

when you consider that during that 5 years, the plaintiff can diligently be preparing a lawsuit while the defendant is ignorant about the very grievance itself, perhaps, and memories and records fade.

So I think it is important, as we go into this bill, that it be characterized as the Trojan horse that it is. This is just the beginning. If you eliminate the statute of limitations in employment discrimination claims, why not eliminate the statute of limitations in other claims: medical malpractice, any other business disputes, and the like? It is just not fair, and it is not right. We should not allow this bill to be represented as a blow for women's equality and women's rights because it simply is much broader and has much more of a broader implication than that.

I am convinced this bill is actually a solution in search of a problem because it is worth noting that in fiscal year 2007, a total of 82,000-plus people timely filed complaints of employment discrimination with the EEOC. It is important to ask what prevented Ms. Ledbetter from doing exactly the same thing, from filing her complaint at the time she knew that perhaps she had a grievance that could be presented to the employer.

So I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to speak briefly on the bill. Assuming cloture is adopted, I hope we will be taking up Senator HUTCHISON's alternative, which I think strikes the fair balance for which I would hope we would all strive, protecting the rights of both those who are victims of discrimination and the companies that have to defend against those claims.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

DESIGNATING CERTAIN LAND AS COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate shall resume consideration of S. 22, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 22) to designate certain land as 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.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 15, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 16 (to Reid amendment No. 15), of a perfecting nature.

Motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with instructions to report back forthwith,

with Reid amendment No. 17, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 18 (to the instructions of the motion to commit), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 19 (to Reid amendment No. 18), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order—the majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, there shall be 10 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, and the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN, or their designees.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, as I understand it, we now have 10 minutes equally divided to complete debate on S. 22, and then there will be a vote on passage. Is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, in just a few minutes, the Senate will vote on S. 22, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. The vote will culminate years of work on more than 160 bills that are included in this package and represents a major achievement for the protection of our Nation's natural, cultural, and historic resources. Taken collectively, I believe the package represents the most significant conservation legislation passed by the Senate in many years.

In addition, it will finally resolve three very important, very complex water rights settlements in three different States ending, literally, decades of litigation and controversy.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 23 AND 24, EN BLOC

Before concluding, I wish to take care of a few administrative matters. The unanimous consent agreement for the bill today allows for the adoption of managers' amendments if they have been cleared by the managers and leaders on both sides. We have two such amendments which are at the desk. I understand they have been cleared by all my colleagues. These amendments make a number of technical, clerical, and clarifying corrections.

At this time I ask unanimous consent to call up those two amendments and have them considered and adopted en bloc, as provided for in the unanimous consent agreement.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the pending amendments are withdrawn.

The clerk will report the managers' amendments en bloc.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI, proposes amendments en bloc numbered 23 and 24.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 23

On page 976, strike lines 8 through 25.

On page 977, line 1, strike "(6)" and insert "(5)".

On page 977, line 3, insert "and" after "interactions;".

On page 977, line 4, strike "(7)" and insert "(6)".

On page 977, line 5, strike "(6)" and insert "(5)".

On page 977, line 8, strike "scales;" and insert "scales;".

On page 977, strike lines 9 through 17.

On page 1275, strike lines 3 through 6.

AMENDMENT NO. 24

Beginning on page 305, strike line 9 and all that follows through page 349, line 21.

On page 526, line 2, strike "2" and insert "5".

On page 526, line 7, strike "5" and insert "2".

On page 974, line 19, insert "the Secretary of the Army, acting through" before "the Chief".

On page 1188, line 19, strike "or" and insert "of".

Beginning on page 1271, strike line 3 and all that follows through page 1273, line 22, and insert the following:

Section 107(a)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendments are agreed to.

The amendments (Nos. 23 and 24) were agreed to.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, the Senate is now considering the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, S. 22, a bill that contains a number of important water resource initiatives. Given the ongoing need to work closely with the states on water resource issues, I believe it important as chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee for myself, and the new ranking member of the Committee, to acknowledge the hard work of representatives from the Colorado River Basin States of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, and California, in reaching agreement regarding certain provisions in title X, subtitle B of S. 22, which contains the Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects Act, hereafter referred to as the "Act".

On August 27, 2008, the Governors' representatives on Colorado River Operations sent a letter to me and Senator DOMENICI, then the ranking member of the committee, requesting certain modifications to the Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects Act. These modifications, which were subsequently incorporated, reflect the joint