in the day, and the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motion with respect to S. Res. 690 ripen at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow; finally, that if cloture is invoked on S. Res. 690, all postcloture time be expired and the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader, no earlier than Friday, May 1.

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

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, expect a vote on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 184 at 1:45 tomorrow.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of my colleagues.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 551

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here with regard to a unanimous consent resolution.

I have tried one before to pursue a simple truth that climate change is real. Earlier this year, I came to the floor and asked my colleagues if they could all agree on that simple scientific fact. Sadly, given the nature of this body, they could not.

So we are going to break it down into smaller bits because the reality of climate change is made up of many, many simple truths; and I hope that by breaking it down piece by piece, I can find areas where my colleagues will agree.

Today's simple truth: Sea levels are rising. Can we agree on that? The resolution specifically says: ''recognizing that sea levels are rising at accelerated rates due to human-caused climate change.''

As global air temperatures rise, obviously, so do the temperatures of the oceans. Here is a graph showing the increase in ocean heat content. It is measured in zettajoules. ''Zettajoules'' is a very big number. ''Zetta'' means it has 18 zeroes. It is a billion trillions or a trillion billions, depending on which way you want to go about it.

To put it at a more practical scale, the entire production of energy by the human species on all of planet Earth adds up to one half of a zettajoule. The price we pay for the fossil fuel component of that half zettajoule of energy is an ocean whose temperature is increasing by around 15 zettajoules a year. It is a 30-times magnifier because of the effect of fossil fuel emissions.

And as ocean heat content grows, seawater expands. The physical nature of seawater is to expand as it warms. And it also melts nearby glaciers, and both result in higher sea levels.

Combined, glacier melt and thermal expansion of water cause global sea levels to rise, and the rates are accelerating over time.

Here is the curve of global sea level rise. It is one of the most unambiguous indicators of what emissions are doing on our Earth to our natural systems.

Sea level rise has been going at accelerated rates since about 1863, which lines up right with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution when greenhouse gas emissions began to rise as we burned coal, natural gas, and oil.

Depending on the trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions, sea level rise in the United States could range between 2 and over 7 feet by the end of this century. That is a particularly dangerous proposition when you consider that 3.7 million Americans in the contiguous United States live on land less than 3.3 feet above high tide.

And it doesn't come up like the bathtub; it comes up and is still subject to tide and storm, so it can be driven ashore at far higher levels than 2 feet or over 7 feet.

Most of the impact will be in Florida, Louisiana, California, New York, and New Jersey. My home State of Rhode Island and my colleague Senator MARKEY's home State of Massachusetts will share that unfortunate experience.

Sea level rise isn't just evidence of a change in climate; it has real consequences. Thirty percent of people living in the United States live in coastal areas which puts them at risk from rising seas, increased flooding, shoreline erosion, and storm hazards.

And it is not just people at risk. Mr. President, $10 trillion in goods and services are produced in coastal areas of the United States.

Rising sea level will not only cause what we call increased sunny day flooding, like when there is no rain to cause flooding; it is just tide and sea level rise, but it will also increase the amount of flooding from storms and from storm surges, and that will cost lives and money.

Indeed, it is already disrupting insurance, mortgage, and real estate markets. I have spoken elsewhere about the meltdown in Florida in those markets. Florida was recently described as the biggest loser for real estate values of all the 50 States, and it relates back to this cascade from climate risk to insurance being unavailable or too expensive to afford, to mortgages being compromised, to property values taking a hit.

There is some lessons we should learn from what has already happened. Mr. President, $8.1 billion of the $62 billion ascribed to Hurricane Sandy connects back to the rise in sea levels. Could have saved $8 billion were the sea level rise not happening.

Everywhere, high water levels that were once rare—1-in-100-year events are becoming 1-in-10- or 1-in-5-year events. Up to 13 million Americans will face displacement from sea level rise by 2100.

That is assuming that all goes smoothly, but all doesn't always go smoothly. There are tipping points in life. My favorite example is a rowboat.

If you put more and more weight in the rowboat, the water goes up and up the side of the boat. And there is not much change as the water goes up and up the side of the boat. But then you hit a tipping point where the water flows over the gunwale and into the boat. That is a big tipping point difference because suddenly it is not just more and more of the hull down in the water; it is the whole boat catastrophically falling, flooding, sinking to the bottom of the lake or the sea. So tipping points are to watch for.

Most ice is found in polar regions with as little as 1.5-degrees celsius of warming. The Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets could be destabilized. That would be a major tipping point. Our Earth has already warmed 1.2 degrees celsius. So getting to 1.5 is not far away. And Greenland, for instance, is warming four times faster than the global average. So that puts us at the risk of the polar ice tipping point very soon.

Sea levels are expected to rise by 20 to 25 feet. Not 2 feet to 7.2 feet; 20 to 25 feet if the Greenland ice sheet melts and an additional 10 to 17 feet if the West Antarctic ice sheet melts.

The disintegration of either ice sheet would render major cities uninhabitable and completely destroy America's coastal communities.

So here is the simple truth: sea level rise is real. It is happening. Fossil fuel-caused climate change is accelerating its effects. Indeed, it is already disrupting American lives, pocketbooks, and families.

Mr. President, I will yield to Senator MARKEY from Massachusetts and return to make the actual unanimous consent request.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the great Senator from Rhode Island, from the Ocean State. I represent the Bay State. We kind of have a relationship with the ocean in Rhode Island and in Massachusetts. That is why we are here.

I rise today in support of Senator WHITEHOUSE's resolution recognizing the grave threat of sea level rise due to human-caused climate change.

After decades of fossil fuel companies polluting our planet, ocean and atmospheric temperatures are rising. Our glaciers and ice sheets are melting.

Greenland's ice sheet is three times the size of Texas. And in some areas, the ice is 2 miles high. So just think of Greenland this way: 1,000 miles long, 300 miles wide, and a block of ice on it—the world's biggest ice cube—2 miles high is on top of Greenland, and it is melting.

So just think of a full glass of water: the Atlantic Ocean. Now, just drop the

biggest ice cube into an already full—an already full—glass of water. It just creates a flood no matter where you have done that.

So in 2007, when Speaker NANCY PELOSI named me as the chair of the Climate Committee in the House of Representatives, she asked me: Where should we go?

And I said: Well, our first visit should be to Greenland because it is the scene of the crime.

So we went up there end of May and out about 50 miles deep into Greenland on top of the 2-mile high icecap, and there is already lakes that are forming because the Sun starts to melt it in May and June and July and August.

What that water does on top of that 2-mile high ice cube is it starts to eddy out groove marks all the way down to the bottom of that 2-mile high ice cube. And then that water—that now warm water—starts to liquefy the bottom of that body of ice. And they measure on the Richter scale ice quakes inside of that big ice cube.

And that is what is happening on the planet. Greenland is a perfect example. I am so glad that Senator WHITEHOUSE raised it because it is the scene of the crime; and all along the East Coast, we are going to see absolutely catastrophic consequences if we don't stop it.

I mean 2 miles—I am thinking 30 football fields high of just ice going straight up in the air—30 football fields. That is what this is. That ice and ice all around the world is running into the ocean faster and faster and causing seas to rise.

The result has been sea level rise on a global scale. In the 20th century, sea levels rose nearly 9 inches over the 20th century. Now, as climate change speeds up, we are expected to see that amount of sea level rise from 2000 to 2030 as much as a foot—1 foot additionally—in just 30 years.

The rate of rise is accelerating, and if we continue to emit greenhouse gases that warm up that ice, sea level just won't quit. It is going to get worse and worse and worse. And for coastal communities across the country like those in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, this rate of rise is very, very real. It means more frequent and severe flooding events, eroding beaches, worsening storm surge, catastrophic consequences.

I mean, in the year 2000, there were three climate-related events that cost $1 billion worth of damage—three in 2000.

Two years ago, 27 events occurred in our country that cost $1 billion worth of damage, and the total amount was $180 billion just out of those 27 events, much less all of the other climate-related damage that was being caused.

It is getting worse and worse and worse, and it means billions of dollars in infrastructure damage, insurers raising premiums or exiting the insurance market for that part of the coastline altogether, and home values just keep dropping.

Senator WHITEHOUSE has talked about this over and over again, warning like a latter-day Cassandra of the coming danger of the impact it is going have upon the valuations of homes, and it means serious risk to human health, to livelihoods, and to lives.

And in Massachusetts, from Winthrop to Chatham to Rockport, our communities are adapting. They are building seawalls, investing in flood modeling, raising homes, and restoring natural ecosystem barriers.

But sea level rise is a particularly challenging crisis. Even if we stabilize emissions, scientists believe that our seas could continue rising for centuries. What we can control is the future rate of sea level rise through our actions right now.

So the task is very clear for the Senate, for our country. We must immediately lower our emissions, invest in ocean science, and build resilient infrastructure to protect against the threat that is already built into the system.

So knowing all of this, what are President Trump and his administration up to? Instead of lowering emissions, they are blocking and killing and delaying 28,000 megawatts of clean energy projects that would cut greenhouse gas emissions instead of tethering the country further to pollution and costly fossil fuels.

Instead of investing in ocean science, President Trump is proposing to cut the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by more than a quarter, and that would slash the budget for the National Ocean Service, which coastal communities rely on for water level models, flood risk assessments, and weather forecasting. And it would eliminate the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and laboratories like the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory that have been the backbone of coastal scientific research for decades.

We need to understand our rising seas, not undermine science. Instead of investing in resilient infrastructure, Trump tried to eliminate FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program last year which would have delivered $90 million just to Massachusetts alone.

So let's be clear. These cuts will not save the government money. We are going to pay more on our energy bills. Not double, not triple, not 10 times more because we are not building in the safeguards, but an infinity size more. It is penny-wise but pound-foolish.

Prevention is preferable to cure. That is where we should be. We need to make sure that we send a message. The President and his administration do not care about coastal communities. They do not understand the seriousness of climate change. We have to reject these cuts to science. We have to protect clean energy investments. We have to have the backs of our climate and ocean scientists, and we must support our local governments and first responders on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

This resolution—the Whitehouse resolution—affirms the facts on sea level rise. These facts are forecast and felt on our coasts, and I urge my colleagues to support Senator WHITEHOUSE's resolution and pass this commonsense resolution.

I yield back to my friend from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, to accommodate the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin, I will move the unanimous consent now and then the Ranking Member of the Commerce Committee will speak.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 551; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Reserving the right to object, I have got a smile on my face here. First of all, let me state that I am not a climate denier. I am just not a climate alarmist, like the Senators from Rhode Island and Massachusetts. So I am thinking of Chicken Little: ''The sky is falling.'' I am not sure how I am going to be able to sleep tonight.

I always found it very interesting when the Senator from Rhode Island was the chairman of the Budget Committee and we held numerous hearings on climate change with some tenuous connection to the budget. Again, very similar, ''the sky is falling,'' whether it is on insurance or housing costs or whatever.

During those hearings, I spoke about, probably a couple of times, and entered into the record the ''World Climate Declaration: There Is No Climate Emergency,'' signed by two Nobel Prize-winning physicists Dr. Ivan Yaeger and Dr. John Clauser, joined by about 25 other businesses, researchers, and scientists, and signed by a bunch of other people as well. It was a commonsense document.

The Senator from Rhode Island was talking about simple truths. Well, again, the simple truth is there is no climate emergency. The climate has always changed. It always will. CO_2 is plant food.

More people die of extreme cold than of extreme heat. I mean, these are things that are brought out in these hearings, generally by the minority witnesses.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Would the Senator yield for a procedural question?

Mr. JOHNSON. I suppose if it is procedural.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yielded Senator CANTWELL's time in order to convenience you, and I am interested in how long you are going to speak because—

Mr. JOHNSON. I am almost done. Do you want me to just object?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE.—you are now inconveniencing our other colleague Senator CANTWELL.

Mr. JOHNSON. Great. Listen, listen, I have barely spent any time here, OK.

The bottom line is, in those hearings, I asked witnesses: How much have we spent combating climate change?

Five to six trillion dollars.

Our Energy Secretary puts the number at $10 trillion and calls it, correctly, the largest malinvestment in human history.

This isn't some simple resolution. This is setting up trillions of dollars of malinvestment, up to $50 trillion in testimony.

So, again, we can't afford this climate alarmism. We can't cave to the Chicken Littles of the Senate.

So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak in support of the Senator from Rhode Island's resolution, S. Res. 551, and applaud him for recognizing that sea level risings are accelerating the rates that we are seeing and driving measurable impact.

So my colleague from the Midwest objecting to this is very disturbing because even our colleague from Maine and I—the Senator from Maine, Senator COLLINS—had gotten CBO to do two different reports over the last 8 or 9 years to say: How much is climate change costing the Federal Government and Federal taxpayers?

The first study came back and said it is costing us billions of dollars, and the most recent one said it is costing us trillions of dollars.

So, literally, you are costing taxpayers trillions of dollars because you don't want to adapt or mitigate those impacts. I can tell you that these are real-world impacts, and, certainly, when 45 percent of the U.S. economy is happening in coastal areas, that means those coastal economies can be impacted by rising sea levels, and that means that our economic output can be impacted. So we were trying to do something about that.

So I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for his leadership on this important issue. He is out here, time and time again, talking about this, articulating the issues, actually traveling his State, traveling the country, being an articulate voice on why rising levels of our oceans are important, why ocean acidification is important, why protecting fisheries is important, why helping shellfish growers is.

You know, we did some research, Senator WHITEHOUSE, at the University of Washington. It was only a few hundred thousand dollars. But we had five generations of shellfish growers about to go out of business because of the fact that ocean acidification had changed the temperature in the water, and we could not figure out how to seed for those shellfish. And the science that was done at the University of Washington helped us come up with a new process and saved the day.

But what is the next challenge going to be? So we need to strengthen our coastal resiliency in the face of this climate change.

So I really also applaud our colleague Senator MARKEY, who is a member of the Commerce Committee, also from an ocean State, very dependent on an ocean economy for lots of different issues. He wants to make sure that we are applying the best science to protecting these economies.

As I mentioned, a nonpartisan Government Accountability Office cost report found that climate change will cost taxpayers more than $1 trillion by 2039.

So I know the Presiding Officer knows all about what happens when FEMA and disasters happen and we need to help States. But just imagine that that bill is now going to be $1 trillion by 2039, and rising sea levels are going to be part of that cost.

Washington, my State, is already seeing real-world impacts from this, particularly in sea level rise. Puget Sound levels are projected to rise 1.6 feet by 2050 and as much as 10 feet by 2100. And statewide, we are expecting to see 1 to 3 feet by the end of the century.

So that does have an impact. And the kind of changes that we are talking about can have impacts specifically on infrastructure. Sea level rise will worsen coastal flooding. It will impact storm surge. It will likely—just for example, what does that mean? We have a highway system that runs right up and down our Puget Sound area that can be impacted at times.

We have had a lot of erosion lately, now twice, right outside of Bellingham, and I–5 has been closed. OK, why is I–5 closing? Because we have had so much rain, we have had so much impact-changing environment that we basically have had to have I–5 shut twice just to clean up from the mudslides.

Our Amtrak service, which runs all the way from California up to British Columbia, also has been impacted by huge slides after rain and after these swollen rivers.

And the increased likelihood of ground instability during earthquakes also magnifies devastating events and threatens critical areas like roads, bridges, and fiberoptic cables in greater Seattle, which could all be underwater as early as 2030.

So we just had a massive flood out in the Northwest, in December, and that impact was just unbelievable—one of the biggest. You know, thank God we had the information from NOAA. And thank God, what did we do?

In King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, we basically, over the last decade, planned for mitigation and adaptation. We built a canal system. We built a system that allowed us to take some of that water and create a flow of the massive amount of water that happened during that flood. And we were able to, literally—we lost one individual. That was it.

We were so proud that we had made it through most of that, until one individual drove into a flooded area and, unfortunately, lost their life. We are very, very sorry for them and their family.

But when we planned and did adaptation and mitigation, when we looked at culverts, when we looked at diking systems, when we looked at relieving the pressure, we were able to lessen the impact.

So it is not unlikely that any of these floods or any of these rising water issues impact a major transportation system in our State, whether it is I–5, I–90, or Highway 2, or some of these other facilities.

So we pay a lot of attention to this because we have got a lot of product going to the Pacific right through our State. And so if any of these infrastructure resources are closed, it is literally millions and millions and millions of dollars a day.

So rising wastewater is also an issue. So treatment facilities around Puget Sound and Elliott Bay are increasingly vulnerable to flooding and overflow, threatening the release of bacteria, toxic chemicals, and other pollutants into our waterways and our drinking water. Those risks and costs only grow as the water rises.

In the State of Washington alone, 2 million people live in areas susceptible to flooding, with $86 billion of infrastructure at risk. And that number continues to grow as sea levels rise.

Nationally, 34 million Americans live in low-elevation areas at risk to sea level rise. That is literally 1 in 10 Americans. So why ignore it?

All my colleague was trying to do is to say we should recognize this threat and start to work toward solutions.

Sea level rise endangers one of the cornerstones of our State's heritage and economy, and that is salmon. We all in the Northwest want to make sure that rising sea levels do not impact our estuaries and our wetlands, but that is exactly what these rising sea levels are supposed to do, significantly reduce estuaries and wetlands by 2100. These areas are critical for juvenile salmon as they migrate to the ocean, as well as birds and important wildlife.

Just this week, Isabella Breda at the Seattle Times wrote a piece about how the Chinook salmon—I think I have got to get this for the Senator from Rhode Island because it is a great story. It is on the front page of the Seattle Times. But it is literally about monitors in the river because we are trying to monitor these storms, because when we have—this is the area where, several years ago, we had a massive mudslide in Oso, which killed dozens and dozens of people, unfortunately.

And so we know we can have major events, and we need to do better.

So, basically, it is about how Chinook salmon in the Stillaguamish River are vulnerable to the flooding

that disrupts the riverbed sediments that are needed for spawning. So we are trying to understand this because it is kind of like a massive amount of flooding can just wash away the salmon beds. And in this river alone, Chinook populations are down to roughly 10 percent of their historic levels.

So this is really important to us. As a State, we want salmon. We want to understand rising sea levels. We want to understand what flooding is going to do to create damage. When are those spawning grounds going to be lost, and when are Chinook survival rates going to continue to drop? We want to know.

Many of the 29 federally recognized Tribes in my State have already been seeing the impacts of climate change and are already preparing for the worst. And I know some people may not know the geography of our country, but we are talking—OK, let's just say that we are talking way out on the Pacific coast. Tribes like the Hoh Indian Tribe, the Quinault Indian Tribe, the Quileute Tribe, and the Shoalwater Bay Tribe are all located along the Pacific coast, and the threat of sea level rise has forced them to take aggressive, unprecedented actions to move parts of their reservations to higher land. Some have had to plan for full-scale relocation of coastal villages to mitigate the increasing dire threat of floods due to sea level.

Trust me, the Army Corps of Engineers is out there, practically on a monthly basis, trying to come up with a plan to mitigate the impacts of the Pacific on the Shoalwater Tribe.

Others are working tirelessly to mitigate the cumulative effects of coastal erosion, including inland flooding and extreme weather events.

For some of our coastal Tribes, the situation is incredibly dire. Not long ago, when I was visiting the Shoalwater in Tokeland, WA, many of the homes and government buildings that were there on the beach and the shoreline you could just tell were quickly eroding.

And so this is about whether we give them a resolution. This resolution that we were talking about makes clear that we cannot bury our heads in the sand while climate change and sea level rise put billions of dollars of infrastructure and millions of Americans at risk.

If we want to protect our economy and these communities, we need the data and the science to understand the problem. We need to take the necessary steps to protect our communities and our infrastructure and our economy.

So I urge my colleagues to reconsider. I hope that we will have S. Res. 551 before us again. I hope that some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle that represent coastal States will talk to our colleague from Wisconsin and encourage him to, instead, support this legislation.

We have to do better planning. We have to do better adaptation and mitigation. We have to use better science. And we have to recognize that the impacts of rising sea levels in our oceans really, really do affect our economy.

I am so proud of our fishing economy in the Northwest. I think we sometimes—the Senator from Massachusetts and I, you know, basically debate back and forth about best seafood and best aquaculture. And I know the Senator from Rhode Island also has a lot to brag about.

But that number—45 percent of the economy being in coastal regions of the United States of America and us doing nothing to think about what is the adaptation and mitigation that we need to do is just wrongheaded. We need these. I don't even know if the Senator has got any data on this, but I would assume he has thought about this from a military perspective.

I have got a lot of military bases in our State, and they are very close to water. What are they going to do when sea level rises? What do we have to do to mitigate and adapt so that those bases continue to be successful, particularly at a moment when the Pacific is becoming even more interesting?

So, again, I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for helping lead this charge every night but particularly tonight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would wrap things up this evening by simply pointing out that the views expressed by the Senator from Wisconsin related to climate change are not shared by the University of Wisconsin, which actually teaches climate science. It has programs in the Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences Department. It has programs in the Environmental Sciences Department.

Courses include Climate and Climate Change; Climate Change, Human and Planetary Health; Climatic Environments of the Past; Climate Change Ecology; Ice and Climate Dynamics; Soils and Climate Change; Climate Change and Health Disparities; Climate Change Medicine; Agricultural Weather and Climate; Climate Change Economics and Policy; Climate Change Action Planning; Case Studies Exploring Infrastructure Sustainability and Climate Change; Climate Change Governance; Climate Change, Sustainability, and Education; and for the lawyers in the room, even a law class: Climate Change, Human Rights, and the Environment.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:07 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 29, 2026:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ROBERT CEKADA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES.