

know, quite frankly, how one can take the oath of office and not respect the Constitution as it delivers that power to this body, not to the President.

My third concern goes to the conflict of interest that he brought into consideration for this position. Specifically, it is the conflict of interest that he carries into his career through his very, very close association with the Koch brothers. He has been given the nickname "the Congressman from Koch." The headquarters of Koch Industries is located in his district. The Koch brothers gave him the money to start his business. The Koch brothers were the biggest donors to his campaign. His entire career is carefully intertwined with the Koch brothers and advocating for whatever they wanted him to advocate for.

What we see is that the Koch brothers are advocating against our working with other nations to take on the challenge of climate chaos. Now, Mother Nature sent us a big, rude awakening this last year with three powerful hurricanes tearing apart parts of our country and with forest fires stretching from Montana across to the Pacific Ocean and down the Pacific coast, deep into California, because of the carbon pollution that is warming the seas and changing the weather patterns and drying out our forests.

We suffer that, but we see so much more. We see the moose dying. We see the lobsters migrating. We see the oysters unable to have babies. A billion of them died back about the time I took office here in the Senate because of the acidification of the ocean, coming from carbon pollution.

The whole world is coming together to try to take on this problem, but Mr. Pompeo is uninterested in this major threat facing humanity. He supports our disengaging from the international community and taking this on. He is fine letting China take the lead and producing the economic results of taking the lead instead of the United States taking the lead and being engaged in these partnerships. So, colleagues, those are my concerns.

We need an individual dedicated to the power of diplomacy, not someone who reaches first for the sword. We need an individual who respects different religions and respects the opportunity in the United States that we carry to the world as a beacon of freedom, not one who disrespects it. Third, we need an individual whose career is not tied to a single industry and whose outlook is to continue to protect that industry, even in taking this job.

So for those reasons, this nomination should be turned down.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from North Carolina.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

### EARTH DAY 2018

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Sunday, April 22, marked the 49th Earth Day. Given the Trump administration's reckless assault on the environment, it is frightening to think where we might be on the 50th Earth Day.

President Trump hasn't built that "big, beautiful" wall he promised. More than a year into his term, he still hasn't filled dozens of critical posts, from Cabinet Secretaries to ambassadors.

Looking at what hasn't been done, a reasonable person might assume that this President still hasn't learned how to make government work. That might be true in many areas, but when it comes to the environment, it is dead wrong.

From day one of his administration, President Trump has used budget cuts, executive orders, and other administrative and regulatory tools to push a concerted rollback of environmental protections. President Trump has repealed or frozen some 850 rules and regulations, many of which have a direct impact on the environment.

He has signaled his intention to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord. America is the largest emitter of carbon gases, and we are the only nation on Earth that is not part of the global effort to save the planet from climate chaos and catastrophe.

Under this President, we have ceded global leadership on the climate to other nations, especially to China. Not only is that shameful, it is bad business. Some of the best-paying jobs of the 21st century will be in renewable energy industries. How are we going to create those jobs and industries in America with a President and administration that refuse to admit even the existence of climate change?

Since Earth Day last year, the U.S. has suffered some of the deadliest and costliest disasters in our history. Last August, Hurricane Irma battered the southern U.S., especially south Florida. It was followed quickly by Hurricane Harvey, which caused an estimated \$200 billion in damage and pummeled Houston. In September, Hurricane Maria caused the worst natural disaster on record in Puerto Rico. Nearly 8 months later, most of the island is still without electricity. After the hurricanes came the wildfires, including some of the worst wildfires in California's history.

Scientists warn that without significant reductions in carbon emissions, climate chaos will become more frequent, more deadly and more expensive.

What is FEMA's response? Strategic plans drawn up by FEMA during both the Obama and George W. Bush administrations acknowledged climate change as a serious threat, right up there with terrorist attacks. Under this President, FEMA has dropped any mention of climate change from its strategic plan. The reality we dare not deny has become the crisis whose name the Agency dare not utter.

Last year and again this year, President Trump has sent Congress budget plans that would gut the Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Scott Pruitt, the President's choice to run EPA, is an ethical nightmare, but he is a polluter's dream. He has vowed to withdraw the Clean Power Plan, a plan to cut emissions from the U.S. power sector by 32 percent from 2005 by 2030. Administrator Pruitt has signaled that he wants to roll back modest new fuel efficiency standards for cars and light-duty trucks—standards that would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The EPA under Donald Trump and Scott Pruitt has suspended the "waters of the United States" rule, designed to reduce pollution in 60 percent of the Nation's lakes, rivers, and streams.

EPA is not the only member of the Trump Environmental Wrecking Crew.

Today, 94 percent of the outer continental shelf in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans is off limits from oil and gas exploration. The Department of the Interior is proposing to open 90 percent of the outer continental shelf for future oil and gas drilling. On top of this, this administration has weakened safety requirements that prevent oil spills.

Interior's Bureau of Land Management is also selling off thousands of federally owned parcels of land for oil and gas development. Among the national treasures up for sale are two national monuments in Utah: the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears, home to some of the richest and most important archeological finds in our Nation.

Interior Secretary Zinke had a special flag designed for himself and ordered that it be flown whenever he was in the Department headquarters. It would be more fitting if he flew the white flag of surrender because that is what this administration is doing.

They are surrendering America's global leadership in the efforts to save this planet from climate catastrophe, and they are surrendering decades of important and lifesaving progress we have made since the first Earth Day in safeguarding our environment, preserving our natural treasures, and protecting the health and safety of the American people.

They are undoing decades of bipartisan agreements that balanced science