

namesake waterway has historically provided Lee County residents a ship-ping avenue and a scenic venue for out-door recreation. Lush valleys led local farmers to grow a wide range of crops, including tobacco, corn, and apples. The Daniel Boone National Forest, which covers thousands of acres of the county, provides an abundant source of hardwood. Taking advantage of the beautiful Appalachian Mountains, coal operations in the county have been a historic aspect of this region.

Formed in the years following the Civil War, Lee County did not take long to become a center of regional ground and water transportation. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Louisville and Atlantic Railroad extended its line to Beattyville, encour-aging new opportunities for local growth. The following decades saw a strengthening economy and growing population.

As the county developed, so did its rural traditions. One of them, the local Woolly Worm Festival, celebrates Lee County's mountain culture. Each Octo-ber, the community gathers for a vari-ety of events, including a pet show, a parade, and a pageant. The most inter-esting day is the Woolly Worm Races, where young people see whose banded woolly worm is the fastest to climb a string. The winning worm is given the responsibility of predicting that year's upcoming winter based on its body's coloration. This is just one example of the pride every Lee County resident can enjoy in their home county.

I frequently get the chance to visit with families in Lee County and con-sistently work to advance their prior-ities in the Senate. For example, I have partnered with local officials to secure millions of Federal dollars to upgrade their water infrastructure and to build a hiking and mountain biking trail. It has also been a privilege to support the brave drug eradication efforts of law enforcement and the Kentucky Na-tional Guard in the Daniel Boone Na-tional Forest. Answering the call of Kentuckians is one of the best aspects of my service in the Senate, and I look forward to continuing to deliver for communities in Lee County and across Kentucky.

Lee County will kick off its year of festivities on March 1, the same day the county was established in 1870. In addition to many community events, the county is also presenting an oral history project, featuring community members discussing local artifacts and historical events. There is certainly a lot to celebrate about the last 150 years. I am delighted to join all the families throughout Lee County in marking this impressive milestone, and I urge my Senate colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this wonderful Eastern Kentucky community.

S.J. RES. 68

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, earlier today, we voted on an amendment to

S.J. Res. 68 that was offered by the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator RISCH. That amendment consisted of one sentence, as follows: "The President has a con-stitutional responsibility to take ac-tions to defend the United States, its territories, possessions, citizens, serv-icemembers and diplomats from at-tack."

On its face, the Risch amendment seems reasonable. The President does have a responsibility to defend the country. But, as is so often the case, the devil is in the details, or the ab-sence of details, and when it involves engaging U.S. Armed Forces in hos-tilities, we should pay particularly close attention. I was among those who opposed the amendment and I want to explain why.

First, it is important to note that the underlying resolution already states that "[nothing] in this section shall be construed to prevent the United States from defending itself from imminent attack." So there is no question about the President's authority to defend the country. But the central purpose of the resolution is to give meaning to the Congress's constitutional authority—the Congress's sole power—to declare war. For far too long this body has sur-rendered that duty to the executive branch.

In 2002, when the Senate considered whether or not to authorize President George W. Bush to invade Iraq, many in this body argued that providing the President with that authority was needed to convince Saddam Hussein to back down. I, instead, saw it as Con-gress abdicating its constitutional duty by providing the President with open-ended authority to use military force against Iraq. For that reason, among others, I voted no.

In fact, my worst fears were realized. Not only was the justification for that war based on lies, but thousands of Americans died, trillions of dollars were wasted that could have been used to fix what's broken in this country, and the American people are no safer. Today that authority is being used in ways that no one envisioned or in-tended to justify an attack against an-other country, Iran, nearly two decades later.

We should learn from that costly mistake. The obvious implication of the Risch amendment is that any President is authorized, and has an af-firmative responsibility, to use mili-tary force at anytime, anywhere, in-definitely, to prevent an unspecified attack that might occur sometime in the future. There is no requirement that it be "imminent". There is no re-quirement that such an attack be any-thing other than speculative or imag-ined.

Given the way this and past adminis-trations have expansively interpreted past authorizations for the use of force, the Risch amendment could be inter-preted to further erode Congress's abil-ity to prevent a President from unilat-

erally sending U.S. forces into hos-tilities without prior consultation with, or further authorization from, the Congress. Such an endorsement—even if unintended—of unchecked Exec-utive power undermines the purpose of the underlying joint resolution, and it makes a mockery of the Congress's sole power to declare war. That is not some-thing any of us should condone.

THE CLEAN ECONOMY ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to discuss solutions to the climate crisis, which threatens the health and well-being of my constituents in Mary-land and Americans across the Nation.

The urgency of climate change asks us to be our most cooperative and col-laborative selves and to seek policy so-lutions that far outlast our legacies in office. As the threat of climate change becomes more and more visible to the American public, people are demanding action from their Federal Government. This year, we have seen an unprece-dented level of interest from Ameri-cans of all ages and walks of life on real solutions to this complex problem. A variety of comprehensive solutions have been proposed, some that rep-resent a departure from how the Fed-eral Government has addressed climate change in the past, while others utilize existing Federal frameworks to drive climate action.

History tells us that our Federal agencies have an incredible capacity to evolve to meet the threats of their time. In previous administrations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been a dynamic steward of domes-tic environmental law throughout the last half-century and is well-practiced in addressing environmental concerns as they emerge. Unfortunately, Con-gress and the President have failed to provide the EPA with the direction and funding it needs to address the issue of climate change in earnest. I support Senator CARPER's Clean Economy Act for this very reason. The Clean Econ-omy Act understands that the EPA lies at the center of America's climate fu-ture and empowers it to address cli-mate change proactively.

The Clean Economy Act provides the agency with the clear goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to match the urgency to reduce warming global temperatures. The Intergovern-mental Panel on Climate Change's—IPCC—October 2018 Special Report on climate warns that warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels will have a catastrophic impact on our global systems. The United States reaching net-zero is an essential component to keep global temperature warming below the 1.5 degrees Celsius cap.

Many of this administration's nomi-nees are fond of pointing out that they are not scientists, implying that they are not qualified to make decisions re-lated to climate change. I will point out that most of us are not economists

either, but that doesn't stop us from making decisions that affect the economy. We have a responsibility to make informed decisions affecting our climate, environment, and natural resources, which are at the heart of our ability to maintain a healthy sustainable economy. There are some tough decisions to make in the face of climate change that reasonable people will disagree about, but the basic science should not be ignored. Whether to accept the facts of the matter should not be a partisan debate.

Fortunately, the IPCC, to which the U.S. Government and scientific community is a leading contributor, continues to provide a well-documented guide for what we need to do to respond to the climate crisis. According to the IPCC's landmark Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, the model pathways that would enable us to limit global warming to the critical benchmark of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels reach net zero global net anthropogenic CO₂ emissions by approximately 2050. This bill is based on the science that demonstrates the importance and value of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by not later than 2050.

We can do this, and making the necessary investments to do so will strengthen our economy, create jobs, and protect our public health and national security. The most expensive and unrealistic course of action is to ignore the mounting costs of climate change and fail to respond.

The legislation ensures that the EPA's plan incorporates greenhouse gas reduction, while expanding opportunities for the U.S. labor force. After all, any conversation about a new U.S. energy future without the participation of working people is incomplete. The Clean Economy Act ensures the EPA has the power to invest in the development and deployment of low- and zero-greenhouse gas emitting technologies and that the U.S. workforce reaps the benefits of an equitable transition away from fossil fuels. The support of the Blue Green Alliance, a coalition of labor unions like the United Steelworkers and the Utility Workers Union of America and environmental organizations like the League of Conservation Voters and Natural Resources Defense Council demonstrates that a diverse collection of interests see a net-zero future for our country.

This legislation builds off bipartisan progress we have made this Congress using existing Federal frameworks to reduce emissions and prepare for the effects of climate change that are already here. In November 2018, the Fourth National Climate Assessment concluded that climate change is affecting the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, and human health and welfare across the U.S. and its territories." The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee favorably reported the American's Transportation Infra-

structure Act in July 2019 that for the first time included a Climate Title. The Federal assistance in it will help the transportation sector lower emissions through infrastructure for electric and alternatively fueled vehicles. The bill also supports States and local agencies preparing our Nation's roads and bridges to withstand climate impacts.

I encourage my colleagues across committees to work together to enact both pieces of legislation to prepare all sectors of the clean economy for the climate reality before us today.

One of the most critical climate change impacts that we must take immediate action on is the threat to our water infrastructure. This week, GAO is releasing a report on water infrastructure and climate change in response to a request I made with my colleague Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island. We asked the GAO to study what is known about the effects of climate change on the Nation's domestic water systems and the potential fiscal risks posed by those effects and evaluate Federal actions that may be taken to reduce such risks.

Therein, EPA estimates that drinking water and wastewater utilities need to invest almost \$744 billion to repair and replace their existing infrastructure over the next 20 years. GAO finds climate change is increasing these costs. In 2017, it cost the Federal Government over \$300 billion to repair damage resulting from climate- and weather-related events, including damage to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, according to NOAA.

The faster we act to make our water infrastructure resilient to climate change impacts, as well as address the root cause of climate change through legislation such as the Clean Economy Act, the better we can reduce the risks and control the costs. Our drinking water and wastewater treatment systems are at great risk from climate change impacts such as heavy rainfall, sea level rise, and flooding that local managers are experiencing today.

The GAO report shows a path toward minimizing future damage. This study documents the need for the Federal Government to work with States and local utilities to strengthen the resilience of water infrastructure to climate impacts and makes practical suggestions that we should implement immediately through incorporating climate effects into infrastructure planning and providing enhanced technical and financial assistance.

My colleague Senator SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO of West Virginia and I introduced S. 2636, the Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act to prepare our publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities for the impacts of climate change. These efforts will work in tandem with the goals of the Clean Economy Act to seek net-zero emissions while preventing further damage to our national infrastructure by the extreme weather events we are already seeing.

The Clean Economy Act directs the EPA to coordinate with other Federal agencies to encourage the restoration of ecosystems such as forests and wetlands that sequester carbon and improve climate resilience, particularly on Federal and Tribal land.

The fight to reduce the greenhouse gases that cause climate change is not unlike the challenge we face in cleaning up and restoring water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and streams. Many of the solutions, such as restoring natural carbon sinks like wetlands, are the same. Wetlands act like natural sponges, storing excess carbon in soils, as well as soaking up stormwater and trapping pollutants before they reach rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay.

The original Chesapeake Bay Agreement was a simple, one-page pledge signed in 1983 recognizing that a cooperative approach was necessary to address the bay's pollution problems. The 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement set the first numeric goals to reduce pollution and restore the bay ecosystem. Today, the EPA-led Chesapeake Bay Program partnership engages dozens of agencies and organizations in the effort to restore the bay and its rivers. I am encouraged to see a number of the agencies named in section 2 of the Clean Economy Act are Federal agency partners, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—NOAA—U.S. Department of Defense—DOD—and U.S. Department of the Interior—DOI.

This body recently unanimously passed proposals I authored that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay watershed and wetlands nationwide. Foremost was a provision increasing the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization to a historic \$92 million. The bills were part of a bipartisan package of wildlife conservation legislation, the America's Conservation Enhancement—ACE—Act. The ACE Act served as a substitute amendment for the North America Wetlands Conservation Extension Act—NAWCA—which provides grants to protect wetlands.

We have demonstrated our ability to respond legislatively to challenges that seemed insurmountable 30 years ago. I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this new consensus bill.

SOUTH SUDAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to express strong concern about the situation in South Sudan and to call on the administration to step up its diplomatic efforts to avert a return to conflict and help achieve a lasting peace. For 6 years, the people of South Sudan have suffered the effects of a brutal civil war. International efforts to find a diplomatic solution have failed, and the humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains one of the worst in the world.

In September 2018, President Salva Kiir and his main political opponent,