

commander of the veterans of Kake, his village, and making sure his Alaskan Native veterans got the care and benefits they have earned.

Lincoln also spent his career helping his fellow Alaskans in his community. He has been a tenacious advocate for self-determination and for healthcare for Alaska Natives, particularly Alaska Native veterans. He did an amazing job. And I saw him in action for many years as chair of the Alaskan Native Health Board, which is an extremely important organization for our whole State, where he did a great job leading that for healthcare for all Alaska Natives. So that is a little bit about Frank and Lincoln's background.

As I mentioned, in 2018, they get this letter. Wow. We have a great opportunity here to get artifacts from their village back home. They got involved, undertook the very tedious process of reaching out, writing grants. And by the time they were ready to go, COVID hit. So, of course, that set them back and everybody back. They had to wait.

Finally, the two, as we were coming out of COVID, reenergized their efforts. They took a plane from Kake to Juneau, Juneau to Seattle, Seattle to Portland, where they went to George Fox University.

By the way, as I mentioned, it was very, very gracious, very respectful. They actually held a ceremony at the university. The university wanted these items to be returned. They knew it was the right thing to do. It was an emotional experience for all.

So they started to bring back the objects, the artifacts. This is how Frank described it. When he was there, when the box of items that had been in storage at the university for about 100 years was put in front of him, he said:

It was like running into an air-conditioned room. And then when they opened up the box [with the artifacts and objects from our village, it was like] the sun hit them, it was like spirits hitting me in the face.

"Can you feel the spirits?" he asked other people gathered in the room.

Lincoln said that he could feel it, particularly when they opened the boxes of the rattles that belonged to his family—imagine that feeling—and his clan, the Eagle Clan, with the Killer Whale House. Lincoln said:

It was like looking directly back at my family's heritage.

He said he felt a certain wholeness when he saw the items. A piece of his culture and that of his community that had been missing for so long was now back. When they got back to Kake, a crowd was there to greet them. They sang greetings songs. They ate traditional food.

And then, as per the guidelines, Frank filled out the last paperwork—you always have paperwork when you are dealing with the Feds—and put his hand up and said: I am relieved of duty. I got it done.

Lincoln's next project is to build a Tribal house along with a wellness center where these and all the artifacts

and art can live in a temperature-controlled room so the spirits he was talking about can be there—set free, back home to pass down the wisdom to the next generation.

As Lincoln said:

It's powerful looking back on people we know that were here before us—as a family, as a tribe—and it's tangible, we can touch it.

And now they are back home. Because of their efforts, Frank and Lincoln and the whole community in Kake can now experience this power. They can touch it.

So to my friends, Frank and Lincoln, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year to Kake. Thank you for the great job you have done—the determination—and congratulations once again on being our Alaskans of the Week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Alaska.

WILLOW PROJECT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, yesterday, as some of my colleagues may know, the Federal Government issued the final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on what is called the Willow Project in Alaska. This is a very large oil and gas development in my State. It has been in permitting for about 20 years—20 years. That is a whole other topic. We don't need 20 years to do anything in terms of permitting.

But I want to first begin by thanking several of my Senate colleagues, particularly a number of my Democratic Senate colleagues who have been reaching out to the Biden administration and saying: Hey, you guys need to move this Willow Project forward, for reasons I am going to talk about.

By the way, I am going to talk about this a lot for the next 30 days here on the floor. It is so important to my State, my constituents, but to America. But I want to begin by thanking so many of my Senate colleagues—a big number of them. I am not sure they all want to be recognized. So I won't recognize any of those. Senator MANCHIN put a statement out on this yesterday. But a number of them—especially my Democratic colleague friends—reached out over the last several weeks of the Biden administration saying: Hey, it is time; it is time. This is good for Alaska, good for America, good for our environment.

So I want to talk a little bit about this. As I mentioned, I will be down here talking a lot about this because it is so darned important to Alaska and, I would argue, America.

This project, as I mentioned, has been under some kind of regulatory review since ConocoPhillips got the leases from the Federal Government during the Clinton administration, the late 1990s. Again, something that people always forget: This is a lease from the Federal Government to the private sector. They paid hundreds of millions of dollars for these leases. We are in a contract with the Feds saying we are going to explore and then develop.

It is also in what is called the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska,

NPRA. It is not a controversial area, unlike ANWR—we recognize that—or some of the offshore developments. This is the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. This was set aside by Congress, this body, I think almost 70 years ago. It used to be called the Naval Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. For what? For developing identifying oil and gas, which our country needs—still needs. It is going to need it for decades to come.

So the review process has been going on for years. Every environmental review, this project advances with flying colors. I will get to that. The Trump administration finished the permitting with a record of decision in 2020. They approved five drilling pads. The Biden administration, after some court delays—and to be honest, after delays from the Biden administration—came back, finally, with a supplemental final EIS and said: We are going to go from five pads down to three.

All right. That is not what I would have preferred. But these are the career people. And they think that this can be developed with this new plan. We would agree. But that is a bare minimum. There were some indications yesterday that the administration is still looking at maybe less. We have 30 more days to review this. And they are looking at maybe less pads.

Well, we have all stated—the private sector companies stated: Hey, anything less than this, you are essentially killing it, because you can't make this an economically viable project.

So let me just give a little bit of a background on this because it is so important, and then I want to make a few points that relate to the voices that need to be heard as it relates to the Willow project.

We could start building this tomorrow. This is clearly a shovel-ready project. We only build, in Alaska, projects like this in the winter because we have such high environmental standards, the highest in the world. We build ice roads, ice paths so we don't disrupt the tundra, and we only, generally, build from January to April. The Conoco team is ready. Estimates are 2,500 jobs—2,500 jobs. Could we use that in America? Could we use that in Alaska? Darn right we could.

By the way, the estimate is 75 percent of those jobs will be union jobs, building trade jobs. That is why the laborers—pretty much every major union in the country—has viewed this as one of their top priorities, not just for Alaska, for America.

Revenues are about \$17 billion for Federal, State, and local governments—\$17 billion. America, Alaska, the North Slope Borough could all use that.

Racial equity, racial justice. I come down here and speak a lot about why resource development in Alaska is so important because it mostly happens in the rural communities in my State where people, primarily indigenous people, don't have the things that the

average American takes for granted, like running water, like flushed toilets, like gymnasiums, like health clinics, let alone hospitals. So Alaska Natives in Alaska, over the last 25 years, have had an explosion in life expectancy. It increased by almost 13 years, more than any other part of America by far. They are living longer. That is a big indicator of policy success. Are your constituents living longer? My constituents are living a lot longer. Why? Because of projects like this. You get jobs; you get revenues; and you start to get things that the average American thinks that every American citizen has. In a lot of our rural communities in Alaska, we don't.

When you want to talk about racial equity and racial justice, this should be No. 1—No. 1. I am going to get to it. The Native communities in my State are 100 percent behind this project.

For that reason, let me talk about another benefit, the environment. This will be the lowest greenhouse gas-emitting project of an energy project of this size, of any project like this in the world—in the world. If we need oil and gas, which the Biden administration's Energy Information Agency says we will need for decades to come and the International Energy Agency in Paris says we are going to need oil and gas for decades to come, wouldn't you want to produce it in the place with the highest environmental standards? The answer is yes. Wouldn't you want to produce it with those 2,500 American jobs—good jobs—that pay a real high wage? The answer is yes. Wouldn't you want to do it in a way that really promotes environmental justice and racial equity by helping indigenous people in their communities with jobs, with revenues, with services that most people take for granted? The answer is yes.

This project, at peak production, will be about 200,000 barrels a day. That is a lot of oil, but you are going to be able to do it without barely any new infrastructure—as I mentioned, five pads or three pads—and it is right next to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline that is two-thirds empty. You plug it in there, and it flows down to America.

You think we need energy? We need energy. One thing I have said to the Biden administration, which makes no sense at all, is why would the President go to Saudi Arabia on bended knee asking for more oil? Why would this administration go to Venezuela—Maduro, a terrorist—and lift sanctions on Venezuela, which has some of the most dirty, polluting energy projects anywhere in the world, so we can import more oil into America from Venezuela and from Saudi Arabia, when we can get it from Alaska with our workers, our high environmental standards—highest in the world—our Native people? These are all the reasons why this makes sense.

These are the reasons why—again, thank you to my colleagues, so many of my Democratic colleagues. All my Republican colleagues are, of course,

supportive, but they don't have the sway with the Biden administration. This is why everybody here—with the exception of a few, and I will just name one because I can't help but name him—are for this. In terms of energy security—and I know the Presiding Officer follows this—which countries fear American energy dominance more than anything? Read the intel. It is Putin in Russia. They are worried about projects like this. It is Xi Jinping in China. They are scared to death of American energy dominance. And it is the people in the Middle East. I was just there on a codel with six Republican and Democratic Senators—in the Middle East. The Presiding Officer was going to come with us. We really missed him. He couldn't make it. Our National Security Advisor was there. We had breakfast with him. He knows all about this project, by the way. The Biden administration's national security teams—Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, National Security Advisor—they think this is a no-brainer.

Of course, we need more energy. Imagine what we can do if you are going into a meeting with the, say, Saudis or Emirates saying: By the way, we just approved a project that will be 200,000 barrels a day for America with the highest standards in the world. That is power. That is still power. We need all the above. I want all kinds of energy—renewables, wind, solar—but we are still going to need oil and gas. If we do, let's get it from us, not our enemies.

This announcement came—like I said, three pads is not great, but we can work with it. BLM put out a pretty good statement. The Department of the Interior put out a statement. They didn't quote anybody, which was very strange. It was a headless Department of the Interior statement that kind of indicated maybe they are going to kill this project in 30 days. That is very troubling.

Our delegation has asked for a meeting with the President to finally pitch him on this. I pitched President Biden on this before. At the time, he was very supportive so it will be hard to walk it back.

Here is my issue. I just want to make a couple of final points. The media coverage on this—to our friends in the media, I am going to ask—look, I interview with the media all the time. I talk with anybody who has issues, but it was remarkable. Go read the articles yesterday on the Willow project. They quote every far-left radical environmental group in America, none of whom, by the way, live in Alaska. The list is very long. They are calling this a horrible project. It is the highest standards in the world, there is no doubt about it. They are just saying apologetic things about this project.

So yesterday's press quoted all these voices who are all negative. By the way, they don't want to build anything. They don't want to have one additional energy project in America.

They don't; ask them. You don't want energy from Alaska? You would rather get it from Venezuela, 18 times more polluting than an American project? When you ask them that question—trust me, I have asked that question a lot—they never have an answer. They don't know what to say. They just say: We hate all oil and gas.

Guess what. We need it. Let's do it here.

Here is my point. This is a list of just some groups that need to be heard. Next time my colleagues—my friends in the media write a story—go ask all the unions. Laborers' International, the biggest construction union in America, LIUNA, led by a great American, Terry O'Sullivan, put another statement out. He has been writing letters once a month. This is one of our biggest projects for the laborers, the building trades, all the unions that build stuff—a giant coalition. Sean McGarvey, another great American is head of the building trades. They put out a huge statement. They have been putting out statements on Willow for years. Did any of our great media in America quote the unions yesterday? No. They quote the Center for Biological Diversity and all these other far lefties, but the men and women who build stuff weren't quoted at all. This is one of their biggest priorities in America right now, 100 percent.

The group that they really did not quote at all—and this is troubling to me—is all the Alaska Native leaders and Alaska Native Tribes and Alaska Native elected leaders in this part of Alaska. There are dozens of them. I was down here and gave a speech a few months ago with all the letters from all these different groups. You know what they do? They love to pick the one person in Alaska who is against them and quote that person.

My ask of the media is next time you write about Willow and the Biden administration, when you are looking for the people who really know how this matters to their State, quote some of these incredible groups—the ANCSA Regional organization, the city of Wainwright, the North Slope Borough, the Native village of Barrow, the Voice of the Arctic, which is a grouping of different Native groups on the Arctic. Here is what they said. Here are a few. This is from the Inupiat leaders of the Alaska's North Slope:

The Administration cannot proclaim to support meaningful tribal consultation and environmental justice while at the same time killing a critical resource that supports . . . the Inupiat communities of the North Slope region.

The Native Alaskans want this. This is the Alaska Federation of Natives. That is the biggest Native group organization that represents all Natives in Alaska: Southeast, North Slope, Interior. They are huge supporters of this—every group.

My friends in the media, go ask them, quote them. Don't go to Greenpeace out of New York City or

San Francisco. Quote the Alaska Native people who live there.

I will make two final points. As you can tell, this is very important to me. You know we have a couple of Members of Congress—I forget this one guy's name from Arizona—GRIJALVA, I think. He was saying the Alaskan people don't want it; Alaska Natives don't want it. He said that yesterday. He has a new member on his committee, MARY PELTOLA, Congresswoman from Alaska, who is an Alaska Native. Maybe you should ask MARY what she thinks about this project instead of spouting off on an issue.

Unfortunately, I have one colleague here—I am not going to get into it. He knows who he is. He makes it his life's work to go after Alaska, including this one. I will give a speech later on the hypocrisy of that action.

I want to just quote the voice of the Arctic Inupiat, a group of Native leaders. Here, they sum up what happened yesterday, what the media kind of highlighted while, literally, canceling the voice of the people in Alaska. Here is what they say:

Outside activist groups opposing Willow have drowned out local perspectives—

That is what happened in the press reports yesterday.

and are actively working to supersede the views of the Alaska Native people. This is not environmental justice or any other kind of justice.

When you put that back to a Biden administration official and say: You guys care about environmental justice, racial justice, racial equity that you talk about all the time, what about my constituents? Every time I have asked that question of a Biden administration official, they look at me blank: Hmm, I don't know how to answer that.

The indigenous people of my State want this project, undeniably. Our friends in the media won't write that story.

It is a direct attack on Alaska Native self-determination.

This is the voice of the Arctic Inupiat. Like I said, I am going to be coming down here talking about this because it is really important for my State and really important for America.

A final point, too. I frequently make the argument—some of my Democratic colleagues don't like it—you know, on these kinds of issues, the Democratic Party that used to be for the working men and working women of America, the people who build things, kind of migrated, kind of left the working men and women out. If the far-left environmental groups want something, they almost always go with them, not the working men and women of America.

This will be a test for the administration. You say you want to support the working men and women and the Indigenous people in my State? This is an easy answer—easy answer. Look at the supporters.

So I hope we can get there. Thirty days is going to be a battle, but I hope

our friends in the media, when they are writing about this in the next few weeks, don't cancel the voices of Alaskans, don't cancel the voices of the Alaskan Native people, the Indigenous people. Hear from them. I know you have a bias against a project like this, but listen to the people I represent. They are great people, and they are very clear that they are supporting the Willow project, as am I, as is Senator MURKOWSKI, as are, by the way, a lot of my colleagues in a bipartisan way. I thank them again. This is going to be really important. And it doesn't just matter to Alaska; it matters to America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore of the United States Senate.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, it was 30 years ago to this very day that I came here to give one of my first speeches on the Senate floor, and I talked about a friend of mine back in Washington State. She was a mom. She had just gotten heartbreaking news. Her son was dying of leukemia. And then another gut punch: Her employer told her she had to choose between being in the hospital with her son or being at her job, and if she wasn't there, she was going to lose it.

To this day, that makes me so angry. No one should face such a cruel decision. No one should ever be forced to choose between taking care of themselves and their loved ones and being able to make ends meet.

So at the time, 30 years ago, I was on the floor to urge my colleagues to pass the Family and Medical Leave Act, which provided job-protected, unpaid leave to workers across the country, because the bottom line was that every worker should know that if they have a family emergency, they can prioritize their family's health without jeopardizing their family's economic security.

I was so thrilled when, just a few days later, we won, and that bill became law. But even back then, it was clear that bill was just a first step. It was clear we needed to keep fighting for the next one. And I am still here, and I am still fighting because we are way behind where we should be. We are way behind our peers in the world when it comes to giving working families the support they need, and it is holding us back.

For one thing, there are still too many loopholes that leave people without the simple promise of unpaid leave. Too many workers today in this country are denied the basic protections of the Family and Medical Leave Act that we passed into law 30 years ago. I have been fighting to close those loopholes and expand protections for decades so workers are not left out in the cold during an emergency just because they work at a small business or they work part time or just because their family might look little different—for example, if they are a caregiver for a niece

or a nephew or a grandchild. No one should be punished for that. So it is time that we pass legislation to guarantee that those workers get the same protections as everybody else.

Let me be clear. Passing bills to do this, that is just updating our laws to guarantee unpaid leave for all. That is just making good on the promise we made to workers 30 years ago. In other words, that is just the next step, but it is far from the last one. Our families need a lot more. They deserve so much better. There is no excuse for our utter lack of a national paid leave program. It is bad for families, as any working mom or dad can tell you or anyone who cares for a family member with a serious health condition. They know this all too well.

By the way, it is bad for our economy because the lack of paid leave means that employees lose their wages and businesses lose their workers. We are facing serious workforce shortages in key sectors of our economy today. Let me tell you, the lack of a national paid leave program is not helping; it is hurting. We are the only Nation among our peers that has not figured that out yet. We are the only one that hasn't gotten this done. The reality is, it makes our economy less competitive on the world stage. But you don't have to look at other countries to see how urgent this is; just listen to people right here.

I shared my friend's story all those years ago, but today, across the country, there are still so many families facing unthinkable choices. There are still so many people—working moms in particular—sharing their own deeply personal stories about this, stories of the painful recovery after giving birth and the incredibly special but, let's face it, pretty tough first weeks of bonding with a newborn child; stories of the grief and the pain of caring for a seriously ill child; sitting at a hospital bedside of a seriously ill parent recovering from surgery or coping with a cancer diagnosis; with the added stress, at that hardest time of your life, about how you are going to make your next month's rent if you have to take unpaid time off of work. Anyone who has been in those situations knows it is hard. You have so much you are worried about.

Here in Congress, we should be working to make that an easier time for families. We should be taking that worry off of parents' shoulders. We should be making sure that no worker has to choose between their family and their job, between their family and their paycheck.

So as we mark the anniversary today of the Family and Medical Leave Act, I want to urge my colleagues, let's celebrate the legacy of that bill, of course, by building on it. Let it be this Congress that we finally, at long last, take the much-needed next steps that families have been waiting for, that they have been calling for. Let's ensure that the Family and Medical Leave Act protects all working families. Let's establish a national paid leave program.