

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING OUR NEW COLLEAGUES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we continue to welcome our new Senators-elect, who are in town this week for orientation meetings and votes on party leadership. Yesterday evening, the Democratic leader and I had the honor of toasting our future colleagues at our traditional bipartisan welcome dinner.

It is quite a distinguished group. Some of our new colleagues are talented legislators who will simply be relocating from the other side of the Capitol. Some are coming to the Senate as private citizens who have built successful careers outside the world of politics. Some have already served as statewide elected officials and are coming to Washington for the first time.

It is our pleasure to welcome these future Senators and congratulate all of them.

LEADERSHIP VOTES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, speaking of looking ahead, just a few hours ago our Republican conference came together and chose the leadership team that will serve for the 116th Congress.

Our Republican leadership team will feature faces both new and familiar. We are looking forward to earning our colleagues' trust and working as hard as we can to seize the opportunities that will lie before us this coming Congress.

It is my honor to have been asked by my colleagues to continue serving as leader. I can honestly say that not a day goes by when I am not humbled and honored by this opportunity to serve my colleagues, the institution of the Senate, and our incredible country in whatever measure I am capable.

I know my friend the Democratic leader feels much the same. I want to congratulate him on his election as leader once again. I look forward to working with him and his colleagues to move the ball and to make bipartisan progress for the American people.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on to the work that is currently before us: We voted yesterday to advance important legislation that will preserve our national security, ensure our readiness, and expand economic opportunity. The bill before us to reauthorize the Coast Guard funding will ensure that the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way every single day have access to the resources they need.

America calls on our Coast Guard to protect our ports, to protect our

coasts, to safeguard the shipping lanes that enable American commerce, to stem the tide of illegal drugs before they reach our shores, and to brave even the fiercest natural disasters that save American lives. They always answer the call. They are always ready. So it is our obligation as a Congress to keep the Coast Guard authorized and adequately resourced to do the job.

When we pass the legislation before us, we will do just that, and we will do even more because this bill also includes important reforms that will streamline needlessly complicated government regulations and help communities and small businesses harness the great resource that is America's waterways.

In my home State of Kentucky alone, we have 1,900-plus miles of navigable waterways. They support 13,000 jobs. This bill includes a major victory for those Kentuckians and for Americans in a number of other States.

The Vessel Incidental Discharge Act will unwind the confusing, redundant tangle of rules and regulations that States, the EPA, and the Coast Guard have all piled on to vessel owners and barge operators who are, frankly, just trying to make a living. With this legislation, that tangled mess will go away. It will be replaced by a single, efficient, and uniform standard, which the Coast Guard will enforce. It is a commonsense step, and it is something that has been thoroughly bipartisan.

This legislation passed the Commerce Committee on a voice vote. It has actually been reported out several different times, including when the Senate was controlled by Democrats. So I look forward to delivering these important measures for the Coast Guard, for Kentuckians, and for many more Americans when we pass this legislation later today.

NOMINATION OF MICHELLE BOWMAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we will also vote to advance the nomination of Michelle Bowman to serve on the Federal Reserve Board. Ms. Bowman brings experience as a community banker and as a banking regulator, currently serving as the State Banking Commissioner of Kansas. Her nomination comes before us in a year when the Senate has taken substantive legislative action on behalf of America's community banks and the communities they serve.

As we were reminded when we passed bipartisan reforms to Dodd-Frank a few months ago, smaller lenders provide more than 50 percent of small business loans and nearly 80 percent of agricultural loans nationwide. So it is as important now as ever that these institutions and their needs are represented on the Federal Reserve Board.

By any standard, Ms. Bowman is very well prepared to serve in a seat designated specifically for an expert on community banking. So I urge each of

my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm another of the President's well-qualified nominees for Federal service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the distinguished Democratic leader will be coming in soon to participate in leadership time, but until such time, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate on the Coast Guard bill for 5 minutes.

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

COAST GUARD REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer entered the Chamber and took the Chair, I was explaining to Members what the Coast Guard does—all the various vital activities they do to provide for the safety and security of Americans. Let me tell my colleagues just a few things this bill does. The distinguished majority leader was discussing this in his remarks also.

This bill that we are about to vote on takes big steps in recapitalizing our vessel fleet. I am proud to say that shipbuilders across the country, including in my State of Mississippi, are rebuilding our fleet. In Mississippi, we have built six national security cutters that are currently operational. The seventh and eighth ships have been built and are scheduled to be commissioned next year. These ships are some of the most technologically advanced vessels in the world.

The Coast Guard needs more modern national security cutters to combat transnational organized crime. These cutters make up the backbone of this effort, and, as we know, the criminals who undermine our borders and our Nation's social and political development are not contained by borders.

In addition, the Coast Guard bill recognizes the importance of national security cutters by authorizing multiyear contracts that will lead to procurement of a 10th, 11th, and 12th vessel. So we are making great progress there. These cutters are highly advanced patrol boats that could deploy independently for a number of missions along our ports, waterways, and coasts.

In addition, the bill does not overlook the Coast Guard's shoreline infrastructure, instead authorizing more than \$170 million for these facilities. This includes steps to repair and replace its aging rotary-wing aircraft.

Other provisions in the bill would clarify the Coast Guard's role in national security as a member of our Armed Forces, and they are and should be clarified as a member of the Armed Forces; establish a land-based, unmanned aircraft system program; help modernize the Coast Guard's healthcare system; enable block-buy contracts for ship acquisition; and conduct an advanced maintenance program for the Polar Star, our only

heavy polar icebreaker. Our sole icebreaker is now 42 years old and 12 years past its intended service life. So this will allow us to pay more attention to the Arctic.

Finally, let me stress to my colleagues and once again express appreciation to the leadership of the committee that we are finally passing the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, known as VIDA, which provides much needed relief to our commercial vessel industry. This relief would come through a single, science-based national standard for ballast water discharge and other vessel discharges. These discharges must take place; it is just a question of what the regulation is and how we take care of our economy and our environment.

Currently, commercial vessel owners are obligated to meet standards from the Coast Guard, standards from the EPA, and standards from 25 individual States. This can mean spending millions of dollars to install equipment, which may or may not ensure compliance with these regulations. Such burdens have put a strain on U.S. businesses and U.S. commerce. This bill will give us one nationwide standard, lifting the burden off of these businesses and lifting the burden off of people who would like to actually get out there and create more jobs instead of comply with a myriad of various regulations.

Under VIDA, the Coast Guard would be the lead agency to enforce these regulations, but it will also do this in consultation with EPA. In other words, VIDA uses the expertise of both of these excellent agencies, the Coast Guard and the EPA, and leverages the expertise of both agencies. It is quite an achievement.

I see my friend from Florida here. He may want me to yield on this question. But there has been a bipartisan effort, and the bipartisan vote yesterday was quite gratifying.

Again, thank you to Chairman THUNE, thank you to Senator SULLIVAN, and thank you to my friends on the other side of the aisle for making this bipartisan, long-range effort finally come to fruition this afternoon.

Mr. NELSON. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. WICKER. I would be delighted to yield to my friend.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, this is an example of where the Senate can get something done. There were many twists and turns to the Coast Guard bill, but at the end of the day, we all came together in a bipartisan way to get it done, and I thank the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, reclaiming my time, I thank the Senator from Florida for making those points and for his leadership as ranking member of the Commerce Committee. In this regard, I suggest the vote coming up soon will be probably as lopsided as the one on cloture yesterday. That is a good sign. It took us a while to get there, I

would say to my friend from Florida, but we are there now, and it is a great achievement for our economy, for the environment, and for the Coast Guard as a whole.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to express my opposition to S. 140, the Coast Guard reauthorization bill, because it prevents State regulation of the discharge of pollutants from vessels engaged in maritime commerce and because it exempts one certain vessel from current fire safety standards.

First, the bill includes a provision, known as the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, which would dictate how ballast water from ships is regulated in the United States. While I appreciate the hard work of the Senate Committees on Commerce, Science and Transportation and Environment and Public Works and their commitment to bipartisan negotiation on this issue, I unfortunately cannot support a bill that includes the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, even as currently modified. The problem is that this provision preempts Maryland's authority to set standards on the discharge of ballast water from ships that are more protective of the Chesapeake Bay than the standards set by the Federal Government.

Ballast water can contain invasive species like blue catfish and zebra mussels, among a host of others, that threaten the delicate balance of life in the bay. The Chesapeake Bay is the Nation's largest estuary. It generates \$1 trillion in economic benefit to the watershed region. The shoreline of the Chesapeake and its tidal tributaries stretches for over 2,000 miles. More than 100,000 streams and rivers and thousands of acres of wetlands provide the freshwater that flows into the Chesapeake Bay. If we do not protect the health of this incredible network of waters, we cannot hope to restore the Chesapeake Bay to its former glory.

Fortunately, the health of the bay is improving. According to the latest report card from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, the bay earned a C grade, signifying the first time that score is meaningfully trending in the right direction and that restoration efforts are beginning to have an enduring impact.

Additionally, the effort to clean up and restore the bay creates new job and economic growth opportunities around the bay States. For example, the watermen that depend on healthy populations of blue crab, oysters, menhaden, and rockfish—for striped bass—depend on those species not being out-competed for food or eaten by invasive species. People throughout the watershed depend on the bay for their livelihoods and for recreation.

Though we in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are making great strides in improving the quality of the Chesapeake Bay, we still have a long way to go. The last thing the bay and the people who depend on it need now is the additional stress of invasive species.

Furthermore, this bill includes a provision that would exempt one vessel from current fire safety standards, another provision by which I cannot abide.

A series of fires aboard international passenger ships in the early 1960s prompted the U.S. to enact the Safety of Life at Sea Act, SOLAS, which mandated that "no passenger vessel of the United States shall be granted a certificate of inspection [. . .] unless the vessel is constructed of fire-retardant materials." Despite the enactment of the SOLAS standards and the opposition of the U.S. Coast Guard, Congress has repeatedly exempted one ship, the *Delta Queen*, from the SOLAS fire safety standards.

Current law requires passenger vessels with overnight accommodations for 50 or more passengers to be constructed of fire-retardant materials, unless an exemption is made, but in the case of the *Delta Queen*, the U.S. Coast Guard has consistently opposed legislation to provide the *Delta Queen* an exemption to remain in service as an overnight passenger cruise vessel.

A Coast Guard special inspection report on the *Delta Queen* in 2008 found "an unnecessary and unacceptable accumulation of combustible fire load." In a January 8, 2016, letter to Senator BILL NELSON, the Coast Guard's then Assistant Secretary of Legislative Affairs wrote "the Department of Homeland Security is resigned to oppose continuously any legislation that would provide any form of statutory relief for the steamer *Delta Queen*."

Section 834 of this bill is contrary to public safety. It is contrary to the Safety of Life at Sea Act regulations which have been in full force in the U.S. since 1966, and it is contrary to the guidance of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The *Delta Queen* is an old ship made of wood. The boilers are original and open to the wood superstructure. There are no structural boundaries to contain a fire and only one means of egress.

I understand that supporters of this provision are concerned about the historic preservation of this ship and the economic opportunities that operation of the ship could bring to its homeport, but we should be concerned first and foremost with the safety of the people who will work on the ship and vacation on the ship. They can have the same opportunities and experiences on a ship that is compliant with the reasonable safety standards that have been in place in this country for more than 50 years.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today the Senate will complete work on a new 2-year authorization for the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Maritime Commission, and on regulations related to vessel discharges and other matters.

This bill is intended to give our Coast Guard the certainty it needs to operate in a constantly changing environment, and I appreciate the significant bipartisan work that has gone into the legislation we vote on today. Maryland is

home to the Coast Guard yard in Curtis Bay, our Nation's facility for maintaining and repairing the Coast Guard fleet, and I am proud of the work they do every day to support the security of our Nation and ships at sea. However, I remain concerned with title IV of this bill, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, VIDA, which would regulate ballast water discharge from ships in the United States. While these provisions have improved since they were first brought to the floor, the title continues to preempt State authority on ballast water discharge from ships. The State of Maryland currently has a more protective standard that is critical to maintaining a healthy Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is enormous: 64,000 square miles, part of six States and the entire District of Columbia, and almost 18 million people.

The Chesapeake Bay is one of Maryland's crown jewels, and it is of upmost importance to me that we continue the progress in cleaning up the bay. The Chesapeake Bay is a delicate ecosystem that is particularly sensitive to invasive species that can be spread through ballast water discharge. These invasive species could compete with our native species in the bay like blue crab, oysters, and striped bass.

There are many provisions of this bill that I will support through the conference process, including additional funding for operating expenses and acquisition funding and \$30 million for environmental compliance and restoration. The Coast Guard yard in Curtis Bay is currently on EPA's National Priorities List and the Coast Guard's priority list and is eligible for this funding.

The bill also includes a provision that allows for incentive payments to go to Curtis Bay's wage-grade employees who demonstrate improvements in performance or delivery during a project.

I hope to gain clarity on section 310 of the bill, which claims to provide more flexibility to choose where ship alterations or repairs can occur. I am concerned that this provision may have unintended consequences in certain situations, particularly with respect to the Coast Guard yard. As this bill moves to conference and eventually the President, I hope to work with my colleagues to clear up this provision and will continue to advocate for the rights of States like Maryland to protect their clean water.

I will vote no today, but believe that we can continue to improve this bill in the conference process. I look forward to working with my colleagues to do so.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

AMENDING THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE WATER RIGHTS QUANTIFICATION ACT OF 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany S. 140, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany S. 140, a bill to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the bill, with McConnell (for Thune) modified amendment No. 4054, in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 140, with amendment No. 4054, as modified.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 241 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Alexander	Gardner	Murray
Baldwin	Graham	Nelson
Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Bennet	Hassan	Perdue
Blumenthal	Hatch	Peters
Blunt	Heinrich	Portman
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Brown	Hirono	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Carper	Isakson	Schatz
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Jones	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Cooms	Kennedy	Smith
Corker	King	Stabenow
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Kyl	Tester
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Leahy	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	McConnell	Whitehouse
Enzi	Menendez	Wicker
Ernst	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	
Flake	Murphy	

NAYS—6

Cardin	Harris	Schumer
Gillibrand	Sanders	Van Hollen

The motion was agreed to.

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 Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2006.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Rounds, Jon Kyl, Tom Cotton, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, David Perdue, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, Lindsey Graham, Jerry Moran.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2006, 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 Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 63, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 242 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Alexander	Flake	Moran
Barrasso	Gardner	Murkowski
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Boozman	Hassan	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heitkamp	Roberts
Carper	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Coons	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shaheen
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Jones	Sullivan
Crapo	Kaine	Tester
Cruz	Kennedy	Thune
Daines	Kyl	Tillis
Donnelly	Lankford	Toomey
Enzi	Lee	Warner
Ernst	Manchin	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young

NAYS—36

Baldwin	Harris	Paul
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Udall
Duckworth	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Nelson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 63, the nays are 36.