

the floor will be wide open for Senators to speak as long as they like.

I object to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the original request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

FORESTRY POLICY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am speaking in morning business with my colleague and friend Senator MERKLEY to talk about forestry policy and to give the Senate a little bit of an update on where we are because we have so many resource-dependent communities that have been devastated as a result of a variety of policies. I want to touch briefly, and then yield to Senator MERKLEY, on what some of those elements are.

No. 1 is that our softwood lumber producers are now in a titanic battle with the Canadians, fighting the Canadian system of heavily subsidizing their industry, thereby cutting ours. A group of 25 Senators—a quarter of the Senate—have joined me in an effort so that our trade representative pushes back and continues to fight this unjust, inequitable system until we no longer see Oregon and American jobs destroyed as a result of the Canadians' unfairly subsidizing their industry.

No. 2, we feel very strongly about getting the harvest up in a sustainable fashion. We know there is an awful lot of work to do in the woods. We can do it with an environmental ethic, with an ethic of forest health, and I strongly support that. I have introduced legislation to do that in my home State and have been supportive of colleagues' efforts to do it in their parts of the country.

The reality is—and the Forest Service has said this—you would have to increase logging on our public lands by 400 percent in order to no longer need a third leg of the forestry stool, which is the Secure Rural Schools program.

I want it understood that we are going to push back against inequitable trade practices that are hurting jobs in rural Oregon and rural America. We are going to support increasing the harvest in a sustainable fashion, but there is no realistic increase that might possibly win passage here in Washington and be upheld legally that involves taking the harvest up to 400 percent. You are going to need a safety net.

Senator MERKLEY and I, Senator CRAPO, Senator RISCH, and many colleagues on both sides of the aisle have fought to get this program, which has now expired, extended for one more year. This program began in 2000 as a result of a bipartisan piece of legislation, which Senator Craig and I authored, called the Secure Rural Schools bill. It now benefits more than 700 counties, and we see it benefiting communities all over the country. This program is depended on for education. It is depended on for roads. It is de-

pended on in many areas for law enforcement. Unfortunately, our colleagues have not been willing to extend it. Senator MERKLEY and I, and Senator CRAPO and Senator RISCH, in a bipartisan way, have wanted to work in the Senate to get this extended, but to put these vital county payments on the back burner would be an enormous mistake.

I want to yield the remainder of our time to my friend and colleague, but there are really three legs to this stool: fight unfair trade practices, get the harvest up in a sustainable kind of fashion, and understand that you are not going to be able to meet the needs of hard-hit rural communities without the safety net program—the Secure Rural Schools program.

Senator CRAPO, Senator RISCH, Senator MERKLEY, and I are going to keep coming back here again and again until we get it reauthorized.

I yield the remainder of our time to Senator MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Oregon, who, back in the year 2000, fought so hard to right a wrong. The wrong was that a variety of measures related to these timbered acres reduced the ability to pull as much harvest off as in the past. Part of that was the fact that there was simply a lot of second growth that wasn't ready to be cut yet. Another was a variety of rules related to environmental protections, to forest fire prevention. There were a whole series of things.

The bottom line is that these counties, which originally had these lands before they transferred them to Federal Government for safekeeping, are dependent upon revenue from the timber sales on these lands. My colleague pointed out that those timber sales simply can't operate at the same level to provide the resources those counties operated on. Much as with Payments in Lieu of Taxes, or the PILT program, we stepped in—my colleague stepped in and led the effort to honor the promise made to those counties. We have been doing so now for 16 years.

One of the challenges that has emerged is that we reauthorize it only for a short period of time. We say we will still honor the promise but only for a year or only for 2 years, which means the counties never know what is going to be coming. They are really caught in limbo. Because they are rural counties—they don't have a great amount of manufacturing; a lot of the counties don't have a lot of farmland—they are really dependent upon the forest industry as the heart of their economy. This is very important to them.

We need to honor the promise to these counties, just as we have through the PILT program. It is a situation we can debate at whatever level that should be, but it needs to be a long-term commitment to this promise to

these counties. Remember, these were county lands that were transferred back to the Federal Government to essentially hold in trust for them.

I share with my colleague the desire that we address this in a fashion that provides a strong foundation, a strong commitment to the promise made to rural America, to rural forested counties. As mentioned, 720 counties in 41 States—that is a pretty significant deal across the country. We need to act, and we need to act now.

I turn this back over to my colleague.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am going to wrap this up simply by saying a program like this has generated a tremendous amount of community involvement. There are advisory committees that bring the industry and environmental folks together. That is what we are going to need to get this job done right. It is called collaborative forestry. The Secure Rural Schools program is something that Senator MERKLEY and I want to reauthorize. It is a textbook case for what you want to do for collaborative forestry.

We didn't even really get into forest health because we all know our forests, particularly in the West, are burning up, so Senator RISCH, Senator CRAPO, and I went into something called fire borrowing, which is an extraordinarily inefficient policy that discourages prevention with respect to fire.

We are going to be back to talk about the nuts and bolts of sensible forest policy. We need to build on this collaborative effort, as we have sought to do in our O&C bill—the bill that Senator MERKLEY and I have been involved with—which will double the harvest, on average, for the next 50 years, according to the experts. We want it to be understood that we are going to be fighting on a number of fronts. We will fight with respect to the trade policy, which is long overdue, as it relates to getting a fair shake for our softwood lumber producers and value-added forestry. We are going to focus on collaborative approaches and get the harvest up in a sustainable way.

Senator MERKLEY has talked about the promise of Secure Rural Schools, and I feel it is very regrettable that when Senator CRAPO and Senator RISCH tried to convince the other side of the aisle to accept Secure Rural Schools now, we couldn't get it done.

I think anybody who knows us knows we are persistent, and you don't get anything important done without bipartisan support. That is the way we will approach our forestry policy in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONTINUING RESOLUTION AND
WRDA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to call everybody's attention to the House vote that just occurred on the continuing resolution and on the WRDA bill. The continuing resolution passed 326 to 96; 208 Republicans voted for it and 33 voted against it. On the Democratic side, 118 Democrats voted for it and only 63 voted against it.

The WRDA bill passed 360 to 61. Republicans voted for it 222 to 17; Democrats voted for it 138 to 44. The House has clearly—with two overwhelming votes—sent us the last two measures that we need to deal with here before we wrap up this Congress and head home for the holidays.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the body the message to accompany H.R. 2028.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2028) entitled "An Act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.", with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment on H.R. 2028.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, an act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Thad Cochran, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, John Thune, Daniel Coats, Marco Rubio, Roy Blunt.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 5139

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2028, with a further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McConnell] moves to concur in the House amend-

ment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2028 with an amendment numbered 5139.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

"This act shall be effective 1 day after enactment."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur with the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 5140 TO AMENDMENT NO. 5139

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McConnell] proposes an amendment numbered 5140 to amendment No. 5139.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike "1 day" and insert "2 days".

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 5141

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to refer the House message on H.R. 2028 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 5141.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McConnell] moves to refer the House message to accompany H.R. 2028 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 5141.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

"This act shall be effective 3 days after enactment."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 5142

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McConnell] proposes an amendment numbered 5142 to the instructions of the motion to refer the House message to accompany H.R. 2028.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike "3 days" and insert "4 days".

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 5143 TO AMENDMENT NO. 5142

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McConnell] proposes an amendment numbered 5143 to amendment No. 5142.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike "4" and insert "5".

GEORGE P. KAZEN FEDERAL
BUILDING AND UNITED STATES
COURTHOUSE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the body the message to accompany Calendar No. 65, S. 612.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 612) entitled "An Act to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the 'George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse'." do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 612.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to concur.

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 motion to concur in the House amendment to Calendar No. 65, S. 612, an act to designate the Federal building and the United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the "George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse."

James M. Inhofe, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Thad Cochran, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, John Thune, Daniel Coats, Marco Rubio, Mitch McConnell.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 5144

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 612, with a further amendment.