

only way to put a decisive end to the suffering of the population of Sierra Leone.

#### NOTICE OF HEARING

##### COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a full committee hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will take place on Thursday, March 4, 1999 at 10:00 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of this hearing is to consider the nomination of Robert W. Gee to be an Assistant Secretary of the Department of Energy for Fossil Energy.

For further information, please contact David Dye of the Committee staff at (202) 224-0624.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

##### COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Thursday, February 25, 1999, at 9:30 a.m. in open session, to receive testimony on U.S. policy regarding Kosovo.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 25, 1999, in open session, to receive testimony from the unified commanders on their military strategy and operational requirements in review of the fiscal year 2000 defense authorized request and future years defense program.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999, to conduct a hearing on financial services legislation.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, for purposes of conducting a full committee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. The purpose of this oversight hearing is to consider the President's proposed budget for FY2000 for the Department of En-

ergy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, for purposes of conducting a full committee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. The purpose of this oversight hearing is to consider the President's proposed budget for FY2000 for the U.S. Forest Service.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, Subcommittee on Public Health, be authorized to meet for a hearing on Antimicrobial Resistance: Solutions to a Growing Public Health Threat during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999, at 9:30 a.m.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, be authorized to hold an executive business meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999, at 10:00 a.m., in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999 at 9:30 a.m. to conduct its organizational meeting for the 106th Congress.

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

##### SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, BUSINESS RIGHTS, AND COMPETITION

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Business Rights, and Competition, of the Senate Judiciary Committee, be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999 at 2:00 p.m. in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building, on: "The Third Anniversary of the Telecom Act: A Competition and Antitrust Review."

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

##### SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during

the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 25, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. to hold a hearing.

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

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### MEAT LABELING ACT OF 1999

• Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the subject of the Meat Labeling Act of 1999. This measure, introduced earlier this year by South Dakota Senator, TIM JOHNSON, would require the country-of-origin labeling of beef, lamb, and pork prior to their sale at a retail level in the United States.

This bill will protect the consumers—who right now have no way of telling what country their meat is coming from—and come to the aid of an industry which has had to face severe competition from foreign countries in recent years.

Mr. President, last year, the U.S. agriculture industry faced devastating losses. Bad weather, pest infestation, decreased demand stemming from the Asian financial crisis, and increased imports, especially from Canada, all contributed to the record low prices in nearly every sector.

In Wisconsin, the hog industry took a big hit as cash prices dropped an average of 55%. Incomes were slashed, farms were sold for pennies on the dollar, and over 600 producers left the business.

This year, the Asian crisis continues, as well as the financial problems in Russia, in Brazil and other countries. The truth is that the market for U.S. agriculture products is bleak and it does not appear to be changing anytime soon.

America's meat producers face not only tough global competition from abroad, but a big disadvantage here at home, because their products aren't marked "made in the USA."

That means consumers can't distinguish a U.S.-grown pork chop from a Mexican one. This raises health and safety concerns, since meat-handling standards in other countries may not be as stringent as our own, and it means that consumers can't choose to put their buying power behind American farmers in the check-out aisle.

Right now the only guidance consumers do have is misleading at best—since many of us would assume that a steak that carries a USDA inspection and grade label is U.S. produced. But in many cases, this couldn't be farther from the truth. That steak could be from Mexico, Canada, or Nicaragua. And for a variety of reasons, I think Wisconsinites want to know if the pork chop they are buying is from Marquette or Mexico.

Recent scares over food imported from foreign countries make this issue more important than ever to consumers. Cases of disease and numerous