

Let me say that again. At best, this rule will have essentially no impact on powerplant carbon emissions. At worst, it will increase emissions by extending these plants' lifespans and allow them to burn more coal each year.

Today our Nation's utilities are already on track to meet and surpass the emission reduction goals set by the Clean Power Plan way ahead of schedule. All the while, the vast majority of Americans are now enjoying lower utility bills, not higher utility bills, and more than 3 million Americans went to work today in the clean energy sector, which includes jobs in renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. Yes, you heard that right. There are more than 3 million jobs in the clean energy sector today.

The President's dirty power plan does not build on this progress. It does not promote affordable or clean energy. What it actually does is attempt to scam or fool the American people into believing that the EPA is doing something to stem the tide of climate change while taking us backward—backward, not forward.

By repealing and replacing the Clean Power Plan, the Trump administration is ensuring that our country forgoes a vast number of economic opportunities of the clean energy future. Instead of building on the Obama-Biden administration's forward-looking environmental standards, the Trump administration, with its dirty power plan, is refusing to see or accept that the global economy's transition to clean energy sources is already underway. Instead of mustering the political courage to lead on the issue of climate change, yet again, the Trump administration is walking away from the bold action we need to address this climate crisis.

This failure of leadership will make it all the more likely that the worsening storms and flooding, record-setting rainfall, and volatile temperatures we are already seeing all over the world will continue to be our reality.

So where do our Republican colleagues stand? Tomorrow we will find out.

Sadly, for too many of them, President Trump's dirty power plan is a sufficient plan to address carbon pollution. In truth, it is not. It is a failure of vision and a retreat from global leadership, and it is time for Congress—Democrats, Republicans, and maybe an Independent or two—to hold this administration accountable.

That is why Senate Democrats are calling for a vote on this issue. Our government needs to provide the right market signals today if we are going to create a clean energy tomorrow, and we need to take a stand for a stronger economy. We need to lead the world to act on climate change, and we need to take a stand for clean air and environmental quality.

We can do that tomorrow by standing together against President Trump's dirty power plan, and I hope a number

of colleagues will join us by doing just that.

It is a false statement to say we can't have cleaner air, less threat to our planet, and create jobs. We can do both, and we need to.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the vote for Ambassador Barrett.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF BARBARA MCCONNELL BARRETT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, a few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to come to the floor and talk about the outstanding public service of some senior U.S. marines: Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, Secretary of Homeland Security General Kelly, and the outgoing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Joseph Dunford. The service these gentlemen have given to their Nation includes almost 140 years of combined Active-Duty military service in the Marine Corps but also at the highest levels of government at a critical time in our Nation's history.

Men and women who are committed to the service of our Nation are continuing to follow in the footsteps of these three very impressive U.S. Marine generals who brought the Marine Corps ethos of honor, courage, and commitment to our Nation's military and to their work in government. We should all be thankful for that.

At the end of September, I had the privilege of attending the swearing-in of a member of the new team that President Trump is putting together in terms of national security, GEN Mark Milley, as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, now in the position succeeding General Dunford. At the Department of Defense, we have Secretary Esper, Secretary McCarthy, the Secretary of the Army, and General Milley who have all served their country with honor and will continue to do so.

Now we are considering the nomination of Ambassador Barbara Barrett to be the next Secretary of the Air Force. In fact, we are going to be voting on her nomination in a few moments.

I want to talk about her experience and her qualifications, which are diverse and very impressive. I think she is extremely well qualified to be the next Secretary of the U.S. Air Force.

Let me provide just a bit about her background and exceptional experience. She is a private pilot, astronaut, Deputy Federal Aviation Administrator, past CEO of the Aerospace Corporation, past member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services and Defense Business Board. Importantly, she is a former U.S. Ambassador to Finland. That is a very impressive resume, a very impressive background.

I first met Ambassador Barrett in 2015 when I had the opportunity to

share dinner with her and the late Senator John McCain. Prior to that dinner, I was talking to Senator John McCain, and he told me how highly he thought of Ambassador Barrett. I can state—and I think many of my Senate colleagues will agree—that there can be no better an endorsement than that from Senator McCain.

Ambassador Barrett will be taking over from Dr. Heather Wilson, who did an outstanding job as Secretary of the Air Force. Secretary Wilson's leadership was critical in rebuilding the U.S. Air Force, which had shrunk to its smallest level ever just a few years ago since the Air Force was created in the late 1940s. We had to start bringing it back. She did a great job on that, and I know Ambassador Barrett is committed to continuing that rebuilding of this critically important branch of our military.

Another important element of Ambassador Barrett's experience is that as a former U.S. Ambassador to Finland, she understands the strategic importance of the Arctic and what is happening in terms of great power competition in the Arctic.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about that critically important part of the world and the role of my State, the great State of Alaska. Dating back to Gen. Billy Mitchell, who is the father of the U.S. Air Force, Alaska has been recognized as what General Mitchell said in an Armed Services Committee hearing; that it is "the most strategic place in the world." Former Secretary Wilson and our current Chief of the Staff of the Air Force, General Goldfein, have been leaders at the Department of Defense, raising awareness of the critical importance of the Arctic in defending America's national security interests. Additionally, Congress has been playing a role in highlighting this in our national security priorities in the National Defense Authorization Act over the last 3 years and so, too, has the Trump administration.

Secretary Pompeo, our Secretary of State, was recently in Finland for the Arctic Council, all the nations of the Arctic, and he had this to say:

We are entering a new age of strategic engagement in the Arctic, complete with new threats to the Arctic and its real estate. . . . This is America's moment to stand up as an Arctic nation and for the Arctic's future.

That was our Secretary of State a few months ago in Finland.

America is an Arctic nation because of Alaska. I like to say that my State constitutes three pillars of America's military might. We are the cornerstone of missile defense for the entire Nation—the missile fields and the radar sites that protect Washington, DC, New York, Miami, Rhode Island, L.A. They are all based in the great State of Alaska. We are the hub of air combat power for the Arctic in the Asia-Pacific.

In the next 2 years, we are going to have over 100 fifth-generation fighters, F-35s and F-22s, stationed in Alaska.

No place on Earth will have that kind of combat power with those critical fifth-generation supersonic stealth fighters. We have a platform for expeditionary forces—some of our best trained military units—to be able to deploy on a moment's notice because we are so strategically located to other countries.

Because of Alaska's strategic role in defending America's interests in the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific, the Congress and this administration, together in a bipartisan way, have been building up each of these three critical pillars of our Nation's military might and defenses.

Let me give just one example. The Senate has been pushing lately to ensure that the air combat capability we have in Alaska is matched by air refueling capacity. The last three National Defense Authorization Acts passed by this body and signed by the President have established criteria that the Air Force needs to use when deciding where to base the next modern aerial refueling tanker platform, the KC-46.

Ambassador Barrett and I have discussed this issue and what the Air Force is going to do with regard to stationing of the KC-46 outside of the continental United States, and I look forward to working with her on the advice already provided to the administration from the Congress on where those military assets need to be based.

As the current Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper, said in his confirmation hearing, having KC-46s colocated with 100 fifth-generation fighters would give America "extreme strategic reach" anywhere in the world. I believe Ambassador Barrett also understands this, and she clearly understands the importance of the Arctic as a former ambassador to Finland.

So, as I mentioned at the outset, we need good people and highly qualified people to serve at the highest levels of our military, civilian and uniformed, and I believe Ambassador Barrett is certainly one of those individuals.

I was heartened to see that my colleagues in the Senate gave a very strong bipartisan cloture vote, 84 to 7, which shows very strong support for her nomination. I know we are going to vote in a couple of minutes. I encourage my colleagues to vote yes for her nomination to be the next U.S. Secretary of the Air Force.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON BARRETT NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Barrett nomination?

Mr. SULLIVAN. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 319 Ex.]

YEAS—85

Baldwin	Graham	Reed
Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hassan	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Heinrich	Rosen
Braun	Hirono	Rounds
Brown	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Johnson	Schumer
Cardin	Jones	Scott (FL)
Carper	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Casey	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cassidy	King	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sinema
Coons	Leahy	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	McConnell	Thune
Cramer	McSally	Tillis
Crapo	Menendez	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Udall
Daines	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murphy	Warner
Enzi	Murray	Whitehouse
Ernst	Paul	Wicker
Feinstein	Perdue	Young
Fischer	Peters	
Gardner	Portman	

NAYS—7

Blumenthal	Markey	Wyden
Duckworth	Merkley	
Gillibrand	Smith	

NOT VOTING—8

Alexander	Harris	Sanders
Bennet	Isakson	Warren
Booker	Klobuchar	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I ask unanimous consent that the subsequent votes be 10 minutes.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Frank William Volk, of West Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Volk nomination?

Mr. ROUNDS. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 320 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blumenthal	Hassan	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Heinrich	Rosen
Braun	Hirono	Rounds
Brown	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Johnson	Schumer
Cardin	Jones	Scott (FL)
Carper	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Casey	Kennedy	Shaheen
Cassidy	King	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sinema
Coons	Leahy	Smith
Cornyn	Lee	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Sullivan
Cotton	Markey	Tester
Cramer	McConnell	Thune
Crapo	McSally	Tillis
Cruz	Menendez	Toomey
Daines	Merkley	Udall
Duckworth	Moran	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Enzi	Murphy	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murray	Wicker
Feinstein	Paul	Wyden
Fischer	Perdue	Young
Gardner	Peters	

NOT VOTING—8

Alexander	Harris	Sanders
Bennet	Isakson	Warren
Booker	Klobuchar	

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read nomination of Charles R. Eskridge III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Eskridge nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?