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Committee on Environment
and Public Works Washington, D.C.

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BUSINESS MEETING

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable John Barrasso [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Carper, Inhofe, Capito, Braun, Rounds, Sullivan, Boozman, Ernst, Cardin, Whitehouse, and Van Hollen.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN BARRASSO, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING

Senator Barrasso. Welcome to this large crowd of paid staff and blood relatives. We are happy to have you here today.

[Laughter.]

Senator Barrasso. Good morning. I call this business meeting to order. Today we are going to consider three bills and eight General Services Administration resolutions.

Senator Carper and I have agreed that we will begin voting at 10:15. At that time, I am going to call up the items on the agenda. We will not debate the items on the agenda while we are voting. Instead, we will debate the items on the agenda before we begin voting at 10:15. I am also happy to recognize any members who wish to make speeches or talk about the bills after the voting concludes.

The first bill we will consider is S. 383, the Utilizing Significant Emissions with Innovative Technologies Act, or the USE IT Act. The USE IT Act is a bipartisan piece of legislation to promote carbon capture technologies that take carbon out of the air and to find productive uses for it.

Carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration is needed to reduce the impacts of climate change, while also delivering abundant and affordable energy to the Nation.

You don't have to take my word for it; across the board,

carbon capture is seen as a critically important technology. State governments, industry stakeholders, labor organizations like the Utility Workers Union of America, and environmental groups like the Audubon Society or the Nature Conservancy all recognize the importance of carbon capture.

At our hearing in February to consider the USE IT Act, we heard about the critical role of carbon capture technologies in addressing climate change. The Clean Air Task Force testified, "Carbon capture, utilization, and storage and direct air capture will play a crucial role in decarbonizing our global energy system."

Now, I have repeatedly said the best way to combat climate change is through innovation, not government taxation or regulation. The USE IT Act will continue to cement the United States as a global innovation leader in carbon capture. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has recognized the pivotal role that carbon capture can play in meeting its climate targets.

My support for climate innovation does not rest on carbon capture alone. We have worked together in a bipartisan manner on this Committee to support the most reliable zero emission source of energy that we have, which is nuclear energy. Last year we passed the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. We must continue to address fundamental issues to allow

nuclear energy to grow in the future, issues like the need to properly manage and dispose of spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain.

The second bill we are going to consider today is another important step forward in addressing emissions that contribute to climate change, S. 747, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2019, or DERA. Since Congress first created the program in 2005, it has enjoyed broad bipartisan support. This legislation would reauthorize the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act through fiscal year 2024.

I want to thank the Ranking Member and his staff for his leadership on this program throughout the years. The program has been one of the most cost-efficient clean air programs. Like the USE IT Act, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act supports innovation-led solutions to environmental protection.

Upgrading diesel engines not only reduces nitrogen oxide, but also emissions of both black carbon and carbon dioxide. Black carbon is a component of particulate matter that has a global warming potential that may be thousands of times higher than carbon dioxide over a 20-year timeframe.

So, today we are moving two bipartisan bills out of this Committee that are going to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change, and there will be more to come. The USE IT Act and the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2019 each passed our

Committee by voice vote in the last Congress. I urge my colleagues to once again support passage of these bills today, as we work it across the full Senate and get signed into law.

When we work together, we have shown that we can promote American leadership, grow our economy, and lower emissions.

The third bill we will consider is S. 1061, the John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2019, which reauthorizes funding for the Kennedy Center. Last Congress, this Committee approved this legislation by a voice vote and the Senate passed it by unanimous consent.

We will also consider eight resolutions to approve prospectuses providing for General Services Administration lease acquisition and alteration.

After Ranking Member Carper gives his opening statement and other members make remarks, at 10:15 we will proceed to vote on the items on our agenda provided we have a reporting quorum. After we finish voting, I will be happy to recognize other members who wish to speak.

I would now like to turn to our Ranking Member for comments that he might like to make.

[The prepared statement of Senator Barrasso follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. CARPER, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Walking up from the train station this morning, I came out of Union Station and looked up Delaware Avenue to the Capitol, and I saw sunshine, I saw blue skies. The Capitol was just glistening in the sunlight. It was like what Christoph Toulouse would say, a top 10 day. It is just a glorious day.

And at a time when there is a fair amount of diversity and disagreement in our Country, and frankly around the world, and our Government and, to some extent, in this Senate, there is something to celebrate, and that is when we can find common ground and work together to address some big challenges that we face on this planet, so I am happy to be here with all of you, grateful to the Chairman for convening us today.

I want to follow up on his remarks with remarks of my own about the two pieces of legislation that he was talking about that he and I have collaborated on, along with Sheldon Whitehouse, along with Jim Inhofe and others on this Committee, and one of those is the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, known as DERA, and the Utilizing Significant Emissions with Innovative Technologies, known as the USE IT Act.

Both of these bills are good for our environment, they are also good for our economy, and they are important in our fight

against climate change.

Some of our newer colleagues on our Committee have not heard this story before, so I am going to share it with you. I think it was 2005. George Voinovich, from Ohio, Republican, former governor and senator from Ohio, from Cleveland, came to me one day. He said, I would like to share with you an idea, a legislative idea that actually reduces emissions, harmful emissions from diesel engines. I said, how big a problem is that, and he said, well, there are millions of them. He said, the old diesel engines, the good thing about them is they last a long time; the bad thing about them is that they last a long time and they spew out all kinds of stuff.

We have all sat at a stop light before and had a big diesel truck before us or besides us. When the light changes, the trucks hits out all this black stuff that comes out of their emissions. As the chairman has mentioned, some of it is black carbon, and whether you believe in climate change or not, it is bad stuff. It can be as much as 1,000 times worse for our environment, for our climate than regular carbon dioxide.

They used to ask Willie Sutton, why do you rob banks, back in the Great Depression and he said because that's where the money is. Well, carbon emissions, diesel emissions are where a lot of the bad stuff is coming from.

George said to me, he said, Tom, the nice thing about this

technology is you can actually put it on existing diesel engines, boats, cars, trucks, locomotives, and he said it will reduce emissions by as much as 90 percent. I said, well, that is great. He said, not only that, the technology is developed by Corning, up in New York, so it is American technology.

We can do good things for our environment, for our planet, and we can create jobs using American technology and sell the technology around the world, and this legislation has been, with Jim Inhofe's strong support and leadership, we have taken this up, we have reauthorized this every several years, and we are prepared to do that again.

I would just say there are a number of our colleagues on this Committee are cosponsors of this legislation. For those who aren't, I would urge you to join us; it is one of those great intersections between cleaner air, better environment, and creating jobs, American jobs. For me, that is the Holy Grail where we want to go to.

I want to thank all of our colleagues for being a big part of not only reauthorizing the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, but actually making it better.

I was invited by Rob Portman to speak at a staff retreat last week, staff here on Capitol Hill, and it includes a lot of George Voinovich folks, alums, and I know that George is looking down today, very excited and happy with what we are doing.

The USE IT Act that we are voting on today, as the Chairman mentioned, is intended to support widespread development and deployment of carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration technologies, also known as CCUS. This includes making smart investments in direct air capture, which sucks carbon dioxide right out of the air.

I know some of this technology is nascent. I think they are doing more with it in Europe than we have been doing, but I like to say there is no silver bullet as we try to address these issues, but there are a lot of silver BBs, and a big one can be figuring out how to suck carbon right out of the air, and that is what we are pushing with this legislation in the USE IT Act.

I hasten to add that DERA and the USE IT Act cannot be the only climate actions that our Committee takes. We need broad, bold climate action to protect our planet.

That said, I do appreciate that now, at a time when our Country is looking for ways to create jobs, achieve healthier air, and a safer climate, cleaning up dirty diesel engines and deploying CCUS are two of many ways we can achieve these goals.

That leads us to our third bipartisan bill, which would reauthorize funding for the Kennedy Center. I want to thank our Chairman for reintroducing this legislation. I am happy to cosponsor the bill along with Senators Capito and Cardin. This bill is another excellent example of what we can accomplish when

we work together to get things done, and I look forward to collaborating, Mr. Chairman, with you and all of our colleagues on this Committee, as well as our friends in the House and Senate to get it to the President's desk.

Today we are considering eight GSA prospectuses and resolutions. These are not controversial prospectuses; they have been identified as high priorities by the GSA.

I would ask for the opportunity just to enter into the record the rest of my statement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Barrasso. Without objection, we look forward to entering that into the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Senator Inhofe.

Senator Inhofe. Just real briefly. I always relish the time that Senator Carper and I can agree on something, and to have three bills in one meeting, I am excited about it.

Now, where are your Democrats? We need a quorum.

[Laughter.]

Senator Barrasso. We had announced that we would vote at 10:15, and we are a little short of that number. A number of Democrats were here, but right now the attorney general is testifying in another committee, as is the secretary of state in a different committee, so I know people have been running in and out. We hope to be able to vote in a few seconds, when a couple more members will show up, so we will just stand in recess for a little while to wait for that.

Senator Carper. I have asked my staff to reach out far and wide to get as many Democrats here as quickly as we can, so thank you for your patience.

[Recess.]

Senator Barrasso. Well, now that members of the Committee have arrived, we will vote on the items of today's agenda.

The Ranking Member and I have agreed to vote on the three bills and eight General Services Administration resolutions en bloc by voice vote. Members may choose to have their votes recorded for a specific item in that block after the voice vote.

The Ranking Member and I have further agreed that S. 1061, the John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2019, which was introduced on April 8th, replaces the text that was circulated with a notice on April 5th. This introduced bill is identical to the text that was circulated.

I would now like to call up S. 383, the Utilizing Significant Emissions with Innovative Technologies Act; S. 747, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2019; S. 1061, the John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2019; and eight General Services Administration resolutions en bloc.

I move to approve and report S. 383, S. 747 and S. 1061 favorably to the Senate and approve eight GSA resolutions en block. Is there a second?

Senator Inhofe. Second.

Senator Carper. Second.

Senator Barrasso. All those in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Senator Barrasso. All those opposed, say nay.

[No audible response.]

Senator Barrasso. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. We have now approved S. 383, S. 747, S. 1061, which will be reported favorably to the Senate. We have also approved eight GSA resolutions.

The voting part of the meeting having finished, I am happy

to recognize any member who wishes to make a statement on any of the legislation or resolutions we have just approved.

Seeing none, I have a number of letters of support for the legislation and I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record statements of support for the USE IT Act from the National Mining Association and the National Wildlife Federation.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Barrasso. I also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter of support of the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2019 from the U.S. Chamber of Congress.

Without objection, it is done.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Barrasso. I ask unanimous consent that the staff have authority to make technical and conforming changes to each of the matters approved today.

With that, our business meeting is concluded and we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:25 a.m. the committee was adjourned.]