

people and this Congress really involves.

This is a changing situation. It is not simple, but it is one about which I will come back and try to inform in every way that I can. In order to bring justice to the process, I will encourage this body to smartly and quickly engage, to help impress upon the Turks to back off the bloodshed, and to bring war crimes against any Turk or any individual we can identify who is killing prisoners and attacking civilians.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from the Nebraska.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to voice my strong support for the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or the USMCA.

When I travel the State of Nebraska, I always hear directly from our farmers and our ag producers. Nebraska's farmers have endured some of the most challenging setbacks in recent memory. The severe flooding from last spring devastated thousands of acres of our farm and our ranch land, brought hundreds of livestock deaths, and destroyed barns, countless grain bins, hay, and critical farm equipment. This list of daunting obstacles continues to grow.

Last July, the Gering-Fort Laramie-Goshen irrigation tunnel collapsed and cut off a crucial source of surface irrigation water to the western region of our State for several weeks.

Only a few days earlier, a devastating fire broke out in a Tyson beef processing plant in Holcomb, KS. The plant processed about 6,000 head of cattle every single day. That is roughly 6 percent of the total fed cattle processing capacity in the United States.

The effects of the plant's closure rippled throughout the entire cattle industry and the beef processing chain. This is all in addition to 5 years of low commodity prices, the unfair small refinery exemptions for oil refiners, and the cloud of uncertainty over trade.

While all of these factors have caused anxiety and unpredictability, there is one solution that Nebraska's farmers, ranchers, ag producers, manufacturers, and hard-working men and women have made clear, and that is the passage of the USMCA.

Nebraska's farmers and ranchers have a different lifestyle than most people. Their patience is steadfast. They plan for the long term. They can envision how they want their land to look, not only next year but 100 years into the future. It is in their DNA, and families are fed around the world because of it.

They are optimists, but they are realists. As Secretary Perdue recently said, "they know you can't plant in August and harvest in September."

That is exactly right. Our producers have remained patient during these tough and turbulent times because they know that there is an opportunity for a better, long-term trade solution on the horizon.

The USMCA would replace the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, and bring the deal into the 21st century, while fortifying our strong trading relationships with Canada and Mexico and growing critical market access for Nebraska.

The heart of Nebraska beats in the same rhythm as agriculture. It is who we are, and as the world knows that it is what we do better than anyone. So it is not hard to understand why our State needs this deal.

America's neighbors to the north and south are the destination of 44 percent of Nebraska's total exports. In 2017, Nebraska shipped \$447 million of agricultural products to Canada and a staggering \$898 million to Mexico. These exports include hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Nebraska's high-quality corn, soybeans, ethanol, and beef.

Specifically, the USMCA maintains and strengthens those markets for corn and soybeans. It also allows U.S. beef producers to continue to grow their exports to Mexico, which have risen 800 percent since NAFTA was first ratified.

In 2018 alone, Nebraska exported over \$250 million dollars of beef to both countries.

It is important to note that the benefits of the USMCA extend far beyond our farmland. Agricultural trade between Canada and Mexico supports nearly 54,000 jobs in the State of Nebraska. According to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska's \$6.4 billion in agricultural exports in 2017 translated into \$8.19 billion in additional economic activity. For the good of our State and our Nation, these markets need to be protected.

The USMCA goes even further than NAFTA. It adopts labor and environmental standards that Democrats have long advocated for. It requires that 40 to 45 percent of auto content be made by workers who earn at least \$16 an hour by 2023. This will undoubtedly help close the gap in labor standards between our Nation and Mexico.

According to the U.S. Trade Representative, the deal includes new provisions to prohibit the importation of goods produced by forced labor.

The USMCA addresses violence against workers exercising their labor rights, and it ensures that migrant workers are protected under labor laws.

The deal brings labor obligations into the core of the agreement, and most importantly, it makes them fully enforceable.

On top of that, the USMCA deploys the most advanced, comprehensive set of environmental protections of any trade agreement in our Nation's history. The list of environmental protections includes first-ever articles to improve air quality, support forest management, and ensure procedures for studies on its environmental impact.

New provisions protect a variety of marine species, such as whales and sea turtles, and there are prohibitions on shark finning.

Unlike NAFTA, the USMCA provides enforcement mechanisms that will ensure that all countries not only meet but strengthen their environmental responsibilities.

Lastly, I want to point out to my Democrat colleagues the support the USMCA is receiving on both sides of the aisle.

I recently heard Tom Vilsack say this:

I think under any evaluation, from the U.S. agriculture perspective it clearly is a better deal. So, with that our hope is that it gets done, and gets done soon.

These are not the words of some Trump administration official. These are the words of President Obama's former Secretary of Agriculture.

Here is another quote from Dan Glickman:

We have a good agreement. We cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good. This is a good deal for America and particularly a good deal for farmers at this vulnerable time.

Again, this isn't support from some Republican Member of Congress. This is support that is voiced by President Clinton's former Secretary of Agriculture.

What is more, all former Agriculture Secretaries since the Reagan administration have voiced their full support for the USMCA.

We have seen the headlines of endorsements, and one especially caught my attention. The title of a recent op-ed read: "Democrats Should Give Trump a Win on His Trade Deal with Mexico and Canada." Well, this piece wasn't composed by a conservative publication. It was penned by the editorial board of the Washington Post.

Finally, a group of 14 House Democrats sent a letter to Speaker PELOSI last July urging her to take up the USMCA for a vote.

The letter reads: "Canada and Mexico are by far our most important trading partners, and we need to restore certainty in these critical relationships that support millions of American jobs."

Both sides of the aisle agree that the USMCA is a significant win for farmers, ranchers, ag producers, and America's economy as a whole.

Nebraska's farmers and ranchers have maintained patience in these tough times. They deserve to know without a doubt that they will continue to have access to their two largest markets and closest trading partners.

As I said earlier, farmers aren't just thinking about themselves. They are planning for the future generations that will proudly carry on their life's work and continue feeding our world.

Right now, we have an opportunity to come together around a common-sense, bipartisan agreement that will benefit the American people both now and for years to come. Now it is up to Congress to deliver.

I urge Speaker PELOSI to stop needlessly delaying this vote, and I encourage all of my Democrat colleagues not

to allow politics to stand in the way of sound policy. It is time to push the USMCA over the finish line.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, first I would like to associate myself with the comments of my senior Senator about the necessity of the passage of the USMCA. The House of Representatives and the Speaker should schedule that vote immediately. There is clearly overwhelming support in both bodies for its passage.

I would also like to underscore my senior Senator's comments about the tragedy of the irrigation tunnel collapse in Nebraska and about the character of Nebraska's farmers and ranchers. They have dealt with yet another catastrophe after 81 of our 93 counties went through a state of emergency earlier this year in a flood.

I would like to just commend my senior Senator for a fine speech on a really important topic.

(The remarks of Mr. SASSE pertaining to the submission of S.J. Res. 58 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. SASSE. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The measure will be received and appropriately referred.

The Senator from Maryland.

S.J. RES. 53

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about S.J. Res. 53. We will have a chance to vote on that tomorrow. I am joined by my colleague from Maryland, Senator VAN HOLLEN, and my colleague on the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island. I also want to thank Senator CARPER for his leadership as the senior Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee in regard to this resolution.

This resolution will be voted on tomorrow. It deals with the CRA—Congressional Review Act—vote in regard to the Trump administration's affordable clean energy rule. That is probably a misnomer. It is what I call the dirty powerplant rule. The CRA would repeal that so that we can go back to the Clean Power Plan that was promulgated under the Obama administration in 2015.

Let me explain what the Trump-era rule would do. First, it would repeal the Clean Power Plan that was issued in 2015. That plan had real results in it. It set limits on a powerplant's production of dangerous carbon. It made meaningful progress. The rule promulgated by President Trump's administration would repeal that and substitute it with a plan that would be a powerplant judgment in each powerplant—coal-burning only—and would not take into consideration the powerplant mix of individual States.

The previous rule allowed the States to figure out how to reach those goals. So a State could do a mix. They could start using natural gas. They could

start using renewable energy. They could meet their goals that are set with a reduction of about one-third of these dangerous carbon emissions but with local discretion on how to reach those goals.

The rule that was promulgated that I am seeking to reverse allows only efficiency per coal powerplants, does not allow the mixing of the different technologies, and prohibits the States from pursuing market-based plans.

I am going to tell you, in my region of the country, we have what is known as REGI, which is a compact to reduce carbon emissions. We do it by energizing market forces so that we can get to friendlier sources of energy, which, by the way, has helped our region not only reduce carbon emissions but create green energy jobs, which is in our interest.

Let me point out from the beginning that the powerplants are the largest stationary source of harmful carbon emissions. Why should everybody be concerned about it? We know its impact on climate change. We have seen the harmful impacts of climate change in America, from the wildfires out West to the flooding here in the East. We have seen the problems not only in our own community but throughout the world. In my own State of Maryland, we have had two 100-year floods within 20 months in Ellicott City, MD. The list goes on and on about the impact of climate change. We see the coastal line changing in our lifetime. We are seeing regular flooding. We are seeing habitable land become inhabitable. All of that is affected by our carbon emissions, and the Obama-era Clean Power Plan did something about it. The rule that we will have a chance to vote on tomorrow would do nothing about it.

We see this as a public health risk. I can't tell you how frequently I have heard from my constituents who have someone in their family who has a respiratory illness: What can we do for cleaner air? Children are staying home from school because of bad air days. Parents are missing time from work. Premature deaths. All that is impacted by clean air.

I talk frequently about the Chesapeake Bay. I am honored to represent the Chesapeake Bay region in the U.S. Senate, along with Senator VAN HOLLEN, and we treasure the work that has been done. It has been an international model of all the stakeholders coming together in order to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, and we are making tremendous progress on dealing with the sorts of pollution coming from runoff or from farming activities or development. But, quite frankly, we have not been successful in dealing with airborne pollutants that are going into the Chesapeake Bay.

In Maryland, we are a downwind State. We need a national effort here. Maryland could be doing everything right, but if the surrounding States are not, we suffer the consequences. That

is why the Clean Power Plan was so attractive in dealing with this issue, because it dealt with it with national goals. Establish how to attain them by the local governments. That is the way it should be.

Let me give the numbers. The Clean Power Plan that is repealed by the rule under the Trump administration would have reduced dangerous carbon emission by about one-third. We believe the rule that was promulgated by the Trump administration could actually increase dangerous emissions.

Let me use EPA's regulatory impact analysis. Looking at CO₂—carbon dioxide—the Agency says that the Trump rule will reduce it by 0.7 percent. That is less than 1 percent. The Clean Power Plan issued by President Obama—19 percent. SO₂s under Trump are 5.7 percent; under the Obama rule, 24 percent. NO_x emissions under the plan that was promulgated under the Trump administration are 0.9 percent—less than 1 percent. Under the Clean Power Plan, it is 22 percent.

We really are talking about whether we are serious about dealing with dangerous carbon emissions or whether we are going to at best maintain the status quo; at worst, make things even worse.

It saddens me that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are embracing the ACE rule, since it threatens to reverse much of the progress we have made in reducing air pollution—progress their conservationist Republican predecessors helped to spur. The Clean Air Act amendments, which established the sulfur dioxide—SO₂—cap-and-trade program, were adopted in 1990. This was never a partisan issue; cap-and-trade was originally a Republican idea. George Herbert Walker Bush was President. It passed the House of Representatives by a 401-to-21 vote. It passed this body, the U.S. Senate, by an 89-to-11 vote. It has been highly successful. During George W. Bush's Presidency, the EPA determined that the SO₂ cap-and-trade program had a 40-1 benefit-to-cost ratio.

The Supreme Court held in *Massachusetts v. EPA* that the EPA has a responsibility to regulate these carbon emissions. So that is exactly what was done in 2015, which is now being jeopardized because of the regulation that was issued under the Trump administration.

I had a chance to serve in the State legislature. This is an affront to federalism. Innovation for green energy and jobs is prohibited under the rule that I am seeking to repeal. It is prohibited. That is why 22 States and 7 local governments have filed suit against this regulation. But we can act.

The Congressional Review Act allows us to take action in this body, and that is why I filed that so we can take action. If we allow this rule to go forward, it will delay the implementation of carbon emission reductions—delay it. If we vote for the CRA, we will be back on track.