

them. Three to four million people went to work on those kinds of jobs. That is a good thing.

The point I am trying to make is, Is it possible to do good things for our planet? Well, President Macron of France, down the hall about 1 year ago, spoke to a joint session of Congress and he said these words: We only get one planet. There is no planet B.

He was right. This is our planet, and it is going to belong to these young people—these pages sitting down in front of me this afternoon. It is your planet. It is already. We want to make sure that we turn it over to you in better shape than we found it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, now let me talk a little bit about climate change and why it might be of some interest to us in Delaware. Delaware is the First State—the first State to ratify in the Nation, on September 7, 1787. Before any other State had ratified the Constitution, we did. For 1 week, Delaware was the entire United States of America. We let in Maryland, and we let in Pennsylvania and about 47 others. I think it has turned out all right, until now. We will see. Hopefully, it will turn out for a much longer period of time.

But the First State is also the lowest lying State in America. Think about that. It sits right on the Atlantic ocean, halfway between Maine and Florida. Our State is sinking and the oceans are rising. That is not a good combination, especially if you are as small as we are. So we have a personal interest in climate change, global warming, and sea level rise.

We don't believe it is esoteric. We don't believe it is scientific dogma. We think it is real, and it faces—maybe not my generation so much, although we are seeing bad things happen because of sea level rise and climate change—my kids and their kids someday. The chickens will come home to roost.

The question is, Can we do anything about it? And the answer is yes, we can do a lot.

Where should we start?

Well, we should start on a lot of places where carbon comes from. For me, one of the things we do is to make sure that we protect, if you will, the carbon-free sources of electricity generation to the extent that we can. As it turns out, 60 percent to 70 percent of the electricity in this country that is generated without creating carbon is from nuclear powerplants.

There is technology and research going on—advanced technology and advanced nuclear reactors—to see if there are ways we can build on nuclear power and reduce the amount of spent fuel. Some people call it waste. I call it spent fuel rods.

What can we do through new technology? There is actually reason to be encouraged. There is a lot we can do and we need to do.

What else can we do? Well, we can pass our Diesel Emissions Reduction

Act and build on the legacy of the last 13 or 14 years. I am encouraged that we are going to do that.

We have nascent technology. I think that Europe is a little further ahead on this than we are, but we have the ability to not just take carbon dioxide out of a smokestack—say, out of a coal-fired plant generating electricity—but to literally pull carbon dioxide out of the air. It is ambient carbon dioxide, out of the air—to pull it out of the air and turn it into something useful.

While those are, I think, promising technologies, there is something else that is right before us that is a lot more effective, and that is our cars, trucks, and vans. Why do I mention them? The greatest sources of carbon dioxide emissions come from our mobile sources—our cars, trucks, and vans. It wasn't always that way. It used to be coal-fired plants, utility plants. It could have been cement plants or other manufacturing plants that emitted emissions, including carbon dioxide.

Today the largest source of CO₂ emissions on our planet are mobile sources—cars, trucks and vans. That is the bad news. The good news is that we can actually reduce that.

I was at the Detroit Auto Show. I have been going to the Detroit Auto Show for a long time. There was a time not that many years ago—a decade ago—when Delaware actually built more cars, trucks, and vans per capita than any other State. We had a huge interest in making sure our GM plant stayed in business and a huge interest in making sure that our Chrysler plant stayed in business.

As the Governor of Delaware, I worked hard to make sure that those plants stayed in business. We had 3,000, 4,000 employees in each of those plants. For a little State like Delaware, that is a lot. At the bottom of the great recession, GM went into bankruptcy. We lost them both. Thousands of jobs were gone just like that.

In any event, I still have a huge interest in automotives. One of the reasons I have a huge interest in the automobile industry is because of carbon dioxide emissions, and the largest source is in our cars, trucks, and vans—the automotive industry.

I went to the Detroit Auto Show again this past January and the January before, and I was there 11 years ago. Eleven years ago at the Detroit Auto Show, the Car of the Year was a car called the Chevrolet Volt, a hybrid. The first 30, 40 miles ran on battery, and after that, it was a gasoline engine.

It was the Car of the Year. It got only about 38 miles on a charge of electricity—a fully charged battery. Fast forward 10 years, and about a year ago, at the Detroit Auto Show, the Car of the Year was a Chevrolet Bolt. It got 140 miles on a charge. It was all electric, not a hybrid. The Chevrolet Volt went from 38 miles on a charge 11 years ago, and 10 years later, the Chevrolet

Bolt goes 140 miles. That is pretty good progress.

I was at the Detroit Auto Show this year, and I saw close to a dozen different vehicles and manufacturers from this country and around the world that have all-electric car vehicles, and they are getting about 240 to 250 miles on a charge. Think about that. Eleven years ago, the Chevrolet Volt was getting 38 miles on a charge; a year and a half ago, the Chevrolet Bolt was getting 140 miles on a charge. This year, there are a number of cars getting 250 miles on a charge—off their battery. It is only going to get better.

We have the ability to create propulsion for our vehicles by using hydrogen in conjunction with fuel cells to create electricity to power our vehicles. What is the waste product? Let me see—water. The waste product of the hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles is H₂O. It is so clean, you can drink it. That is where the future is for automotive transportation in this country—battery-powered vehicles and those that are powered by hydrogen in conjunction with fuel cells.

In our committee, Senator BARASSO, some of our colleagues, and I are getting to work on the highway bill. It is not just the highway bill; it is roads, highways, bridges, transit. We do this about every 5 years. We are starting to work on the next follow-on reauthorization of the transportation bill. The current bill expires on September 30 of next year.

We are getting a head start on it this year. We want to make sure, as we prepare for the next 5 years in transportation, that we build roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems in ways in which we realize we have a real challenge on this planet with too much carbon in the air and make sure we build into our roads, highways, and bridges the ability to recharge batteries.

Come 2030, half of the vehicles that are expected to be built and sold in this country will be battery-powered electric vehicles or they will be hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles. If we are smart about it, when we take up and legislate and build on past legislation to build roads, highways, bridges, and transit going forward, we will do it in a way that creates corridors where people traveling major roads in our country can easily stop and recharge their vehicle's battery or refuel hydrogen. That has to be part of our legislation.

Since much of our carbon dioxide is coming from mobile sources, we want to make sure that, when we build roads, highways, and bridges, we do it in a way in which we reduce emissions in smart ways, if you will, and the infrastructure is more sustainable. These are some of the things we need to do.

The other thing I want to say is that, for me, the Holy Grail of public policy right now, given the threat we face from climate change, extreme weather—I will give you a hint. We had too much rain in Delaware. We raise a lot of soybeans, a lot of corn, a lot of lima

beans, and a lot of chickens. If you asked a lot of farmers in Southern Delaware last year how things went, they will tell you that they got a whole lot of rain. We got a whole lot of rain last spring. You don't want to have too little rain, but you don't want too much. A lot of our farmers planted their crops last spring, and it rained, and it rained, and it rained. The crops did not come up. They plowed under and replanted, and it rained, and it rained, and it rained. Too many of our farmers didn't get a crop.

The folks in the Midwest—Nebraska, South Dakota, and other places—right now are going through even more extreme weather than that because they are getting a lot of rain all at once. I talked to one of our colleagues here in the Senate about his State this morning, and this is happening again, I think, maybe this week. That extreme weather is caused by too much carbon in the air. There is a great need to do something about it.

The good news is this. We can do something about it and create jobs. How would that work in the automotive area? Right now, our friends in the automotive industry would like to build a lot more fuel cell-powered vehicles and a lot of electric-powered vehicles. They plan to. They want to make sure that, when they do that and they are on the roads and highways across the country, people get their electric vehicles recharged and their hydrogen vehicles refueled.

We need to put into our transportation legislation provisions that make those charging stations and those fueling stations a reality. Our auto industry needs certain predictability. Most businesses will tell you that, of all things, they need certainty and predictability. It is at the top of the list. Right now, the current administration is not interested, unfortunately, in providing the certainty and predictability that folks need in the auto industry.

There is a 50-State deal to be made in terms of fuel efficiency standards going forward. It looks something like this: The Trump administration wants to have almost no increase in fuel efficiency standards between 2021 and 2025—almost nothing, almost flatline, and absolutely nothing beyond 2025. The current regulation in place by the last administration—the Obama administration—calls for, between 2021 and 2025, annual increases in fuel efficiency standards by roughly 5 percent. That is pretty steep. That doesn't sound like much, but after 5 years in a row, it is a big increase.

The auto industry is saying that they would like to have some near-term flexibility between 2021 and 2025 in fuel efficiency standards. They are ready to ramp it up going forward.

I think the current administration might be willing to agree on a compromise of fuel efficiency standards going up 1 percent a year between 2021 and 2025, but they don't want to do anything more after 2025. We will be

making a bunch of vehicles that get maybe 300, maybe 400 miles on a charge. I think there might be a number between a 1-percent increase in fuel efficiency standards between 2021 and 2025 and a 5-percent increase. There may be some middle ground between a 1-percent-a-year and a 5-percent increase in what the Obama rules call for. Maybe it is 3 percent. So rather than making no progress in fuel efficiency standards, you have a 3-percent increase. The auto industry may not be crazy about it, but they can live with it. They can live with a good deal more than 3 percent after 2025. We ought to do that.

If we do that kind of thing, we will make sure we don't spend the next 5, 6 years with the auto industry in legal battles in California and 13 other States, including Delaware and Rhode Island. The auto industry has a certain predictability that they need. If they build these vehicles, we will be competitive on the world stage and have a strong economy as a result, and we will have done good things for our planet. Why wouldn't we do that? Really, why wouldn't we do that?

My dad was a big “common sense” guy. We can all probably remember things our parents said to us from time to time. Among other things, after my sister and I had done some bone-headed stunt, my dad would say: Just use common sense. He was an old chief petty officer in the Navy—tough as nails. He didn't say it that nicely, but he said “just use common sense” a lot.

We need to use some common sense. In doing that, we will create a great bunch of jobs and make ours a competitive nation on the world stage in one of the most important industries we have; that is, the building, design, and development of vehicles. We will do good things for our planet and for those who are going to inherit this planet from us.

That is pretty much what I wanted to say today.

I want to take a minute to say something as a bigger State talking to another big State—I like to tell people Delaware is the 49th largest State. We are about a couple of acres larger than Rhode Island. These are two States that I think the Senator from Rhode Island will agree with—I will say this to our pages here. I don't know if you have heard the term used in boxing when you have a smaller fighter fighting against a bigger fighter. When the little boxer wins over the much bigger boxer, you say the smaller boxer “punches above his weight.” When it comes to climate change and trying to figure out the right thing to do for our planet, our country, our people, I would like to say that in Rhode Island and Delaware, we punch above our weight. This may not be a heavyweight title bout, but this is a big one. Where they have world championships, in terms of issues, this is a world championship issue. This is one we can win.

I want to thank my friend Senator WHITEHOUSE for taking a great leader-

ship role in all of this, including today. He knows, as most of us on this floor and I think on our planet know, that it is time to wake up, or as my friend Congresswoman LISA ROCHESTER likes to say: Stay woke.

Thank you, sir.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Thank you very much. It is not often that the distinguished ranking member on the EPW Committee gets to say he is from a bigger State and give his advice in those terms. I appreciate that we from Rhode Island were able to give him this moment.

I also want to thank him for his leadership in trying to fight for strong fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission standards for our automobiles.

The story of what is going on cannot be properly understood without understanding the oil industry's role in all of this. They are up to their usual mischief.

Our offices obtained a draft letter to the Deputy Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, urging her to weaken the auto emission standards. Well, we were able to look at the metadata on this document, and guess who wrote it. It was written by one of Marathon Petroleum's in-house lobbyists.

Marathon shopped this letter, which their lobbyist wrote, around to Members of Congress, convincing several to send similar letters in favor of weakening the standards. We took those letters, and we ran them through plagiarism software, and this is what we got. The red text is the text that is identical to the language of the Marathon lobbyist's letter. The black is where, in this case, Members of the Pennsylvania delegation added a little local information about Pennsylvania. It is an 80-percent match in the plagiarism software to the letter written by the Marathon Oil company lobbyist.

Marathon and the oil industry weren't just recruiting Members of Congress to copy their lobbyist language into letters to the Trump administration; they got their trade associations involved as well. The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association lobbied, for instance, to weaken the standards, according to their lobbying disclosure reports. It is always better to have your trade association do your dirty work. What company really wants the public to know it lobbied to lower fuel economy standards so that consumers could pay more at the pump? It is not a good look.

In addition to cranking up its trade associations, the fossil fuel industry also cranked up its constellation of front groups that it has developed and funded over the years to kill laws and regulations that would reduce the carbon pollution that is driving climate change. The industry launched those front groups against the fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission auto standards. These front groups provide a veneer of fake public support for the oil industry's anti-climate campaign.

