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Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, the remarks of the Senator from Virginia, as always, are thoughtful, articulate, and in this case somber and serious, given the gravity of the situation that he described. They are important remarks and important for each of us in this body to thoughtfully and seriously consider.

The Senator's commitment, as a valued member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and ex-chairman of that committee—his commitment to traveling to where the action is taking place and meeting with representatives from all sides, analyzing the problem and bringing back the very latest of information, is invaluable to those of us who serve on that committee and everyone here in this body who needs to make decisions about what the policy of the United States should be in regard to these difficult situations that arise.

The Senator has indicated he has made close to 10 separate trips to this very difficult area of the world. This is not easy travel. This is a commitment that is extraordinary but also extraordinarily important to us in terms of formulating our policy. I thank the Senator for his leadership in that effort.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I express my humble gratitude to my good friend who has served these many years that we have been together on the Armed Services Committee and, indeed, has made trips to remote parts of the world. I remember well a trip to the gulf region, and other regions. And I and other Members of this body on both sides of the aisle will dearly miss the wisdom and the insight that you have in these complex problems, and problems that you have addressed very forthrightly in your distinguished career in this body. As you bring it to a close, we wish you well.

I thank the Chair and thank my colleague.

Mr. COATS. I thank my colleague from Virginia for those kind words.

SENATOR DOMENICI REPRESENTED THE SENATE AT THE SUMMIT IN RUSSIA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senator DOMENICI has been on official Senate business earlier this week and was therefore, necessarily absent for the two votes held on Tuesday and the five votes held on Wednesday. He attended the Summit in Russia.

During the Summit an important agreement was signed regarding the management and disposition of weapons-grade plutonium. Senator DOMENICI was instrumental in first identifying this issue and recommending a strategy for significantly reducing the amount of dangerous plutonium in the world and to make sure that it is kept away from rogue states and terrorists. Senator DOMENICI's suggestions were a blueprint for taking advantage of this opportunity for the United States and Russia to work together to withdraw approximately 50 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium from each countries' respective nuclear weapons programs. This is very important arms control/non-proliferation objective. The countries agreed to cooperate in transforming this weapons-grade plutonium into a form that cannot be readily used to make nuclear weapons. This agreement, when its terms are carried out, will make the world a safer place.

I am pleased that the Senator from New Mexico represented the majority and the Senate at this United States-Russian Summit.

#### THE \$2 BILLION FAILURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we have failed.

For the past nine months, I have worked with the members of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Administration to draft much needed reforms to our nation's hazardous waste program. These reforms would have made RCRA work more quickly and more cheaply. They would have removed the bureaucratic obstacles that hinder environmental cleanups. They would have given the states the proper authority and freedom they need to responsibly manage their RCRA sites.

My colleagues, the Senate has failed to save the federal government \$2 Billion this year in clean up costs. Despite our best efforts, agreement could not be reached on a bill to save two billion dollars per year.

Early in this Congress, the General Accounting Office released a report highlighting the need for a legislative change in remediation waste policy. The Administration, states, stakeholders—even the EPA—agreed that only a legislative fix could adequately streamline the program and speed the pace of cleanups. This GAO report also said that a legislative fix would save the federal government \$2 billion each year.

Unfortunately, the Congress and the administration were unable to come to

agreement on how to structure this legislative fix. Discussions among interested parties and legislators clearly showed the need for a bill, but translating this need into legislative language has been difficult. Progress was made, but not enough.

And so, Mr. President, the next Congress is tasked with addressing this two billion dollar environment opportunity. Although I am truly disappointed that these many months of educating and negotiating have left us without a bill to champion, I am hopeful that the Senate will return to this issue with renewed vigor next year.

I know that Senator CHAFEE, the Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and Senator SMITH, Chairman of the Superfund, Waste Control and Risk Assessment Subcommittee, share my commitment to seeing meaningful RCRA reform enacted in the next Congress and will make it a priority. With this leadership, I believe that we can resolve the outstanding issues quickly and move forward with legislation that will indeed make the cleanup of contaminated sites smarter, faster and better. This is also true of those on the House Commerce Committee as well as many in the Administration.

I was encouraged by the RCRA team built this year and look forward to working with this team again next Congress.

I again want to stress that the RCRA reform goals have not changed. To make RCRA work more cheaply and quickly, to streamline the bureaucratic process and give more authority to the states and to speed site clean up. It is unfortunate that yet another year has passed without reform.

Mr. President, let's make sure Congress gets the job done next year. The nation expects and deserves its RCRA sites to be cleaned up. This nation wants \$2 billion in savings each year. I would like to thank my colleagues and their staffs for the work done this session and look forward to redoubled efforts in the 106th Congress.

RCRA REFORM WILL BE A PRIORITY FOR THE 106TH CONGRESS

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, for the past year, the Majority Leader, Senator BOB SMITH, and I have been working with our colleagues on the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Administration to draft legislation to address some of the requirements of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ("RCRA") that currently impede the cleanup of literally thousands of contaminated sites across the nation. This so-called "RCRA rifle-shot" would have been an important piece of legislation. It would have demonstrated once again that we can improve our environmental laws, without jeopardizing human health or the environment, and reduce unnecessary costs. Just last year, the Government Accounting Office reported that eliminating those impediments to cleanup could save up to \$2.1 billion per year