confusion over section 137 as to whether the language that is now incorporated in the CR expands DHS authority or allows implementation of a potential Executive order pertaining to cyber security. The answer to that question is no, absolutely not. The provision is limited to funding improvements in the Federal Network Security Program, which provides security systems that monitor cyber attacks on Federal Government computer networks. It helps enhance the protection for these existing networks that are in place.

It is important that both the House and Senate homeland security appropriations bills included this additional funding, and it is considered so critical, it was added to the continuing resolution so that this implementation can continue without interruption. It does so because these networks are constantly under attack by individuals and groups who might cause real problems and real harm to our country.

So let me be very clear on the language that has been agreed on in a bipartisan basis and what the colloquy said. This provision does not intrude upon the authorizers' jurisdiction. This provision does not have anything to do with the regulation of private sector infrastructure. DHS has confirmed that in writing. And this provision does not enable a new Executive order in any way. I would be the first to object to that. I hope we can work toward a legislative solution for those existing networks that are in place.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am very happy to allow my colleague from Rhode Island for allowing me the time, and unfortunately his good presentation was interrupted. I thank my colleague for the time to clarify that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am very happy to allow my colleague from Rhode Island the time, and I appreciate his good work on cyber security and hope that he and I and others can work toward a legislative solution on that.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. My topic had been the acidification of our oceans as a result of carbon pollution now up 30 percent in acidity and projected to increase 160 percent in acidity at unprecedented rates in millions of years. It has been 50 to 300 million years since we have seen this kind of dramatic change in ocean acidity. For species that use calcium carbonate to create their shells and skeletons, such as oysters, crabs, lobsters, and the little plankton that so many other species depend on at the base of the food chain, it becomes harder for these species to thrive.

These unprecedented changes I am talking about in ocean acidity are not happening alone, they are happening in concert with the temperature that is also driven by carbon pollution.

Just this week on the surface of the Earth, we experienced one of the hottest summers on record. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released this statement about the northeast shelf large marine ecosystem, which extends from the Gulf of Maine down to Cape Hatteras. Here is what they said:

"During the first 6 months of 2012, sea surface temperatures were the highest ever recorded. Above average temperatures were found in all parts of the ecosystem, from the ocean bottom to the surface and across the region. The annual 2012 spring plankton bloom was intense, started earlier and lasted longer than average. This has implications for the food web, as creatures to the largest marine mammals, like whales. Atlantic cod continued to shift northeastward from its historic distribution center."

I don't need to tell anybody in the Northeast how important the stability of the cod fishery is right now. That historic fishery is facing significant reductions in catch limits because the population is not rebounding as expected from the reduced catches that fishermen are already contributing to try to solve this problem. Something is causing that failure to rebound, and the unprecedented environmental changes occurring in the ecosystem can't be overlooked as the culprit behind this unexplained phenomenon of failure to rebound.

NOAA cites a 2009 study published in Marine Ecology Progress Series that analyzed survey data in the region from 1987 to 2007. It found that about half of 36 fish stocks evaluated have been shifting northward for the past four decades, with some disappearing from U.S. waters as they move farther offshore.

In Narragansett Bay, in my home State of Rhode Island, average water temperatures have increased by 4 degrees. This amounts to an ecosystem shift. In fact, the bay, once dominated by bottom-dwelling fish, such as winter flounder, is now more populated by open-water species, such as squid and butterfish.

Let's look at winter flounder a little bit more closely. In the 1960s, the biomass of winter flounder in Narragansett Bay was as high as 4,500 metric tons. By 2011, it was down to just about 900. This is the total estimated biomass on the blue line. The red line is the landmass. That is what the fishermen were able to catch and bring in. As my colleagues can see, it went from 1,000 metric tons up to 2,000 metric tons and then, over time, it sagged and returned to 2,000 metric tons, and now it is left to virtually zero. This was a very productive fishery for Rhode Island fishermen.

Past overfishing had a role to play, but so too has the dramatic temperature change and the stock's ability to recover is made all the more difficult by ongoing temperature change as well as acidification.

The changes facing our oceans do not stop at higher temperatures and greater acidity. I wish they did. But as average global temperatures rise, water expands. Water expands as it gets warmer, and new fresh water pours out of the snowpack and ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland. Long-term data from tide gauges in our traditional sailing port of Newport, RI, show an increase in average sea level of nearly 10 inches since 1930. At these tide gauge measurements, show that the rate of sea-level rise has increased in the past two decades compared to the rate over the last century. The increase is not just happening, it is speeding up. This is consistent with and since 1990, sea level has been rising faster than the rate predicted by scientific models used to generate the IPCC estimates.

Global predictions for sea-level rise range from 20 to 30 inches by the year 2100, with recent studies showing that the numbers could be even higher than that due to greater than expected melting of glaciers and ice sheets.

Our Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council has used these predictions to estimate that by 2100, the sea level in Rhode Island could rise approximately 2 to 5 feet. For our coastal ocean State, that is a dramatic threat.

Sea-level rise and the increase in storm surges that will accompany it threaten at-risk coastal areas, whose roads, powerplants, wastewater treatment plants, and public facilities may need to be reinforced or relocated.

The natural environment there—estuaries, marshes, and barrier islands—has a role. They act as natural filtration systems and they act as buoys against storms, and they are being inundated by rising seas. In Rhode Island, local erosion rates doubled from 1990 on to 2006. Some of the saltwater wetlands near our coast are already transforming themselves into salt marsh as a result of this inundation.

Our Coastal Resources Management Council has documented places such as a beach in South Kingstown by where 160 feet of shoreline has been lost to erosion since 1951 at a rate of 3 feet per year.

In the small but vibrant coastal community of Matunuck, beach has eroded 20 feet over the past 12 years. The town faces difficult decisions as the only road connecting the community and its restaurants and businesses
The laws of chemistry don't care no matter how much special interest laws of nature are not subject to repeal. But the polluting special interests and the party of Russell Train who, as instrumental in the passage of the Clean Air Act; the party of President Nixon, who founded the EPA; the party of Theodore Roosevelt, the great conservationist; the party of President Nixon, who founded the EPA; the party of John Chafee of Rhode Island, who was instrumental in the passage of the Clean Air Act; and the party of Russell Train who, as I mentioned earlier, died this week at the age of 92 after a distinguished career in environmental protection in the Republican Party—that party has now become the servant and handmaiden of whatever paid at least $153 million in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industry executives or related groups. Governor Romney has accepted $3 million in contributions from Oxbow, a coal company controlled by William Koch, a brother of David Koch.

Nature could not be giving us clearer warnings. Whatever higher power gave us our advanced human capacity for perception, calculation, analysis, deduction, and foresight has laid out before us more than enough information to make the right decisions. These God-given human capacities provide us everything we need to act responsibly if only we will.

But the polluting special interests appear to rule here. The party of Theodore Roosevelt, the great conservationist; the party of President Nixon, who founded the EPA; the party of John Chafee of Rhode Island, who was instrumental in the passage of the Clean Air Act; and the party of Russell Train who, as I mentioned earlier, died this week at the age of 92 after a distinguished career in environmental protection in the Republican Party—that party has now become the servant and handmaiden of whatever paid at least $153 million in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industry executives or related groups. Governor Romney has accepted $3 million in contributions from Oxbow, a coal company controlled by William Koch, a brother of David Koch.

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