

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,

former Vice President Riek Machar, agreed to form a unity government in the capital, Juba, by March of 2019. Though this so called “revitalized agreement” is not perfect, it is what we have to work with. The ceasefire between Kiir and Machar that was part of it has largely held, sparing the South Sudanese from the violence and brutality so many experienced at the height of the civil war. I am also encouraged that the government and political opposition groups that had refused to sign the 2018 revitalized peace deal reached an accord last month.

However, two successive delays in the establishment of the unity government have made me skeptical about the chances that the latest deadline, February 22, will be met. While both parties have stated their commitment to it, they have yet to effectively address two fundamental sticking points: the boundaries of South Sudan’s states, and the formation of an inclusive national army. Absent an agreement on these two issues, lasting peace may prove elusive.

At the end of the day, Kiir, Machar, and others who claim to represent the South Sudanese people are responsible for peace in their country. However, given our historical role in South Sudan, the United States has a significant role to play. I would like to remind my colleagues that the United States was heavily involved in brokering the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement which helped create the conditions for South Sudan’s independence. Since independence, the United States has provided nearly \$3.8 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance since the outbreak of civil war. We have supported the UN peacekeeping force in South Sudan, UNMISS, which is protecting 200,000 civilians sheltering in or near its bases, investing more than \$342 million last fiscal year. These dollars are and have contributed to keeping thousands of people alive. But the South Sudanese deserve more than mere life support. They deserve to live in peace. We have influence with all of the key actors in the region, yet the administration has failed to use it. The administration must effectively use its influence to help the millions of South Sudanese who aspired to liberty but found misery instead.

Previous administrations made South Sudan a priority in their foreign policy. The Bush administration helped negotiate the aforementioned Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Obama administration help shepherd the country to independence and remained actively engaged as the security and humanitarian situation developed.

At his confirmation hearing, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Tibor Nagy promised that under his leadership, “The South Sudanese will realize just how involved the United States is.”

However, administration engagement has been weak and inconsistent, and it

is not guided by a clearly articulated strategy. In May 2018, the White House announced it was conducting a review of our assistance programs to South Sudan. In a statement, it expressed frustration that, “the leaders of this country have squandered this partnership, pilfered the wealth of South Sudan, killed their own people, and repeatedly demonstrated their inability and unwillingness to live up to their commitments to end the country’s civil war”—a bold statement but it has been more than a year and a half since the review was announced, and it remains incomplete. Since that time, what has the administration done? Well, 3 years into the administration, it has finally designated a special envoy, something for which I have been advocating for years, but the envoy will not answer directly to the President or the Secretary of State, which I fear may limit his stature and, therefore, his effectiveness.

Additionally, the administration has imposed targeted sanctions. Last year, the Treasury Department sanctioned two Cabinet ministers, Elia Lomuro and Kuol Manyang Juuk. Last month, they also sanctioned South Sudan’s First Vice President Taban Deng Gai. Deng is credibly accused of influencing the government to execute to dissidents; he should be sanctioned for human rights abuses. But, as I have said many times before, sanctions are not a strategy. Sanctions are a tool to be used selectively to apply pressure towards a specific political goal. In this case, support for a comprehensive and durable peace agreement.

Last month, a year and a half since his confirmation, Ambassador Nagy visited Juba. While I applaud Ambassador Nagy’s trip—I believe that the U.S. should be increasing its diplomatic engagement—one visit does not a policy make. It is unclear what the trip was meant to accomplish in the absence of a comprehensive strategy.

At this critical juncture, I am still hard pressed to understand the administration’s approach towards South Sudan, and I am worried that we do not have a plan of action should this latest deadline not be met. Time is of the essence; I urge the administration to take several actions.

First, ensure that Special Envoy Symington has the appropriate staff and resources to effectively undertake his responsibilities. The administration has moved from no envoys for Sudan and South Sudan to two envoys. While the challenges in the two countries are different, the fates of the two countries remain intertwined. Coordination is critical, as is support for both of their offices.

Second, we must have a sound strategy for supporting a viable peace agreement. I call upon Special Envoy Symington to take immediate steps to develop an interagency strategy, in consultation with our Ambassadors in the region, aimed at uniting the region to apply pressure to the parties to ad-

dress outstanding obstacles to the formation of a unity government. In the short term, the strategy should focus on developing benchmarks and milestones towards formation of a unity government, and steps—to include punitive measures—the United States will take to encourage regional partners to apply consistent pressure on the parties to the conflict to move towards peace. Longer term, it should lead towards supporting conditions that support a sustainable peace and credible elections. The strategy should also include actions to support grassroots reconciliation and restorative justice, as well as accountability for war crimes and human rights abuses.

Finally, the administration must conclude its review of assistance to South Sudan and be transparent to the South Sudanese, members of the diplomatic community, and the American people about exactly what the next steps will be relative to its findings and how those steps fit into a broader strategy. Whatever these steps are, they should be aimed towards cementing peace, and continuing strong support for development and humanitarian assistance to the people of South Sudan.

If past is prologue, South Sudan’s leaders may well once again fail their people. The stakes for the formation of a unity government—one that can implement a durable peace—are perilously high. If the current negotiations collapse, millions will suffer. We must do all we can to ensure that the South Sudanese are able to move forward with this agreement, flawed though it may well be, and we must be prepared to help it succeed.

TRIBUTE TO IYAD SHIHADDEH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to a valued and long-standing member of my staff, Iyad Shihadeh. After nearly 9 years of serving the people of California in my San Francisco office, tomorrow will be Iyad’s last day.

Iyad first joined my team in 2011 as a staff assistant and quickly made an impression through his diligent efforts on behalf of the Californians calling or visiting our office. Iyad was quickly promoted to the position of constituent services representative, where he managed as many as 200 casework requests simultaneously between the Departments of State, Justice, and Homeland Security.

Iyad demonstrated an aptitude for problem solving on behalf of individuals and organizations needing help navigating the Federal bureaucracy. Additionally, Iyad took charge of the office’s intern program, guiding the dozens of students each year working in the San Francisco office. Many of our former State interns and staff are indebted to him for his thoughtful career advice as they made their first forays into the field of public service.

In 2017, Iyad was promoted again to be the director of constituent services,