

build it up. We have negotiated, pleaded, and begged for access to our resources for more than a generation. We have even been willing to sacrifice some of the revenues Alaska is clearly entitled to by law, and it has fallen on positively deaf ears here in Washington, even at a time when those dollars would mean quite a lot in terms of avoiding painful tax hikes or program cuts. When you look back on the past 50 years, it is more than a little astonishing that opposition to development continues to be so just dug in.

I think what has been borne out from Alaska's resource development is a very strong record of environmental stewardship. We have produced our natural resources for generations. For my entire life there, we have been producing our resources, whether it is our timber, whether it is our fisheries, whether it is mining and now oil. We have produced them for generations, and we have preserved our pristine qualities and the natural beauty perfectly. We are a world-class vacation destination for everyone who wants to come up on the big cruise ships, to those who want to do the ecotourism. We are a genuine paradise for the trophy fisherman, for the hunters who want to come to Alaska. We have a fish and game management program that is the most productive, the most sustainable model for the entire world.

I have people tell me: The one thing I want to do before I die is go to Alaska and see it. So if we have been producing all of our resources for all these years, for all these generations—if we really had been doing that terrible of a job, why does everybody want to see this incredibly beautiful land we have? I suggest it is because we have been doing a pretty good job of resource development as we have gone along the course.

Resource production has yielded substantial social and economic benefits to the State. More than 16 billion barrels of oil have been sent to the lower 48, with minimal environmental impact. Our oil also supplies refineries near Fairbanks and Anchorage. It allows us to serve as an international cargo hub. Our refineries produce the fuel for fighter jets and other military needs at our four bases. The strategic value of Alaska's geographical position—we sit literally at the top of the world there—for military purposes alone is sufficient to justify access to the resource, even if we were to ignore the jobs, ignore the revenue and the energy security benefits that come along with it. Yet, as I stand here today, virtually every extractive industry in Alaska has been disrupted by the Federal Government. Mining, timber, oil and gas—all these productions are well below or well behind the levels that would best serve Alaska and our country. No matter the project, it seems we have to fight the Federal Government for access and permission every single step of the way.

Federal agencies are attempting to subvert Supreme Court decisions. Sen-

ators from other States are attempting to halt mines that have not even been proposed. Permits are delayed, they are withheld, and they are outright refused. Drilling cannot take place in places Congress has explicitly designated for drilling, including our National Petroleum Reserve.

At the root of these troubles really is Alaska's treatment by the Federal Government. Because we have so much land and because we do depend on the development of these lands to thrive as a State, Alaska's future truly rests in the Federal Government's hands. But at the very moment—at the time when we most need the Federal Government to be acting as our partner, it has become an obstacle to progress and to our prosperity. The promises that were made at statehood and under ANILCA seem to be remembered only by Alaskans.

So it is apparent to me that the system of Federal land management and land use that used to work has now turned against us. Instead of facilitating new development and working to ensure it is carried out responsibly, the Federal Government now routinely denies our opportunities and locks up Alaska's lands. No matter where we look, we face this gauntlet of land use and environmental statutes that have been twisted into permitting delays, project denials, endless litigation. Put at risk is the sound economy we have worked very hard to build, the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Alaskans, and our ability to live up to our obligation at statehood to remain financially solvent as a State. We are in this position for, I believe, one reason, and that is because the promises that were made to Alaska by the Federal Government have been broken. We have asked nicely—perhaps too nicely—for a long time for those promises to be honored.

So, before I close, I would like to draw one more quotation from Senator Gruening, of whom I spoke earlier. This is a rather lengthy quote, but it is one worth hearing. Senator Gruening states:

We Alaskans believe passionately that American citizenship is the most precious possession in the world. Hence we want it in full measure; full citizenship instead of half-citizenship; first class instead of second class citizenship. We demand equality with all other Americans and the liberties long denied us that go with it. To adapt Daniel Webster's famous phrase uttered as a peroration against impending separatism, we Alaskans want "liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever."

But the keepers of Alaska's colonial status should be reminded that the 18th century colonials for long years sought merely to obtain relief from abuses, for which they—like us—vainly pleaded, before finally resolving that only independence would secure for them the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness," which they felt was their natural right.

We trust that the United States will not, by similar blindness to our rights and deafness to our pleas, drive Alaskans from patient hope to desperation.

That is pretty lofty language, I grant you, but I think it is suited. I think it is suited to this conversation this evening. Just as Ernest Gruening had to have this same fight from this same Chamber over 50 years ago, I am compelled to remind this body that the greatness of this Nation, the ultimate and true greatness of the experiment, depends on the greatness of the individual States which comprise it. As we look at our States and what they are capable of achieving, I would bet Alaska's potential against any other.

Today, on the 144th anniversary of Alaska Day, I ask the Senate to just think, to consider the promises that were made to the State of Alaska, to realize that those promises have not been kept but broken to the detriment of both Alaska and our Nation as a whole. This must be changed with the realization that partnership, not abject denial, is truly the best path forward. If the Federal Government keeps its promises, Alaska will realize its potential, grow as a State, and secure its future.

We would not be doing this just for Alaska alone. The rest of the Nation will benefit greatly as well. That is something we need. It is something we should all agree to work for. There is probably no better time to start than today as we recognize Alaska Day.

I thank the Chair for the attention of the Presiding Officer and for the opportunity to share a little bit of Alaska's history and our frustration with the present.

I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:37 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, October 19, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

WENDY M. SPENCER, OF FLORIDA, TO BE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE, VICE PATRICK ALFRED CORVINGTON, RESIGNED.

##### UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

ALFREDO J. BALSERA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2014, VICE ELIZABETH F. BAGLEY, TERM EXPIRED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

GINA K. ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY, OF OHIO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA.

JULISSA REYNOSO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORIENTAL REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY.

ROBERT E. WHITEHEAD, OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC.