

“key to our way of life,” but renewable energy “screws up the whole physics of the grid.” He also portrayed industry lawsuits with environmental groups as a “constant battle between liberty and tyranny.”

While at the Department of Energy, Mr. McNamee was a key player in the agency’s failed attempt to bail out the coal industry and upend wholesale energy markets.

Furthermore, I am very concerned that Mr. McNamee will take us backwards in the fight to combat climate change. Just recently, the Trump administration tried to bury the release of the Fourth National Climate Assessment report and its alarming statistics on the realities of climate change. The report found that annual average temperatures in the United States are projected to continue to increase in the coming decades and that human health and safety, our quality of life, and the rate of economic growth in communities across the U.S. are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In my home State of Maryland, the report found that one of Maryland’s crown jewels, the Chesapeake Bay, will experience stronger and more frequent storms, an increase in heavy precipitation events, increasing bay water temperatures, and a rise in sea level.

FERC’s independence is critical to its mission, and Mr. McNamee, if confirmed, would be a significant departure from that.

His history as being a supporter of the fossil fuel industry, an opponent of clean energy, and an opponent of progress to combat climate change are alarming. I oppose his nomination to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC.

Mr. LANKFORD. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Under the previous order, all postclosure time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Bernard L. McNamee, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2020?

Mr. RISCH. 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 called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 254 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

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

NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 143.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 143) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2019, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint resolution be considered read a third time.

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

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. McCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 143) was passed.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kathleen Laura Kraninger, of Ohio, to be Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection for a term of five years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, on November 23 of this year, we had release of the Fourth National Climate Assessment, which is required to be released under the Global Change Research Act that was passed by Congress in 1990.

This climate assessment is put together by 300 experts, guided by a 60-member Federal advisory committee, including 13 Federal Agencies. They rely heavily on the panel from the National Academy of Sciences. My point is, this is the best scientific information we have as to the risks of climate change. The Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume 2, was issued on November 23, 2018.

Its conclusions should be sobering to all of us; that humans are responsible for the current climate crisis and that we must take responsibility to minimize future destruction.

Four years earlier, the first volume of the Fourth National Climate Assessment was issued, and its prediction was that we would see increased instances of flooding, wildfires, and higher temperatures. Unfortunately, that has come to pass, as we have experienced this year and in the last several years an unusually large number of flooding episodes, wildfires that we have just experienced, and higher temperatures.

The findings make two critical assertions in regard to how it will affect our lifestyle. First, it said climate change is a growing risk to the danger of human health. By human health danger, you can look at the direct impact of climate change—those whose lives have been forever changed as a result of storms or as a result of flooding or as a result of wildfires or as a result of sea level rising. We know many people have lost their lives, and their lives have been compromised as a result of the reality of the new current weather conditions.

It also affects the safe supply of water—clean drinking water is very much impacted by what is happening with climate change—and sea level rises and the spread of diseases, from people who are suffering from asthma to the spread of West Nile disease, and

many other examples of how climate change is accelerating those types of conditions which have a major impact on human health.

The report then indicated that, yes, it directly affects the health of the people of our country and the globe, but it also has a direct economic impact. The damage affects, in a negative way, the rate of our economic growth.

I will give you many examples why. Take a look at infrastructure damage. We recognize that the bridges and the highways in this country—our infrastructure—were not designed and constructed with the realities of the weather conditions we are now experiencing. As a result of much heavier damage that we have to deal with, adaptations and changes, that affects the resources we have to devote to the new realities of our infrastructure.

Coastal communities have been put at direct risk. First of all, I have seen coastal communities shrink because of the loss of shoreline. We know the risk factor for coastal communities affects their economic growth. They have to deal with the cost of adaptation. That devotes revenues that could be used for other purposes.

In addition, we have seen the economic challenges to agriculture and the sustainability of agriculture. In many parts of the world, the realities of climate change have taken away their traditional livelihoods and sustainability of agricultural products.

We are also seeing a direct impact the climate is having on tourism, which, for many communities, is a large part of their economic activity.

The report estimates that the gross domestic product of this country could be adversely affected by as much as 10 percent. That is a major hit on our economic progress.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a report in October 2018. That report indicated that by 2030, the economic damage as a result of climate change could reach \$54 trillion—that is trillion with a “t.” This is an economic crisis we must address. We cannot ignore it. We must deal with it.

The good news is, mitigation and adaptation policies work. They work. We can mitigate the causes of climate change by our activities here on Earth. We can adapt to some of the realities of the new weather conditions, but we are not doing it at a scale necessary today to avoid substantial damage to human health and our economy. We have to step up our game dramatically.

It disproportionately impacts the poor. The poor don’t have the resources in order to adapt or move or to deal as other people have. They are trapped in more vulnerable communities, and they suffer more as a result of it.

We could talk about every one of our States that are impacted by this. In my State of Maryland, I have taken the floor to explain that Ellicott City—a wonderful community in Howard County, MD, that has what I call Main

Street, which reminds you of Main Street America—has had two 1,000-year floods in 20 months. These floods are unprecedented because normally the flooding conditions are as a result of the rising of the river next to Ellicott City, but these were floods caused by the increased amount of rainfall in a short period of time that could not be handled in its runoff, causing extreme damage. They have had two 1,000-year floods in 20 months.

We have flooding in Annapolis, which should be a concern to not only the people of Maryland but to our Nation because of the importance that Annapolis plays to our national security because of the Naval Academy. The same could be said in Virginia, where there is a significant challenge to our future military facilities as a result of their coastal locations. In Baltimore City, we have had 25 heat-related deaths in 2018. That is three times more than we saw in 2017.

There is no question that this affects Maryland, that it affects every State in this Nation. This is an American issue and a global issue.

There is a path forward. There is a path forward that is not terribly difficult for us to embrace because it will not only help us deal with climate change and the environment, but it will mean a better economic future for us, and it is using energy sources that are plentiful, meaning that there is a security advantage by doing the right thing for our environment and our economy.

Green energy, conservation efficiencies, all are activities that can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions. It can mitigate the damage. It will create more jobs.

With green energy, there are more jobs than there are in the fossil fuel industry. It is less dependent. Fossil fuel is good for our national security, since there is an abundance of the green energy sources here in America and with our allies around the world.

In my own State, we have taken actions to reduce carbon emissions. We have been effective in doing that, and it has been a plus for our economy.

What we need is U.S. leadership. We saw that in 2015. I was proud to be part of a 10-Member Senate delegation that went to Paris as we entered into a global agreement to deal with our responsibilities to change the trajectory for climate change.

The U.S. role in Paris was critical to get all the nations of the world together with realistic strategies to reduce our carbon emissions. I say that knowing full well that COP24 is meeting, as we are meeting here, in Poland. This is a convention whose attention is going to be to finalize the Paris Agreement Work Program—a rule book of guidelines, procedures, and rules needed to turn the Paris Agreement into a working system. Every country made commitments in Paris. We now need to make sure that those commitments are carried out.

Shortly before the convening of COP24 in Poland, the G20 met in our hemisphere, as I think everyone is familiar with—these are the economic powers of the world, all the major economies of the world—and they reaffirmed their commitment to Paris. The world economic powers did that.

Now, what is happening in Poland and what happened in G20—every country participated, except one. The G20 was actually G19 and their commitment to implement the powers agreement—the United States, through the Trump administration, did not join. Of course, in Poland right now, the United States is not an active participant, since President Trump announced that we would withdraw from the convention on climate change known as COP. That is not leadership. The world will always be better off with America in leadership, and we are missing that leadership.

So my plea is that we need to step up. This should not be a partisan issue. Climate change should not be a partisan issue. It is a human rights issue; it is a human issue; it is a health issue; it is an economic issue. We need to restore the U.S. leadership on this matter. We can do that through our Tax Code. We can do that through renewable energy legislation, by increasing the CAFE standards, by dealing with clean air standards. If U.S. leadership is not going to come from the White House, let the U.S. Senate exercise that leadership and show the international community that we understand our responsibility and the risk factors to our health and to the economy.

The National Climate Assessment and the activities of G20 and COP24 should motivate us to action on behalf of the health and welfare of the American community and our global neighbors. I urge our colleagues to get engaged in leadership on this issue.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana (Mr. SASSE).

TRIBUTE TO HANNAH NIESKENS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the honor of recognizing Hannah Nieskens of Jefferson County for her tremendous service to Montana veterans and her great impact on Montana’s educational system.

Hannah grew up spending time in Montana with her family and then was awarded the Presidential Scholarship to attend Montana State University in Bozeman. After graduating with honors from MSU, Hannah began her career of education in the Billings School District.

During her 4 years in Billings, she met her now-husband Kelly, who served in the Army, and they fell in love. Hannah and Kelly now have three children—two daughters, Charity and Hope, and their adopted son Joshua. Joshua is currently serving overseas in the Air Force.

Hannah has a distinguished career in education. She has served her community as a teacher in Billings, the dean