from Sikeston in Southeast Missouri. Jeremy wrote to share his concern about the effect that the high cost of gas is having on his family. Jeremy states that his father and other farmers are struggling to cope with fuel and natural gas price increases at a time when the prices they are being paid for their crops are the lowest they have received in 14 years. He is worried that many farmers will be forced out of business as a result.

These and many other stories I have heard over the last couple of months have touched me deeply. Unfortunately, these stories are much too common in Missouri.

We hear that the cause of these record increases are due to problems associated with supply, demand, industry deregulation and, possibly, price gouging. But this is a complicated issue, and I have yet to meet anyone who has an easy solution. The only thing that is clear right now is that we need to learn what has caused these sharp increases and quickly develop an appropriate response.

This is why I have decided to cosponsor Senator BOXER's amendment that would require the National Academy of Sciences to submit a report to Congress within 60 days on the causes of the recent increases in the price of natural gas, including whether the increases have been caused by problems with natural gas supply or by problems with the natural gas transmission system. The study would identify federal or state policies that may have contributed to the recent spike in prices and determine what federal action would be necessary to improve the reserve supply of natural gas.

We don't know what the results of this study will be, but I am hopeful that they will help us to determine a course of action at the federal level to relieve the current crisis that is harming so many people in so many ways.

NOMINATION OF GALE NORTON

Mr. DODD. Mr President, I would like to briefly explain my recent vote to support the nomination of Gale Norton to be Secretary of Interior. At the outset, let me say that I did so with serious reservations. In fact, I find many of Ms. Norton's past positions, statements and actions most troubling.

Gale Norton has built a successful career advocating for the mining, timber, and oil industries. Her record in this respect has led many to question whether she can strike an appropriate balance between conservation and development. She has argued that several fundamental environmental laws are unconstitutional, including the Endangered Species Act and the Surface Mining Act, two laws that the Secretary of Interior is tasked with enforcing.

She has advocated opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR, in Alaska to oil drilling. This vital ecosystem supports hundreds of thousands of caribou, bears, wolves and oxen and 160 species of birds. Is it prudent to destroy this pristine land for what the U.S. Geological Survey estimates is a 6-month supply of oil? I believe not.

As Attorney General of Colorado, she was a proponent of the State's self-audit law, which allows polluting companies to escape fines if they report their violations and make efforts to correct the problem. Unfortunately, the Summitville Mine in Colorado was not as vigilant as it should have been and continued to operate even though it still had serious environmental problems. Only when the mine leaked cyanide into a local river did Ms. Norton's office step in. While she worked vigorously to clean up the damage and billed Summitville for the cost, it was the federal government who had to step in and prosecute the offenders. A Secretary of Interior must be vigilant, quick to respond to disaster, and proactive in policy-making. I am troubled by Ms. Norton's slow response at Summitville and her inability to articulate at the confirmation hearing what she might do to reduce the chances of a similar disaster.

Many have urged me and my Senate colleagues to reject this nomination and some have unfairly compared Ms. Norton to former Interior Secretary James Watt. I am one of several current Members of the Senate who was here in 1981 and I remember James Watt. During his confirmation hearing, he remained unyielding in his devotion to development and extractive industries. That intractable stand, coupled with his past statements and actions led me to vote against James Watt for Secretary of Interior. In fact, I am one of six current members of the Senate who cast a vote in opposition to Mr. Watt's nomination.

I did not detect such a divisive tone during Gale Norton's confirmation hearing before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I take some comfort from statements she made, under oath, specifically her intention to enforce the laws as written and interpreted by the courts, including the Endangered Species Act. Ms. Norton gave assurances to several committee members that she would uphold the current moratorium that exists on offshore oil and gas leases in California and Florida. She further stated that she was willing to work with other States to achieve similar results regarding offshore oil and gas leases.

I was pleased to hear Gale Norton's strong support for our National Parks, including eradicating maintenance backlogs. I look forward to working with her and members of the Senate to ensure proper funding levels in the fiscal year 2002 appropriations for this and other environmental protection efforts. Finally, I was pleased that Ms. Norton supports fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I trust she will work with Congress to achieve that goal and to enact the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, a bill that had broad bipartisan and bicameral support in the 106th Congress. Land and Water Conservation funds and the matching grant program have been very important to the ability of Connecticut and other States to acquire land and enhance recreation areas and parks.

I am mindful that some of Ms. Norton's testimony reflects a stark change in policy beliefs. Do I think these newly stated positions make her an environmentalist? No, I do not. Do I think positions she has taken in the past could pose harm to our public lands? Yes, I do. However, the entirety of Ms Norton's record, including testimony given at the hearing, demonstrates a sensitivity and an understanding of the role of the Secretary of Interior.

The Secretary of Interior has enormous responsibility over our Nation's public treasures. That person must be a responsible steward for close to 500 million acres throughout the country, including Weir Farm National Historic Site and the McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Connecticut. The Secretary must oversee and protect public lands, not plunder them.

In many instances Gale Norton has demonstrated a willingness to advocate Federal interests and be an honest and fair broker. As Associate Solicitor for the Department of Interior, she upheld federal interests including habitat restoration at the Como Lake restoration project and the Endangered Species Act on behalf of the California Condor. While Colorado Attorney General, Ms. Norton ensured that the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was sufficiently cleaned up and urged Congress to establish a wildlife refuge there.

I respect people's strong feelings regarding the nomination of Gale Norton, and in fact, I share some of their deeply rooted concerns. I did not cast this vote lightly or without a heavy degree of concern. I am not ignorant of the fact that Gale Norton is a nominee who represents the views of our President or that any other nominee for Interior Secretary would share those views. Nor do I agree in sending a message by voting against a nominee. This is an individual, a Cabinet nominee, not a piece of legislation. The President is entitled to a degree of deference in assembling his Cabinet, a bipartisan tradition that most members follow.

I have spent a quarter century in Congress fighting for measures to protect our air, drinking water, lakes, rivers and public lands. I prefer sending a message by enacting legislation that will strengthen our quality of life and opposing policy that would weaken or destroy our natural resources. Working together, Democrats and Republicans have enacted such lasting laws as the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Act.

Gale Norton is undertaking an enormous responsibility, but one that affords an opportunity to bring people together. She has given me and my colleagues her word to uphold and enforce

our laws. I trust she will remain true to her word, and I look forward to working with her.

NATIONAL DAIRY FARMERS FAIRNESS ACT OF 2001

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I am pleased to rise today and join my colleague Senator RICK SANTORUM of Pennsylvania to reintroduce legislation to provide much needed assistance to our Nation's dairy producers who continue to face the lowest milk prices in over two decades.

Due to the failures of the Federal order reform process and the lack of a meaningful dairy price safety net, this legislation is an appropriate and necessary response to the ongoing regional milk pricing inequities and the dairy income crisis affecting all producers. In the past, the divisive and controversial dairy compact system has hindered Congress's efforts to achieve a fair and equitable national dairy policy. I am pleased to join with Senator SANTORUM and reintroduce this legislation to create a regionally equitable plan that will provide a safety net for small and medium size producers regardless of location.

The National Dairy Farmers Fairness Act of 2001 has two major goals: (1) To create a dairy policy that is equitable for farmers in all regions of the country; (2) provide stability for dairy producers in the prices they receive for their milk. To accomplish these goals, this legislation creates a price safety net for farmers by providing supplemental income payments when milk prices are low. A ''sliding-scale'' payment is made based upon the previous year's price for the national average for Class III milk. In essence, the payment rate to farmers is highest when the national Class III average is the lowest. To participate in this program, a farmer must have produced milk for commercial sale in the previous year. Payments under the program are also capped for the first 26,000 hundredweight of production. Again, all dairy producers would be eligible to participate under this scenario.

The fiscal year 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill provided $667 million in emergency direct payments to dairy producers for losses incurred this year. While this action was absolutely necessary to respond to the dairy market loss crisis, it is time that an on-going program providing supplemental income payments to farmers when milk prices decline be established.

This important legislation represents a bipartisan and national approach in providing predictability and price stability in this otherwise volatile industry. Again, I am pleased to join with Senator SANTORUM in introducing the National Dairy Farmers Fairness Act and look forward to working with him in passing this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO COAST GUARD HELICOPTER AIRCREW

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I stand here today to pay tribute to four great Americans—Lieutenant Commander Brian Moore, Lieutenant Troy Beshears, Petty Officer First Class Mike Bouch and Petty Officer First Class John Green, all serving in the United States Coast Guard.

Last July, these four extraordinary Guardsmen were conducting a night flight over the Gulf of Mexico when they heard a distress call from the oil rig ''Ocean Crusader.'' Immediately flying to the rig, they arrived to find it engulfed in flames from a natural gas fire. Placing themselves in imminent danger, they landed on the rig to rescue the crew of 51. To expedite the rescue, Petty Officer Green left the helicopter to coordinate rescue efforts while his crew mates began the difficult task of ferrying the rig workers to another platform in groups of four. As the helicopter began its first evacuation flight, Petty Officer Green began lowering rig workers to a rig supply boat in groups of four using a crane and gondola.

After rescuing 12 workers, in three dangerous trips, the helicopter crew was forced to leave the scene to refuel while Petty Officer Green remained behind to keep lowering people to the supply boat and safety. He lowered 36 workers that way before another Coast Guard rescue helicopter arrived on the scene and landed to pick up the four men who remained on the platform. When told the helicopter could only take three safely, Petty Officer Green courageously volunteered to stay behind. Alone on that platform as the helicopter took the workers to safely, in the distance he could see his own aircraft returning when the rig erupted with fire raging from the waterline hundreds of feet in the air.

Committed to rescuing their crew mate, Lieutenant Commander Moore decided to try and rescue Petty Officer Green. With Petty Officer Bouchard hanging out of their aircraft trying to spot the landing platform in the smoke, he flew the helicopter into the middle of the inferno the Ocean Crusader had become, setting down amidst the flames to pick up Petty Officer Green.

Today people say we live in a world without heroes, one in which cynicism and selfishness rule the day. I am proud to say this is not the case in our United States Coast Guard. Guardsmen and Guardswomen like Lieutenant Commander Moore, Lieutenant Beshears, Petty Officer Bouch and Petty Officer Green put their lives on the line every day so that others may live. In this case, 51 men owe their lives to these four heroes who lived up to the Coast Guard's motto of ''Semper Paratus—Always Prepared.'' On behalf of those 51 men, their families, the state of Louisiana and Americans everywhere, I am proud to stand here today and say ''Thank you—job well done!'' to these extraordinary heroes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO NORM BISHOP

• Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated member of the U.S. Forest Service as he concludes his 39-plus years of service to his country. We are proud to have had this man serve on the Medora Ranger District in Dickinson, ND for the past 35 years.

Mr. Norman G. Bishop deserves this honor. North Dakotans are grateful for his contributions to the wise and sustainable use of our national grasslands.

Norm Bishop's personal and professional career accomplishments are as diverse as they are noteworthy. His loyal service and sacrifices for nearly four decades, working in the communities of western North Dakota, are a testament to all who use and appreciate our public lands.

In 1962, Norm moved to Dickinson, ND where he was an Airman, First Class at the Dickinson Radar Installation. His very first night in Dickinson, Norm met Karen Ridl, who he married a year later. After the Air Base closed in Dickinson, Norm began his Forest Service career.

During the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, Norm was instrumental in developing what is now the largest, most productive oil and gas program in the entire National Forest System. In fact, Norm became the first person in the entire Forest Service to be certified as an ''Oil and Gas Resource Specialist.'' For more than 20 years, Norm worked tirelessly to insure that oil development on the grasslands was accomplished in a manner that was sensitive to the needs of natural resources. My staff and I had the privilege of working with Norm Bishop on the Kinley Plateau/Bullion Butte Minerals exchange. Norm's professionalism and knowledge were instrumental in making that exchange a tremendous success.

It is with great honor for me to present these credentials of Norm Bishop to the Senate today. It is clear through all of his accomplishments that he has dedicated himself to furthering the benefits we enjoy on public lands. All of his actions reflect a true leader with a sense of purpose, commitment, and conscience.

As Norm departs from public service I ask my colleagues to join me in delivering an appreciative tribute from a grateful nation, and best wishes to he and Karen for a productive and rewarding retirement.•

TRIBUTE TO PC CONNECTION

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to PC Connection of Merrimack, New Hampshire, for being honored as ''Business of the Year'' by the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce. A major employer and important corporate leader in New Hampshire, PC Connection is a renowned worldwide business with a