

Whereas the State has lost 2,100 square miles of coastal wetlands since the 1930s and is expected to lose another 500 square miles over the next 50 years if nothing is done to mitigate wetland loss;

Whereas 2,000,000 residents, more than 50 percent of the State's population, live within Louisiana's coastal zone;

Whereas Louisiana's working wetlands provide protection for coastal communities and for oil and gas pipelines that serve as the major energy artery in the United States, delivering more than 25 percent of the Nation's energy;

Whereas wetland ecosystems throughout the United States are threatened by erosion, invasive species, runoff, and habitat loss; and

Whereas World Wetlands Day is celebrated around the world on February 2 of each year by government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and groups of citizens in the global community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges the severity of the wetland loss occurring in Louisiana;

(2) recognizes and supports the observance of World Wetlands Day in the United States; and

(3) supports efforts to raise awareness about the critical need to sustain and preserve wetlands in Louisiana, the United States, and throughout the world.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today in honor of World Wetlands Day proclaiming February 2 America's Wetlands Day.

February 2, 1971 was the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Each year since 1971, leaders from all parts of the world have used this day to raise public awareness of the value and benefits of wetlands—not only as ecological gems, but as economic boons, incubators of biodiversity, and a sportsman's paradise.

The signing in 1971 of the Convention on Wetlands provided a framework for national action and international cooperation toward the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Wetlands can be found in every country and are among the most productive ecosystems in the world.

Those of us from Louisiana have a rather unique perspective on the subject of wetlands. You see, Louisiana's coast is really America's Wetland. It is not a beach, but a vast landscape of estuaries, rivers, freshwater marsh, forested floodplains, and vernal pools.

The landscape that extends along Louisiana's coast is one of the largest and most productive expanses of coastal wetlands in North America. It is the seventh largest delta on earth, where the Mississippi River drains two-thirds of the United States. It is also one of the most productive environments in America—"working wetlands" as they are known to Louisianians—producing more seafood than any other State in the lower 48. It's the nursery ground for the Gulf of Mexico and habitat for one of the greatest flyways in the world for millions of waterfowl and migratory songbirds.

Even more importantly, Louisiana's coastal wetlands provide storm protection for ports that carry nearly 500 mil-

lion tons of waterborne commerce annually—the largest port system in the world by tonnage. That accounts for 21 percent of all waterborne commerce in the United States each year. In fact, four of the top ten largest ports in the United States are located in Louisiana.

These wetlands also offer protection from storm surge for two million people and a unique culture. Louisiana's low-lying coastal communities are home to more than 2 million people—nearly half the State's population. Even as those communities recover from the back-to-back 2005 hurricanes, they remain threatened and compromised as the land they occupy erodes from beneath their feet.

Tragically, Louisiana's wetlands are eroding at a devastating rate: approximately 24 square miles per year disappear—that is the equivalent of approximately one football field lost every 38 minutes. Within the next 50 years—even with current restoration efforts taken into account—those wetlands are expected to recede an additional 500 square miles.

The U.S. Geological Survey recently found that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita alone transformed 217 square miles of marsh to open water. Tragically, these eroding wetlands are Nature's levee system—they diminish a hurricane's destructive power by reducing storm surge and absorbing wave energy.

Scientists have estimated for every 2.4 square miles of wetlands, storm surges are lowered by about one foot. Some studies suggest that only one square mile of wetlands may achieve this. Because these wetlands are nurseries for many species of fish and shellfish, their loss has a profound impact on the \$1 billion dollar per year fishing industry supported by Louisiana's fragile coastal environment.

The costs associated with Louisiana's coastal wetland loss are not only Louisiana's to bear—they are the entire Nation's. For instance: Hurricanes Katrina and Rita impacted more than 26,000 businesses, destroyed 275,000 homes, and caused more than \$44.7 billion in insured losses.

Today, more than 40 percent of the Nation's oil and nearly a quarter of the Nation's natural gas is produced in or transported through Louisiana.

More than 20 percent of the nation's imported oil is delivered to and processed in Louisiana.

Louisiana is second only to Texas in the number of oil refineries on its soil—with 17 refineries, most of which are located in the coastal zone.

The erosion of Louisiana's coastal wetlands—America's Wetlands—endangers the U.S. energy supply and it endangers the Nation's critical infrastructure in the Gulf Coast: Refineries and petrochemical facilities that drive U.S. economic growth are at risk of being flooded, damaged and shut down, as we saw during the 2005 hurricanes.

That is why I am submitting a Sense of the Senate resolution that will ac-

knowledge February 2, as World Wetlands Day and express that it is the sense of the Senate that we must raise awareness of the Nation's imperiled wetlands—in Louisiana and throughout the country. We need to raise awareness of these critical issues and we need to work locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to confront this problem head on.

The good news is that scientists know how to restore the wetlands and they have been very successful in reinforcing barrier islands that protect these ecological gems. What has heretofore been lacking is not the will, but the resources with which to undertake this critical challenge. The passage of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act changed that and certified America's commitment to providing long-term, sustainable funding to address this problem. Today, we have the will; we have the way; let's get to work and preserve America's wetlands.

SENATE RESOLUTION 73—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 6, 2007, AS "RONALD REAGAN DAY"

Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mrs. DOLE, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. VITTER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 73

Whereas President Ronald Wilson Reagan, a man of humble background, worked throughout his life serving as an entertainer, a corporate spokesman, Governor of California, and President of the United States;

Whereas Ronald Reagan served for 2 terms as the 40th President of the United States;

Whereas Ronald Reagan was elected to his second term by almost three-fifths of the electorate, a percentage surpassed only by the election of President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1964, and was victorious in 49 of the 50 States in the general election, an electoral college record unsurpassed in the history of Presidential elections in the United States; and

Whereas February 6, 2007, will be the 96th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth, and June 5, 2007, will be the third anniversary of his passing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 6, 2007, as "Ronald Reagan Day"; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 9—CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION DURING "NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE WEEK"

Ms. LANDRIEU submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 9

Whereas the architectural profession has made unique contributions to the history, texture, and quality of life in the United States;