

country that has increased the cost of a gallon of gasoline.

We have fewer refineries, as I indicated.

Most of all, it is "the chickens are coming home to roost" answer that Senator DOMENICI provided; namely, that we have decreased the United States oil production at the same time we are relying more and more on foreign oil. The net result of that should come as no surprise to anyone. We are going to have to pay higher prices at the gas pumps as a result.

It is time that the United States had a clear strategy, a good energy policy, that promoted the development of oil resources in the United States in a safe and environmentally clean way. That can be done. I believe under a new administration which is focused on developing an energy strategy that will suit the American people, it will be done.

I thank Senator THOMAS for making some of his time available to talk about this important subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Arizona.

Quite often we have difficulties, we have problems, and we really don't think about the policy that has created it—or in this case, the lack of policy.

I think it is very important that as we have the great growth of energy use in this country, that we take a look at our policy and not let ourselves become captives of overseas production.

#### M/V "MIST COVE"

Mr. THOMAS. I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3903, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (H.R. 3903) to deem the vessel M/V MIST COVE to be less than 100 gross tons, as measured under chapter 145 of title 46, United States Code.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 3903) was read the third time and passed.

#### OCEANS ACT OF 2000

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 568, S. 2327.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2327) to establish a Commission on Ocean Policy, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3620

(Purpose: To establish a Commission on Ocean Policy, and for other purposes)

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, Senator HOLLINGS has a substitute amendment at the desk, and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS], for Mr. HOLLINGS, proposes an amendment numbered 3620.

Mr. THOMAS. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 2327, the Oceans Act of 2000. This bill would establish a Commission on Ocean Policy to assess the problems that face our nation's coastal regions. Over half of the U.S. population lives in these areas and they are the source of one third of our gross domestic product. Clearly, the current problems faced in our coastal areas cannot be left unattended. Senator HOLLINGS, the ranking member on the Commerce Committee, has worked hard on this legislation. I am pleased that the Committee was able to report this bill in the most expeditious manner.

The Commission will examine current programs and policies related to coastal and Great Lakes regions, and determine whether the problems in such areas are adequately addressed by current laws, regulations, and public policy. The 1966 Stratton Commission, also the result of the hard work of Senators HOLLINGS, STEVENS, and INOUE, led to the establishment of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the enactment of the Coastal Zone Management Act. While the Stratton Commission provided an invaluable service to our nation, over thirty years have passed since that landmark study. Now it is necessary to reexamine the programs, policies, and state of America's coastal areas.

The Commission established by this bill will issue recommendations to the President and Congress to develop an effective and efficient national policy for our coastal regions. Mr. President, it is time for a comprehensive review of the policies that affect so many Americans.

I thank Senator HOLLINGS for his hard work and determination to address this issue. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to pass the Oceans Act of 2000.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Senate passage of S. 2327, the Oceans Act of 2000. The bill calls for an action plan for the twenty-first century to explore, protect, and make better use of our oceans and

coasts. Its passage is, quite simply, the most important step we can take today to ensure an effective, coordinated and comprehensive ocean policy to guide us into the new millennium.

I thank my colleagues in the Commerce Committee for their support, in particular, Senators SNOWE, KERRY, and STEVENS, for their cosponsorship and their efforts over the last several weeks to bring this bill to the floor. Following in the Commerce Committee tradition with respect to ocean issues, this has been a bipartisan process. I also thank the other cosponsors of the legislation, Senators BREAU, INOUE, BOXER, LAUTENBERG, MURKOWSKI, LIEBERMAN, AKAKA, FEINSTEIN, CLELAND, MOYNIHAN, MURRAY, REED, SARBANES, SCHUMER, WYDEN, LANDRIEU, MURKOWSKI, CHAFEE, and ROTH for their continued support. Finally, I want to express my appreciation to the numerous industry, environmental, and academic groups who agree that the time has come for this bill.

Mr. President, it is critical that we enact the Oceans Act of 2000 this year as we pass through the gateway to a new millennium. The oceans are again beginning to receive the attention they received in 1966 when we enacted legislation to establish a Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources (known as the Stratton Commission for its chairman Julius Stratton) to recommend a comprehensive national program to explore the oceans, develop marine and coastal resources, and conserve the sea. The Stratton Commission's report and recommendations have shaped U.S. ocean policy for three decades, and resulted in the creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under Presidential Reorganization Plan Number Four, as well as most of the major marine conservation status NOAA implements. These include the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Where the Stratton Commission performed its work with vision and integrity, the world has changed in myriad ways since 1966. Ocean and coastal issues are growing more popular day by day, but we are able to make the necessary headway to ensure they get the attention and priority they deserve. Consider the following quote from the National Research Council's report entitled *Striking a Balance, Improving Stewardship of Marine Areas*:

The findings of the Marine Board studies have revealed a strong interest in the nation's coastal and marine areas by present and potential offshore industries, coastal states responsible for resource development and environmental preservation of their offshore regions, and the ocean research community. Little has been done, however, to devise a comprehensive regulatory or management framework for current or future activities in federal and state waters or on or under the seabed in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The need for a regulatory and