

The Federal court's ruling brought common sense back, but the Department of Energy can still slow-walk permits, and this is something Congress must watch closely. This is something Congress is already looking to address, with bipartisan support for setting a time limit on how long the Department of Energy can take to review new permits—a shot clock, if you will.

When we unleash American energy production and LNG exports, it creates high-paying jobs, it boosts our economy, and it strengthens the United States and the national security of allies. It denies income to Putin and drives down global greenhouse gas emissions. These should all be bipartisan goals.

Common sense prevailed in the courts. Now it is time for common sense to return to the White House.

#### NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Madam President, the National Flood Insurance Program, or NFIP, was created to protect Americans and their families. It covers 4.7 million American homes. But NFIP fails to serve that core function when it becomes too expensive to afford.

This is my poster: Make flood insurance affordable.

FEMA's new risk assessment, Risk Rating 2.0, has blindsided homeowners with unprecedented spikes in their insurance premiums, and it was never passed by Congress.

I speak to constituents constantly about flood insurance. A few months ago, I shared several stories that my team and I have heard from people in Louisiana about the issue. And their stories matter. They are the stories of Americans struggling to get by, and they deserve to be heard. So I am back to share a couple more.

One resident in New Orleans, nearing retirement, told us she was struggling to keep up with rising premiums because they no longer allow her home to be grandfathered into the program. Her house was built in 1987, up to the standards under the flood map at the time. She did everything right.

Her home flooded during Katrina, like so many did, but, again, it was saved from skyrocketing premiums until Risk Rating 2.0. And it is important to note that the flooding during Katrina was due to the failure of federally designed and built flood walls. So she is being blamed for the Army Corps of Engineers' failure, and, therefore, now she has got skyrocketing premiums.

She tells us that her future premiums will eventually rise to over \$8,000. Her hazard insurance is almost \$12,000 and growing each year. She wrote:

There is no way I will be able to retire and afford the premiums. I can hardly pay them now. There is no way I will be able to retire.

Her story is one that is shared by many homeowners in our State. There is another woman in the city of Central, LA, just outside of Baton Rouge, an area that doesn't often flood. As she

put it, in order for her house to flood, the whole city of Central would need to be under water.

But when Risk Rating 2.0 hit, she learned her premiums would quadruple if she opted for the coverage she wanted. So, instead, she dropped coverage altogether.

Now that is the problem with blindsiding people with higher premiums. If they don't flood and they cannot afford insurance, they drop their coverage. When that happens, the pool of policyholders shrinks, and the risk is put on fewer and fewer policyholders, which raises their premiums even more, and you enter what is called an actuarial death spiral.

FEMA itself forecasted that over 20 percent of stakeholders would leave the program within 10 years with these increased premiums. We are setting the program up for collapse.

And, by the way, these are not wealthy people. The wealthy are like a small minority of those affected. There is a stereotype that this is for wealthy people with their camps at the beach. No, this program is for working and middle-income Americans, the kind of folks who wake up every day, go to the refinery, make the gasoline and the jet fuel that help us get here, and do the work that literally powers our economy. And they are the ones that are affected.

Madam President, 62 percent of all NFIP policies are in parishes and counties where the median household income is below the national average of about \$54,000. These are hard-working families, not millionaires' beach homes.

And it is not just Louisiana families getting hit. We have seen flooding in States that don't typically make you think of flooding.

So if it is the dark yellow, it is a State that has had over a billion dollars in claims. That includes the President of the Senate's home State of California, her native State of Mississippi, and all of these other beach States, including a non-beach State, which would be the State of Missouri.

So the yellow which is not as dark is, again, places which have had over \$50 million in NFIP claims. So you see this is a pervasive problem.

This is a national program. Forty-four States have had over \$50 million in total NFIP claims, and every single State has had at least \$5 million in claims.

You may be surprised to hear that Ruidoso, NM, a small village in South Central New Mexico, has faced 13 flash flood emergencies since June 19 of this year due to runoff from heavy rain.

On July 17, homeowners in Nashville, IL, were devastated when the town's dam flooded and caused damages to dozens of homes.

On May 24, Montana Governor Greg Gianforte issued an executive order to declare a statewide disaster in response to recent flooding in Northern and Central Montana.

Residents of Appleton, WI, faced widespread damage from a flash flood earlier this year.

New Mexico, Illinois, Montana, Wisconsin—not places you typically think of when you think of flooding. Again, it is a national issue, not just a coastal issue.

Now, let me say to my colleagues who represent those States and all of my colleagues that come to talk to me about it: Let's have a conversation. Every single Member of this body has constituents who depend upon the National Flood Insurance Program. My team is working on a bipartisan solution that will roll back Risk Rating 2.0 and make flood insurance affordable and accountable again. Let's find a way forward.

#### VENEZUELA

Madam President, for 25 years, the Venezuelan people have suffered. They have endured the Chavez-Maduro despotic regimes—regimes that stole their money, ruined their country's infrastructure, destroyed public services, tortured their politicians, and tried to destabilize the entire region.

One little factoid: At one point, Venezuela had the third richest economy in the Western Hemisphere per capita, and now their per capita income is that of Haiti. They have gone from third to being the worst.

But Venezuela's freedom-loving citizens kept fighting. Yesterday, again, they went out to vote for freedom in a movement led by Maria Corina Machado, the opposition leader who was herself barred from running, and Edmundo Gonzalez, the opposition's candidate. The result was an overwhelming—overwhelming—win for the opposition and for democracy.

And here is Maria, and here is Edmundo.

Multiple exit polls and quick counts show the opposition winning by more than 30 percent. Edmundo Gonzalez won with the largest landslide in Venezuelan history. This landslide win comes despite the regime's efforts that barred the vast majority of the 8 million Venezuelan exiles from voting. The real electoral numbers were so bad that the regime simply stopped counting votes and made up numbers.

Now, Venezuelans obviously want change, and the regime does not. They are desperately holding on to whatever power they can grab. This is a critical moment in our hemisphere. Do they have to wait with another 25 years of tyranny and repression when they are just 3 hours from the United States? Do we, the United States, allow the Russians, the Chinese Communist Party, the drug cartels, Iran, and others to use Venezuela as ground zero in their plans to harm the United States and our allies in the hemisphere? Do we allow Venezuela's collapse to eventually flood the United States with refugees?

We need to change course. It starts by recognizing President-elect Edmundo Gonzalez. It starts with an

international coalition to ensure the political transition that Venezuelans already began at the polling booth.

The world knows what happened at the ballot box over the weekend, but we must have the courage to come together, stand against Maduro, and tell him: Not this time.

I stand here today saying so: Not this time.

Maria Corina has always said her fight will "go until the end," as she puts it. The free world must ensure that this is not the end.

With that, I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Adam B. Landy, of South Carolina, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

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

Mr. CASSIDY. 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 executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Ex.]

YEA—73

Baldwin	Cantwell	Daines
Barrasso	Capito	Duckworth
Bennet	Cardin	Durbin
Blackburn	Carpenter	Fischer
Blumenthal	Casey	Gillibrand
Booker	Cassidy	Graham
Boozman	Collins	Grassley
Braun	Cornyn	Hassan
Britt	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Brown	Cotton	Hickenlooper
Budd	Cramer	Hirono
Butler	Crapo	Johnson

Kaine	Murphy	Stabenow
Kelly	Murray	Tester
King	Ossoff	Thune
Klobuchar	Peters	Tillis
Lankford	Reed	Van Hollen
Lujan	Rosen	Warren
Lummis	Rounds	Welch
Manchin	Sanders	Whitehouse
McConnell	Schatz	Wicker
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Moran	Shaheen	Young
Mullin	Sinema	
Murkowski	Smith	

NAYS—13

Cruz	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Ernst	Lee	Sullivan
Hagerty	Marshall	Tuberville
Hawley	Paul	
Hyde-Smith	Schmitt	

NOT VOTING—14

Coons	Padilla	Scott (SC)
Fetterman	Ricketts	Vance
Hoeben	Risch	Warner
Markey	Romney	Warnock
Menendez	Rubio	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 710.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Meredith A. Vacca, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 710, Meredith A. Vacca, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Peter Welch, John W. Hickenlooper, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Laphonza R. Butler, Richard

Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 709.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph Francis Saporito, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 709, Joseph Francis Saporito, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Peter Welch, John W. Hickenlooper, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Laphonza R. Butler, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 582.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.