

huge cyclonic activity just reported last week in parts of Africa. That is causing disruption for families, death, and a host of problems that are causing not particularly stable governments to become less stable.

This is an issue that we must address. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in order to provide the resources and the direction to do that.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Oregon.

CLIMATE CHANGE

MR. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I understand that this week it is the intention of the majority leader to put on the floor of this Chamber a resolution that is related to taking on the enormous challenge of climate chaos. If I just heard that announced, I would say “well done” because it is way past time for us to wrestle with this calamity affecting all of our States and all countries around the globe.

Temperatures across the planet are going up. All kinds of impacts are being felt. So if the majority leader said, “Yes, we are going to rise to our responsibilities and have a serious debate on the floor; we are going to take a bill to committee; we are going to wrestle with how we in America cannot only take on carbon pollution here but show the type of leadership that mobilizes countries around the world and mobilizes leadership around the world,” well, then, I would say “well done.”

But, unfortunately, that is not what is about to happen. The majority leader says he doesn’t want to talk about climate. So he wants to put a resolution on the floor with no debate in the committee, no serious effort to develop a series of policies to take on this calamity, and just to create a farce out of this Chamber. This Chamber, which I love, is being used in this horrific fashion, taking very serious issues that threaten our economy and threaten our natural resources and making fun of them and choosing to do nothing.

It was Henry David Thoreau who said: “What is the use of a house if you haven’t got a tolerable planet to put it on?” But I am sure that when Henry David Thoreau spoke he had no inkling of the challenges we would be facing here in the year 2019.

The challenge in this year of 2019 is that in a single human lifetime the carbon dioxide in the air has gone up 30 percent—trapping enormous quantities of heat, raising the temperature of our oceans, where 90 percent of the heat is trapped, changing the weather that we experience in all kinds of ways, and driving a huge increase in forest fires in our country. If that alone were the impact, that would be enough to take action. In fact, if we just look at that one issue of forest fires, looking at the Fourth National Climate Assessment, it is estimated that the change in cli-

mate has doubled the acres burned by forest fires—just that one issue.

In my home State of Oregon, we really see this. In the Northwest there is a beautiful forest. The landscape, particularly west of the Cascades, has the most incredible old-growth forest and timber stands you would ever see, and it is burning at an unprecedented rate.

Why is that? Well, for one, we have summers that are hotter and dryer than before. That hot, dry period extends for about 2 months longer than before. Then, we have storms that are more likely to have lightning strikes than before. Combine this very dry forest with lightning strikes, and you have a huge problem on your hands. It isn’t just some remote forest that is burning. It is our natural resources, our ecosystems, and our timber stands. It is also having an impact on the commerce of our cities and the recreational industry.

That is not the only impact that we see in my home State of Oregon. We also see that the acidification of the Pacific Ocean from carbon dioxide is starting to make it hard for shellfish to make shells. Most significantly, 10 years ago we discovered that the acidity of the Pacific Ocean was killing the newly born oysters as they tried to create a shell and to do so in more acidic water. We have to change the chemistry of the ocean water now. We have to buffer it in order to enable the oyster industry to survive. What kind of canary in the coal mine is that? What kind of warning is it that the shellfish is in trouble because the ocean is becoming too acidic?

You may say: Why does that have anything to do with carbon in the atmosphere? It has everything to do with carbon in the atmosphere, because the ocean waves absorb the carbon dioxide, it becomes carbonic acid, and that acid makes the ocean more acidic.

I stand on the beach in Oregon and look out at the Pacific Ocean. Of course, you can only look out at about 20 miles of the sea, but all you see is water. It is hard to imagine that you would have to go thousands of miles to hit another continent. Yet, that ocean, as vast as it is, has changed its chemistry in our lifetime, not just becoming more acidic but becoming warmer. In fact, we have a calamity ongoing right now off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington. The kelp is disappearing. With the kelp disappearing, that is a concern for every fisherman. The kelp forests provide a lot of shelter and food for a lot of species. How do we know what impact that will have on our fisheries, which are so important to our coastal economy?

We have the fact that the change in snowpack is affecting our winter sports. The lowered average snowpack just means warmer, smaller trout and salmon streams in the summer. People want to fish. They want healthy streams, not streams that are too tiny and too hot for the salmon and the trout. You see the impact we are hav-

ing on forests, farming, fishing, and on the cities from smoke and on human health as people inhale that smoke. It is not just an impact on the economy. It is an impact on our health and our children’s health. That is just in my State.

So I would ask my colleagues across the aisle, every one of them, to say: Do you know what? We have a responsibility to take on issues that are doing great damage.

That damage isn’t just wildfires. We are seeing more intense weather events across the country. This is in all kinds of places—severe weather storms, droughts, hail, tornadoes, and, probably most significantly, more powerful hurricanes, like Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Florence just last year in 2018. Of course we saw the trio of hurricanes in 2017.

You say: Are hurricanes connected to all of this? How can that be?

Hurricanes take their energy from the ocean. When the ocean is warmer, it creates a fiercer hurricane. It takes that energy, and it becomes winds that are moving faster and a hurricane that is larger and endures longer when it hits land.

It is estimated that extreme weather events cost Americans nearly a half trillion dollars over the last 3 years. In 2017 alone, between the fires and the hurricanes, damages were estimated at \$300 billion. That is real damage. That is real economic damage happening here in the United States of America. When talking about \$1 billion of damage, that is talking about a lot of families being set back a long way. We are talking about a lot of infrastructure being ripped up, and we are talking about lives lost.

Despite this enormous damage and despite lives lost, the majority leader wants to create a farce over an issue threatening our country and our planet? That is just wrong. It is way beyond wrong—to see the face of a calamity and to do nothing. Well, it could go with all kinds of adjectives—none of them complimentary, not a one.

We should be the opposite here, taking on the responsibility of addressing these issues that are having an impact—having an impact in the heartland, having an impact on our soy and corn crops, having an impact on the coasts, having an impact in the Southeast, with hurricanes, and the Northeast, with Lyme disease and spreading tick infestations, the loss of the moose, and the lobsters heading north along the ocean into Canada.

So we must not bury our heads in the sand. We cannot allow the political donations that are present now in our corrupted governmental system to deter us from doing the work we need to do. Yet that appears to be exactly what is happening. We have a broader responsibility here—a responsibility to our sons and daughters. We have a responsibility to our grandchildren and their sons and daughters and their grandchildren.

This contamination of our atmosphere cannot be easily undone. Carbon dioxide stays in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. So we have to prevent it from being put there in the first place. There is so much we can do together. There is so much we can do to say this challenge is real, to say we will work together as Americans to take this on and to help lead the world in ending this horrific damage that will persist for hundreds of years.

There is so much to do. We can create millions of good-paying jobs together for America and export products to the world instead of buying products from the world. We can make sure that as we do that and as we invest in an energy transformation, not only do we create millions of good-paying jobs, but we also make sure that rural America is not left behind, that our former fossil fuel communities are not left behind, and that our frontline urban communities that have so often been left behind are not left behind. We can make an economic renaissance that goes into every corner of our Nation where often economic improvements have not gone before.

These elements are the core elements of the Green New Deal. One is to face reality and together say: Yes, we have a big challenge in front of us of devastating consequences and growing consequences. Maybe it was a theory 20 years ago, but today it is a reality in every town across this country. It is a big calamity. We should say we will work together to take it on. That is the second basic principle, coming together, and then there is a surge of activity to develop alternatives and deploy alternatives to the use of fossil fuels.

The third piece of this puzzle is that in so doing, we will create millions of good-paying jobs. Isn't that what so many leaders run on? I certainly love the idea of good-paying jobs.

My dad, a union mechanic, was able to raise a family and be part of the great middle class of America and be

part of the American dream: buy a house, take the family camping on vacations, participate in having a 40-hour workweek, and get paid overtime if you had to work more. Yet that dream is further and further out of reach. Don't we want to create those better paying jobs in the process of renovating our energy economy?

Years ago, I undertook tearing the insides out of a house in the 1980s and then rebuilt that house. When you rebuild a house, there is plumbing, wiring, framing, sheetrock, windows, and roofing. I would buy a lot of stuff to renovate that house. That type of construction renovation puts a lot of people to work. If construction renovation puts people to work, think about how renovating our entire energy economy puts people to work. That is the third core principle.

The fourth is to make sure those economic gains go to those who have previously been left behind. That is an important message for rural America. That is an important message for urban frontline communities previously left behind. There is so much work to do and so many ways we can make sure these communities participate.

When I go out to Oregon, I do a town-hall in every county every year—36 counties. Twenty-two of them are rural. In political terms, you would describe them as deep red. People are frustrated by the very low wages and the very low number of jobs in those rural communities. Now we have an opportunity to say we have to go to work in an intensive way—a way that can create jobs all across this Nation and all across rural America. Instead, we have the majority leader bringing the issue to the floor as a farce. That is profoundly disturbing.

I encourage all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, let us not miss this opportunity before us—an opportunity for America to lead, an opportunity for America to build its economy, an opportunity for America to

lead the world. We cannot afford to miss that opportunity. America cannot afford for us to miss that opportunity, and the world cannot afford for us to fail.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:18 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

GEN. JOHN W. RAYMOND

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. JEFFREY L. HARRIGAN

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY AND APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 601 AND 7033:

To be general

GEN. JAMES C. MCCONVILLE

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED CAREER MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR PROMOTION WITHIN THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER:

KENNETH H. MERTEN, OF VIRGINIA
GEETA PASI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
TODD D. ROBINSON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ERIC SETH RUBIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MATTHEW HEYWOOD TUELLER, OF UTAH
ALICE G. WELLS, OF WASHINGTON
KEVIN M. WHITAKER, OF VIRGINIA