

sooner Congress realizes change requires a cultural shift in both parties, the sooner that change will come.

I would like to spend a moment outlining a few components of this bill. We have not actually gotten to see the bill, but I have been told by the majority leader that we have added, I think, 12 or 13 other bills to it. But from what we have known in the past, let me go through and explain to the American public what is in this bill.

The national parks today face a severe shortage of money to maintain them at their current level. It is about \$9.8 billion. In this bill we add four new national parks. The U.S. Arizona Memorial in Hawaii is sinking. The visitors center is sinking. We haven't put the money in to repair it, but yet we are going to create more national parks that will further dilute the maintenance budget of the National Park Service so we can't even maintain what we have. We have a \$700 million backlog just on The National Mall in Washington. We didn't address any of that in terms of the priority of fixing that. Yet we are going to add four new national parks.

We are going to add 10 new heritage areas. It is great for us to protect and think about the environment. But we never talk about how that impacts property rights, one of the rights given to us as our Nation was created. We are going to threaten that area. We are going to threaten through eminent domain. We are going to threaten through councils that will impact individual ownership of what you can do with your own property because you might be in proximity to a heritage area. We have 14 studies that would create or expand future national parks; in other words, 14 more. That is what we are funding in this bill. We don't have the money to take care of the parks we have today, but yet we are going to put into this and spend money to potentially create 14 more.

There are 17 provisions in this bill that will totally prohibit any exploration, oil extraction, coal extraction, natural gas extraction from 2.98 million acres in this country, many of which have proven reserves underlying. There are 53 rivers that are designated or portions of which are designated as scenic rivers. We have a great scenic river in Oklahoma called the Illinois. I am glad it is a scenic river. But with scenic river designation comes a trampling on the rights of people who are far away from it. We didn't change scenic rivers designation in light of our energy needs. Once a river is designated a scenic river and we need to move natural gas or a coal slurry or oil from point A to point B, we are totally prohibited from ever doing that on a scenic river. So it is another strike at any sort of increasing in our independence on energy because we are going to designate scenic rivers. Why not designate scenic rivers with an option to make sure we don't handcuff ourselves when it comes to energy?

There are 65 new Federal wilderness areas. Here is an important matter we came across as we studied this bill. In the United States today, right now, before this bill, there are 107 million acres of wilderness. All the developed land—cities, suburbs, towns—across the whole rest of the country is only 106 million acres. We are going to be adding to that and limiting our opportunity to the resources we have.

There are 1,082 pages in the bill. I understand it is now 1,200 pages. There are 1.2 million acres in Wyoming that are withdrawn from mineral leasing and exploration. There are 1.93 million acres of Federal wilderness land. There are 3 million additional acres withdrawn from leasing and energy exploration. There are 331 million barrels of oil that we know are there and we are never going to take. We are just going to help those who drive up our energy costs because we are going to know it is there but we can't touch it because we are going to make it off-limits. There are 592 spending and 15 new State and local water projects. There is nothing wrong with State and local water projects, as long as they are a priority, but these are earmarked, specific projects for specific Members. There is \$10 billion of total spending money we don't have. We are going to borrow it.

There are 8.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that we know is there that we will never touch. What the Department of Interior tells us is there is much more there, but these are the proven reserves.

I will end my conversation, only to be continued in a more thorough manner as the bill actually comes to the floor by asking the American public: What would they hope we would do in terms of trying to change, trying to meet what they see as the problems in front of us? Would it be that we would be about passing things that are small but make us look good that we can't pay for or would it be that we should attend and address the pressing and also long-term needs of the country?

It is about trust. The reason we have a 9-percent approval rating is because we are not trusted. We are addicts. We are self-indulgent addicts over our power.

My query to the body and to the American people is, will you hold us accountable? You have to do an intervention with us, each one of us, every time we are home: Are you being a good steward with the limited dollars we have? Are you making choices that may not look good for you as a politician but are truly the best choice for the country? Are you putting yourself second and our country first? Are you acting as a statesman or are you acting as somebody who wants to get re-elected?

The real paradox is, with trust comes confidence. With that confidence comes the involvement and support of the very people we actually do represent.

We have a choice. I hope the introduction of this bill does not portend

that we will not take President-elect Obama's lead and offer the American people real hope, real change, that we will get away from our addicted self-indulgence to look good at home and start making the hard, tough decisions that will right our ship and put our country first. Anything less than that says the people who took their oath today and those of us who have taken it before, we violate it. We raise our hand and put one on the Bible and say we will uphold it, but then when it comes to the first tough choice, look good at home or do what is in the long-term best interests of the country, we swivel, we back down, and we opt for the short term, the self-aggrandizement, and the stroke on our own back. We are better than that. The people in this body are better than that.

My hope is we can prove to the American people over the next 6 to 9 months that we got the message, that it is about making the tough choices. It is about doing what is right in the long term. It is not about what makes us or our party look good; it is about what is best for the country as a whole.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I would raise objection to the filing of the bill at the desk, the Bingaman land package.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES KIEFFER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise today to commend and congratulate one of the best and brightest gentlemen I have ever had the privilege of employing. That man is Mr. Charles Kieffer who has served as staff director of the Senate Appropriations Committee for the last 2 years, and as deputy staff director for 6 years prior to that.

Chuck Kieffer is a marvel of intelligence, wisdom, tact, coolness, and an extraordinary knowledge of appropriations and budget matters. He is personable, polite, and a pleasure to work with. He has been invaluable to me, to the leadership of the Senate, and to all