't mean consumers lose with higher electricity rates. We must ensure that ratepayers are protected from unjust and unreasonable increases in energy prices. The legislation will help return the power to the people when it comes to energy prices by providing an outlet for consumers to challenge rate increases.

I thank Senators MURKOWSKI and CANTWELL for working with me to move this legislation forward, and I thank my great partner in the House of Representatives, Congressman KENNEDY, for his tireless work to address this issue and to protect consumers.

I am pleased that this legislation contains several other key provisions that increase the funding caps for three coastal protection programs, allowing the towns of Salisbury, Newbury, and Sandwich to implement larger beach-nourishment projects—pumping sand onto the beach—to protect their communities; reevaluate the Muddy River environmental restoration project to pave the way for reauthorizing this crucial project; permit the town of Sandwich to use sand pumped from the Federal Cape Cod Canal that otherwise would be dumped in the ocean to fortify their town from rising seas; ensure that the Corps takes on all the costs to repair the town of Sandwich's beaches, which experience severe erosion due to the jetties at the mouth of Cape Cod Canal; and require the EPA to appoint liaisons to minority, Tribal, and low-income communities so these disenfranchised groups can have better access to the resources and tools provided by the Federal Government to improve the quality of our Nation's drinking water.

From fortifying our communities, to dealing with the present-day impacts of climate change, to eradicating the environmental contaminants of the 20th century from our water infrastructure, this legislation package will provide the funding and direction needed to help modernize the Commonwealth's water infrastructure.

I thank Chairman BARRASSO and Ranking Member CARPER for working with me on this important legislation. I was proud to vote in favor of America's Water Infrastructure Act today. It is something that I think is going to work very successfully for the State of Massachusetts. It is something that, in my opinion, is the quintessential example of how bipartisanship should, in fact, animate the legislative process in this body.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S.J. RES. 63

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, just a little bit ago, a few hours ago, we had a matter before the Senate relating to S.J. Res. 63. This was a resolution of disapproval, which would have worked to disapprove of the rule that was issued jointly by the Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services regarding these short-term, limited duration insurance plans.

I had hoped, actually, to have an opportunity to speak to this prior to the vote but was not able to. I want to take just a couple of minutes this afternoon to weigh in on this issue from an Alaskan perspective. I think there have been some suggestions that with this rule in place, those of us who care about protecting those with pre-existing conditions, somehow or another, are taking these protections away.

I have weighed this carefully. In fairness, I think some of the arguments that have been made are, perhaps, not quite as clear cut as would be suggested and, perhaps, certainly, in a State like mine, where we still have the highest healthcare costs in the country and some of the highest costs for coverage in the country.

I think Members here in the Senate know full well that while I have opposed many aspects of the Affordable Care Act, I have supported and have strongly supported certain parts of it as well. Again, one of those things that I feel very strongly about is the need to ensure that we protect those who have preexisting conditions. That is a debate that, I think, is ongoing in other places as well. Yet I want to make clear that, certainly, my vote this morning is in no way meant to erode or undermine where I am coming from when it comes to preexisting conditions.

Back to the situation that we face in Alaska, as I mentioned, we are the highest in terms of the cost of care and the highest in terms of the cost of coverage, and we are still one of those States that has but one insurer on the exchange in Alaska. So our options are, really, pretty limited. As I am speaking to individuals about what they are hoping for when it comes to coverage, they are looking for additional options, but they are looking for affordable options as well.

It is true—it is absolutely true—that these short-term plans do not offer as much or, certainly, may not offer as much in the way of coverage as those plans that are offered on the individual exchanges. I understand that, but I have had to come down on this issue on the side of more choice for consumers and more options being a good thing for consumers.

In Alaska, our population, as one knows, is relatively small. We have about 720,000 people in the whole State, but we are talking about 18,000 people, give or take, who are enrolled on the individual exchanges each year. The