

is the very best in New Mexico. Who knows that? But he is very good at the law.

Secondly, after being good at law, he had a shot at being a judge, and he was a very good judge at the district court level where you have general jurisdiction. When you add all that together, you just feel good about it. And you can end up telling the Senate, thank you this evening in advance and the President, thank you for sending this man to New Mexico to become a district judge in our State.

I yield the floor. If I offended or sought precedence over the distinguished Senator, I did not intend to. I apologize.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there is no offense. I know no offense was meant and none was taken.

As the distinguished senior Senator from New Mexico knows, he and I consulted at some length on this nomination, and I was happy to move forward. In fact, while the Senator is still on the floor, why don't we go ahead and pass the nomination. Then I will address the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, Executive Calendar No. 292 is approved.

The nomination was confirmed.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with that confirmation of the New Mexican judge, the Senate will now have confirmed 135 judicial nominees of President Bush. These include 35 confirmed so far this year. I mention that number of 35 because I looked back to the third year of the last Presidential term—President Clinton's—when the Republicans controlled the Senate. They only allowed 34 judges to be confirmed in all of 1999. In fact, we have now confirmed more than twice the total number of judges confirmed in the 1996 session, when a Republican Senate majority refused to consider any circuit court nominees and confirmed only 17 district court judges in that entire session.

I mention that, Mr. President, because some believe this has become politicized. Well, maybe it was for 6 years, but it is not politicized now. We have actually reduced judicial vacancies to the lowest number in 13 years. Currently, there are more Federal judges on the bench than at any time in our history. We have confirmed 35 this year, and in the 1996 session with President Clinton, the Republican Senate majority refused to consider any circuit court nominees and only confirmed 17 district court judges during the whole session—half of what we have confirmed already.

At a similar time in President Clinton's term—the third year of the term—they allowed 34 judges to be confirmed the whole year. We have done 35 so far. By every single standard, during the time when the Democrats were in the majority and now, we have confirmed far more judges at a far faster rate for President Bush than the Republican majority allowed during the time of President Clinton.

I note that in the cases of both of today's nominees, the home State Senators include both a Republican and a Democrat Senator who supported the

nomination; both worked for the nomination. Working with these home State Senators makes it far easier and makes the confirmation process proceed more smoothly.

I congratulate the nominees confirmed today and the four Senators who came together in a bipartisan effort to get them through.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table and the President will be notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now return to legislative session.

The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

THE CLEAN AIR PLANNING ACT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, earlier today, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER announced his decision on this Senate floor to join Senators GREGG, CHAFEE, and me in cosponsoring the Clean Air Planning Act.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator ALEXANDER be added as a cosponsor of S. 843.

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we are delighted at this decision. We welcome him as a cosponsor. The Clean Air Planning Act is a sensible solution to a vexing and challenging problem. We welcome the support of Senator ALEXANDER on this bill and the opportunity to work with him and other colleagues in this body to pass a strong bipartisan piece of clean air legislation later this year. Together, we can pass legislation that will control harmful emissions, provide cleaner air, and let more people live longer and healthier lives. We can do so in a way that does not impose hardship on those who produce electricity or on the consumers or an industry that relies on affordable electricity.

There are several advantages for the Nation that the Clean Air Planning Act will provide, and I want to mention several of those at this time.

First of all, let me begin with public health and environmental benefits. The Clean Air Planning Act will achieve substantially greater emissions reductions than the administration's Clear Skies Act. The Clean Air Planning Act will generate an additional 23 million tons of SO₂ reductions, 3 million tons of nitrogen oxide reductions, 240,000 pounds of mercury reductions, and 764 million tons of carbon dioxide reductions relative to the Clear Skies Act in the first 20 years of the program.

As a result, the human health benefits are likely to be substantially greater under the Clean Air Planning Act than the Clear Skies legislation. An EPA analysis has concluded that in 2020, the Clean Air Planning Act would avoid almost 6,000 premature deaths from fine particulate matter when compared with Clear Skies on an annual basis—not a cumulative basis.

Let me return to CO₂ and business certainty. From the perspective of the

electric generating sector, business certainty is a major driver for the enactment of multipollutant legislation. Without CO₂ included, electric-generating companies will continue to make their investment decisions in the face of major business uncertainty. This raises the specter of stranded investments.

By lifting the uncertainty surrounding future action on CO₂, the Clean Air Planning Act creates a more favorable climate for the expansion of U.S. coal markets and stimulates the development of clean coal technologies.

Let me talk for a moment about diverse generation mix. The Clean Air Planning Act and Clear Skies will both preserve a diverse fuel mix. Both bills are projected to have minimal impact on coal use. In 2010, coal use is expected to be about 2 percent lower under the Clean Air Planning Act than under Clear Skies—50 percent versus 48 percent. Coal is projected to constitute 45 percent of the electric generating mix in 2020 under either bill, Clear Skies or the Clean Air Planning Act.

An important question is, What will it cost to buy the relative advantages of the Clean Air Planning Act?

In both 2010 and 2020, total annual electric system costs under the Clean Air Planning Act are projected to be only 2.5 percent higher than under Clear Skies. This includes the cost of regulating CO₂ under the Clean Air Planning Act. On a net present value basis, the total cost differences between Clear Skies and the Clean Air Planning Act over a 20-year period, from 2005 to 2025, is in the range of 2 to 3 percent.

The EPA itself has conceded that retail electricity prices would increase by only two-tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour more under the Clean Air Planning Act than under Clear Skies, which amounts to about \$1.20 per month for the average residence.

According to the EPA, the CO₂ reduction plan could be carried out at "negligible" cost—that is their word—to the industry. Specifically, we can achieve the CO₂ goal in our bill—returning electricity industry emissions to 2001 levels by 2013—for approximately \$300 million in additional costs on top of the \$103 billion the industry will already be spending to produce electricity. That is just 0.3 percent—not 3 percent, not 30 percent, but 0.3 percent.

Let me conclude. Once again, I thank Senator ALEXANDER for having the courage to join us in this effort. I know it is not a decision that he made lightly. As a former Governor, he shares my commitment to getting things done in the Senate and in our Nation's Capital, with a commitment to focusing on policies that are the right thing for this Nation to do. Speaking for Senators GREGG, CHAFEE, and myself, we welcome the support of the junior Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.