

another 26 may soon join them. There is also legislation pending in the New Jersey State Legislature to limit the proliferation of disposal plastics in New Jersey's economy.

With 40 percent of Americans living in coastal communities, my constituents back home are far from the only ones grappling with the hazards of plastic pollution in our oceans.

There is no question we still have work to do. As our bill heads to the House, I look forward to continuing these efforts with Senators WHITEHOUSE and SULLIVAN and our cosponsors as we engage House leaders to act on the bill this year.

Again, thank you to my colleagues. It is good. I know it doesn't always get the headlines. The essence of a good story seems to be conflict not cooperation, but I am thrilled to be a part of cooperation that could make a difference in the lives not just of our oceans but of our families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator MENENDEZ and Senator WHITEHOUSE again for their leadership on this.

We have all seen the pictures and the news stories. The issue, though, is a severe one. The World Economic Forum has estimated that if we don't do anything about this big crisis of ocean debris, but particularly the issue of plastics in the ocean, there are estimates that by 2050 there will be more plastics by weight in the world's ocean than there are fish. We can't let that happen.

So what we have done is we have put together this bill. As already mentioned, there were three different committees. There is an element on the domestic innovation side that creates a Marine Debris Foundation. That is a congressionally chartered private organization.

Think of groups that matter to Americans. There are dozens of these kinds of foundations, but they are important. They send a signal that the Congress of the United States cares about these things. Think about the Red Cross, the American Legion, and the National Parks Foundation. These are all congressionally chartered organizations. The new Marine Debris Foundation will be one of them.

The American Government is focused on this. It is an opportunity for the private sector, and we have seen some industries step up. There is a group called the Alliance to End Plastic Waste that has pledged \$1.5 billion to start addressing this problem. That is not small change. It is going to need that kind of money. Perhaps some of that can go into this foundation.

There is an innovation prize. A lot of focus in our bill is on innovation so that we can solve some of the big challenges in chemistry—a plastic bottle that could fully biodegrade. We don't have that yet, but these are some of the things that the bill looks at doing.

Of course, Senator MENENDEZ talked about the very substantial foreign rela-

tions component because so much of the plastic waste in the oceans comes from countries in Asia and Africa and 10 rivers, estimating almost 80 to 90 percent of all of the plastic waste in all of the oceans. So, again, it is solvable because it is definable.

Then, the third component is improving domestic infrastructure to prevent marine debris through new grants and foreign studies for waste management mitigation. So this covers a lot of different areas—innovation, our domestic side, the international side.

We have momentum. We had a great group of bipartisan Senators—Democrats and Republicans from all over the country and from all political persuasions—showing that momentum. We have the Trump administration fully behind this. In many ways, some of their Federal agencies weighed in significantly to help us design this legislation, and now we need to get it over to the House and move it in the House soon and get it to the President's desk.

So this is a good day for the oceans and a good day for bipartisan success in the U.S. Senate on an issue that people care about. People really care about making sure that we have clean oceans and we are making progress.

So I just want to leave it at that, and I will ask my colleague from Rhode Island, who has been the real leader on this issue, to wrap it up.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am delighted to close this out. Again, I thank Senator SULLIVAN. I think there is reason to hope for a really good appropriations subcommittee hearing on this subject in the coming year. I think there is reason to hope for another Environmental and Public Works Committee full committee hearing on marine plastics. I expect those things will happen, and that will help us with our progress.

One of the things I have come to admire about Senator SULLIVAN is that, as a colonel in the U.S. Marines, he sets himself a mission and then he goes about it with real vigor. One of the missions that he set himself was to make sure that the Trump administration followed up on what Save Our Seas 1.0 did.

There were a lot of doors that were knocked on that had their hinges rattled by Senator SULLIVAN. There are a lot of administration officials who probably had to hold the phone an inch or so away from their ears because Senator SULLIVAN was trying to get their attention on this subject.

Having seen him in action on Save Our Seas 1.0, I very much look forward to watching him in action on Save Our Seas 2.0 and to make sure that its legislative promise is fully realized in executive implementation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I look forward to another White House signing of this with all of our colleagues. I am sure that the administration is interested in it. You and I had a very eventful one over at the White House a couple years ago.

So, again, the momentum is there. We are just going to keep building on it.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, on to Save Our Seas 3.0.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in 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.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 11, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Peter Gaynor to be Administrator of the Federal Management Agency. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted yea.●

TRIBUTE TO CONRAD JEFFRIES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I honor Idaho veteran Conrad Jeffries for his service to our nation and for his efforts to address alarmingly high suicide rates in our country, especially among our Nation's veterans and servicemembers.

Conrad knows firsthand the personal costs of military service and the challenges servicemembers face returning to civilian life, and he has dedicated considerably of his time, talents, and resources to serving our country and helping his fellow veterans and military families. On January 12, Conrad Jeffries embarked on a more-than 200 mile run from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to raise awareness about rising suicide rates among veterans, Active-Duty servicemembers, and first responders. I understand his running route is intended to honor three sailors who committed suicide aboard the U.S.S. *George H.W. Bush* in September and promote the use of suicide screening forms to identify the root causes of and prevent veteran suicides. Conrad has said, "Veteran suicide is not the problem. Veteran suicide is the outcome." Conrad has admittedly faced his own personal struggles and has since dedicated his life to solving veteran suicide. This includes working to help others who struggle with mental health and substance abuse.

Conrad, who was raised in American Falls and lives in Boise, ID, served our Nation for 13 years in the Idaho Army National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard.