

S. 47

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 47, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communication services.

S. 132

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 132, a bill to increase and enhance law enforcement resources committed to investigation and prosecution of violent gangs, to deter and punish violent gang crime, to protect law-abiding citizens and communities from violent criminals, to revise and enhance criminal penalties for violent crimes, to expand and improve gang prevention programs, and for other purposes.

S. 133

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 133, a bill to prohibit any recipient of emergency Federal economic assistance from using such funds for lobbying expenditures or political contributions, to improve transparency, enhance accountability, encourage responsible corporate governance, and for other purposes.

S. 160

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 160, a bill to provide the District of Columbia a voting seat and the State of Utah an additional seat in the House of Representatives.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS ON JANUARY 6, 2009

By Mr. SPECTER (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 32. A bill to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to hold at least 1 public hearing before issuance of a permit affecting public or private land use in a locality; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I seek recognition to speak on legislation I am introducing that will require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to hold at least one public hearing before issuance of a permit affecting public or private land use in a locality. I introduced legislation on this issue at the end of the 110th Congress, and fully expect it to remain relevant as we move forward with upgrades to our energy infrastructure, possibly as part of an economic stimulus package. The legislation has been updated; namely, it now allows for a second hearing when officially requested by a county or local government to address issues not addressed at the original hearing.

Increasing demand for electricity throughout the Northeast is putting a strain on energy infrastructure in my State, necessitating new transmission lines and natural gas pipelines and the expansion of existing ones. In southwestern and northeast Pennsylvania transmission line expansions are planned over hundreds of miles of private property, while in the southeast natural gas pipeline expansions are underway.

There is no doubt these projects can be invasive, and rarely do they fail to be controversial. I make a point of touching all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties each year. In traveling Pennsylvania this Fall I heard a lot of complaints, which didn't come as a surprise. I heard frequently from constituents who oppose these infrastructure projects, and who felt their concerns were being ignored by the energy companies and by FERC.

I realize there will always be some opposition to large infrastructure projects. What is unacceptable, however, is for the people of my State to feel that their voices were not heard, that their issues were ignored. It may be the case that these projects are necessary. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is the authority, and in exercising its authority it must be sensitive to local concerns.

To address this I propose simply that FERC hold a hearing in these affected communities. In many cases this is already done, but my legislation makes it mandatory. State Public Utility Commissions, who have a great say in these matters, are beyond Congress' reach. But where the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is involved we can take steps to ensure that our constituents' concerns receive due consideration. Holding a hearing may not lead to all sides agreeing on the proper route forward, but at the very least my Pennsylvania constituents will come away with the satisfaction of having publicly aired their grievances.

To ensure that constituent concerns are given all due consideration, my legislation allows for affected parties to petition for a second hearing, provided certain conditions are met. In order for a second hearing to occur, a county government, or a municipal government within the affected county, must petition the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a second hearing. A second hearing will only occur to address an issue that was not addressed at the initial hearing, and the hearing shall occur between 30 and 60 days after approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The safeguards included in this legislation are critical to protecting individual property rights. As the Nation moves forward in making needed updates to its infrastructure, defending citizens' constitutional right to redress their government with their concerns should be paramount for this Congress. I will continue to fight to allow my constituents to be heard when Federal

projects will affect their rights as homeowners and landowners.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 22. A bill to designate certain land components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak to Senator BINGAMAN's introduction today of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. I strongly support this bill and Senator BINGAMAN's leadership in sponsoring it, and urge my colleagues to vote for its prompt passage.

This omnibus legislation includes no fewer than 20 bills of interest to California, including 14 bills to increase our water supply and to restore our rivers and groundwater quality, 3 bills to designate additional wilderness areas, and 3 other National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service bills.

I would like to speak at some length about one of these bills, the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, which I have introduced with Senator BOXER to bring to a close 18 years of litigation between the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Friant Water Users Authority and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Before I discuss the San Joaquin bill, however, I would like to review the other 19 California bills in the omnibus legislation introduced today. These include the following:

ADDITIONS TO NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wilderness,
Riverside County Wilderness, and the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Wilderness;

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians of the Tuolumne Rancheria land exchange;

FOREST SERVICE

Mammoth Community Water District land conveyance;

NATIONAL PARK SERVICES

Tule Lake Segregation Center Resource Study;

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

San Diego Intertie feasibility study,
Madera Water Supply Enhancement Project authorization,
Rancho California Water District project authorization,
Santa Margarita River project authorization,
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District project authorization,
North Bay Water Reuse Authority project authorization,
Prado Basin Natural Treatment System Project authorization,
Bunker Hill Groundwater Basin project authorization,