

warming at the rate of multiple Hiroshima explosions worth of heat per second—per second. There is not a lot of dispute here either, unless you want to argue with a thermometer.

Ocean warming displaces fisheries, disrupts ocean currents, destroys coral reefs, and depletes the oxygen levels and carrying capacity of the sea. These are the kinds of changes that usually transpire across geologic time. They are happening now.

Ocean warming sends its dangers ashore because that ocean heat energy powers up storm systems. They power up into stronger storms, and they power up faster. We just watched Tropical Storm Laura spin up into category 4 Hurricane Laura in less than 24 hours. As Bob Marshall, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Louisiana writer put it: “High water temperature [is] the crystal-meth of hurricane intensity.”

Warmer seas power up stronger storms, and they power up more storms. The Atlantic has already generated a typical full year’s worth of storms, pumping out about 55 percent more energy than usual into tropical storms and hurricanes. This year delivered the earliest ever C-, E-, F-, G-, H-, I-, J-, K-, L-, and M-named storms—every single one, the earliest of its name.

In 2019, 14 separate billion-dollar disasters struck the United States, and the majority of them were hurricanes. In 2018 and 2019, Dorian, Florence, and Michael slammed into our coasts. Year 2017 brought Harvey, the most significant tropical cyclone rainfall event ever recorded; and Irma, the strongest storm ever recorded outside of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, with sustained winds reaching 185 miles per hour; and Hurricane Maria, killing nearly 3,000 Americans in Puerto Rico and laying waste to the island.

Ocean warming is altering basic operating systems of our planet. Physical systems are altered; biological systems are altered; basic features of the ocean are altered; and the change has just begun. Many of these changes are oceanic, but some come ashore. We need to buckle up.

The third ocean alarm bell is acidification. Oceans absorb not just 90 percent of the excess heat; they absorb about 30 percent of the carbon pollution—the excess carbon dioxide from fossil fuel emissions, and they have sucked up a lot of excess carbon. Since the Industrial Revolution, oceans have absorbed about 525 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>—22 million tons per day. That added carbon dioxide chemically changes the ocean’s pH, making oceans more acidic. It looks like the oceans are acidifying at their fastest rate in at least 50 million years. As with warming and sea level rise, the rate of acidification is accelerating. Again, there is no real dispute; pH testing is pretty reliable stuff.

A new Texas A&M study shows carbon dioxide levels rising at alarming rates in the Gulf of Mexico—bad news

for shrimp, coral, and other marine life that are highly sensitive to acidity. Texas A&M warns of the acidification threat to the gulf’s commercial fisheries, worth roughly \$1 billion per year.

The Woods Hole Institute made startling findings about acidification of coral reefs triggering a kind of osteoporosis for coral, hampering the organism’s ability to grow skeletons. Reefs, of course, are the nurseries of the sea. Without coral reefs, marine biodiversity plummets and our oceans become unrecognizable.

The University of Alaska has an entire ocean acidification research center because of the dangers to Alaskan fisheries. The lowly pteropod is a base species along the northern Pacific coast. It is damaged in acidified seas, and no one quite knows what becomes of that ocean food chain when a foundation species like the pteropod collapses. We know it is not good.

All of these warnings are stark. Our oceans are in crisis. Our natural world hurdles toward a point of no return. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry keeps deploying lies and political influence in a carefully orchestrated covert operation run against our own government.

The fossil fuel industry’s menacing climate denial apparatus has captured one of America’s major political parties. In the wake of Citizens United, fossil fuel dark money has so thoroughly corrupted American politics that Congress has lost an entire decade—the lost decade—to industry mischief. Even today, we still fritter and dawdle.

Eventually, we will see the full contours of the covert operation the fossil fuel industry has run against us as if we were an enemy nation. One day will come a full accounting of this industry’s wanton deception of the American people. One day we will see just how much money this industry paid for its malign influence and who accepted that money and denied the science and ignored the problem. History will judge those involved harshly, and deservedly so. It is a crime in progress against our own children and the world they will inhabit.

After the lost decade of Citizens United, time is short to heed the warnings of our oceans and end the fossil fuel pollution that threatens them. It is truly getting to be now or never.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

### REMEMBERING JIM THOMPSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1978, I was the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, running with Michael Bakalis, the Democratic nominee for governor. We squared off against a ticket headed by six-foot-six Governor Big Jim Thompson. Big Jim was 40 years old and a relatively new Governor, only elected 2 years earlier. Bakalis and I were underdogs, but we were hopeful. We shouldn’t have been.

Our fate was sealed when Jim and Jayne were joined by their beautiful daughter Samantha right after Labor Day. Election day came, and we were clobbered. We found out what many Democrats would learn over the years. Big Jim was hard as hell to beat. Why? He may have campaigned as a partisan, but he governed in bipartisanship. His talent for working to get things done helped make him the longest serving Governor in Illinois history.

Last month, Jim passed away. I was honored to call him a friend and, today, I would like to pay tribute to his life.

James Robert Thompson, Jr. was born on the West Side of Chicago in 1936. Jim was known to be shy but ambitious. He listed his ambition as “President-Politician” in his yearbook. In one classmate’s yearbook, he wrote “Jim Thompson, Pres. of U.S. 1984–1992.”

Jim attended the University of Illinois at its campus on Navy Pier in Chicago. He transferred to Washington University in St. Louis in his junior year and attended law school at Northwestern in 1959.

In 1961, Jim worked for the Cook County State’s attorney and argued two cases before the United States Supreme Court. He also joined Northwestern University Law School as an assistant professor.

For 5 years, Jim taught at Northwestern, inspiring many students to pursue criminal law. In 1969, he became the head of the criminal division of the U.S. Attorney’s office. As fate would have it, he was the lecturer on criminal procedure in my bar review course. In 1971, President Richard Nixon appointed him to be the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

At the age of 35, Jim was a crusader against corruption in both parties, leading investigations against Chicago aldermen and Vice President Spiro Agnew. His efforts made him look like a political outsider—just what Illinois