

My question—it is really a comment in the form of a question. You pointed out we are 3 years after the highway bill. This is correcting some unanticipated errors in that bill. What is happening is, here we are in this recession. There are a lot of projects that are stymied. They were unintended to be stymied, but we need to correct that.

My question is, Don't you think it is time to correct a bill that passed 3 years ago, and we are going to get to the new highway bill next year? This is unfinished business. It is bipartisan. My point is, do you believe as strongly as I do that the time has come to do this?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to the distinguished chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I appreciate the work done on a bipartisan basis to get us here. If there were ever a time we should do this, a technical corrections bill on a bill that passed more than 3 years ago, it is now. It has taken that long to get it done, especially since we have the highway trust fund that now is \$5 billion short of what it should be. There are construction projects that need to go forward. Many of them cannot go forward until this technical corrections bill is passed.

This bill does not favor Democrats. It does not favor Republicans. I think everyone should understand when Senators BOXER and INHOFE work on a bipartisan bill, that is a bipartisan bill. We all know the reputations of the Senator from California and the Senator from Oklahoma. This is a good piece of legislation, and I say to my friend from California, I hope we can get it done very quickly.

We have lots of things to do. I am disappointed we are not going to be able to move to the patent bill. I am sorry about that.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I may put the leader on the spot, but as I understand it, we have had to file a cloture motion on this bill, which means a threatened filibuster over going to a technical corrections bill to amend and revise a highway bill that is 3½ years old. I know the Republican minority set a record in the Senate with 62 filibusters last year. I don't know if the majority leader can tell us the ongoing number of filibusters from the Republicans at this point. I assume it is over 70 filibusters. The previous record was 62 filibusters in 2 years. Now we have had over 70 filibusters, and we are just into this new legislative year.

I ask the majority leader, in his experience in the Senate, does he ever recall a filibuster being mounted on a bipartisan bill that is a technical corrections bill related to highway projects and other building projects across the Nation, in both Democratic and Republican States?

Mr. REID. I say to my distinguished friend, the answer to that is no. But I

do say this: That is why I made my remarks very clear. I think a lot of it has been unfounded, but we have had some distrust that some of the things we are doing will prevent people from offering amendments; there will not be an opportunity to legislate on this bill.

I have no intention—I made it very clear—of filling the tree. I used kind of a buzzword because everyone knew what I was talking about. But I have no intention of doing that. That is why I said I hope once we get on the bill, the 30 hours will not need to be used; we can just go to the bill and start legislating. That would be the right thing to do.

We have now been in this session for 12–15 months. I would hope by this time we know each other a little better, we can trust each other a little better, Democrats and Republicans. I think we just finished some very good work. Today we passed an extremely important housing bill. It was bipartisan.

I was with some people today, and they criticized: Why did you put this provision in there dealing with homebuilders? It is something that they don't need.

I personally disagree with that. In Nevada we have homebuilders who are doing everything they can to hang onto land so when this market bottoms out they will still have some land to build on. Anyway, I said to them we in the Senate today have a very slim majority, 51 to 49. I said to my friend—I asked this question: We have a number of things in this bill that were put in that we did not especially like.

The Republicans got a number of things in this very important housing stimulus bill that they did not like. But that is what legislation is about. That is the big speech I gave to my friend. I think he understood it after I said this a little better.

After that, we also did something on a bipartisan basis: passed, all in 1 bill, 80 different bills. There is no need to go back into the history of why this happened, but it happened, and we were only able to get it done because we worked on a bipartisan basis. I want to do the same on this highway bill.

We have other things coming up that we need to do this work period. As I indicated, because of the patent bill, for reasons that I am sure will be written about over the next few weeks, we are not going to do a patent bill now. The chairman and ranking member could not work out what they wanted to bring to the floor. So, as a result of that, we have a little extra time. I hope that because of that we can do highway corrections, we can maybe move to that.

There is a veterans bill we are trying to get worked out. We know we have more than 50 votes; we hope we have more than 60; we are very close to that.

We have an FHA reauthorization. We need to do that. I spoke to Chairman ROCKEFELLER a few minutes ago.

So without belaboring the point, in answering the question of my dear

friend, the assistant Democratic leader, no, I don't remember ever a filibuster being filed on a bipartisan bill. But I do not know the entire history. I hope we can move forward on this piece of legislation in regular order.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to make one brief comment to the leader.

I have no additional comment to make to the leader. I can pose it as a question, but I do not really need to. The leader is aware that there is no intention on the Republican side to filibuster this bill. I concur in his remarks about the bipartisanship that resulted in both of the bills passing today.

There is one matter that needs to be resolved, as I understand it, with respect to this technical corrections bill, which does need to be dealt with, as the chairman of the committee noted. As far as I know, that is the only matter. There could be others, but I know of no intention on the part of anybody on our side of the aisle to raise extraneous matters to use the bill for any other purpose but to complete action on the bill. I am aware of the same matter that the majority leader is right now as the only matter that exists on our side. So there is no intention on our side of the aisle to filibuster the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say also through the Chair to my friend, I have spoken to that Senator, and still we might be able to work something out. If we cannot, he can offer an amendment and see what happens that way.

Mr. KYL. Sure.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I feel comfortable with what we have been able to accomplish this week. I cannot say that every week we have left here, but this has been a really good week. I think we have accomplished a lot that is good for the American people in the process.

We have a farm bill that is moving along. We had today an actual conference, Democrats and Republicans, trying to come up with a farm bill. It is wonderful that that is taking place because in recent years we have not had a real conference. We have had little meetings take place. But I think that is wonderful that we were able to get that done.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

THANKING STAFF

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, earlier today the Senate passed S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. As I said during the debate, S. 2739 is a collection of over 60 bills reported from the Committee on Energy

and Natural Resources over the past 15 months.

This achievement would not have been possible without the hard work of our outstanding staff. Both the ranking member, Senator DOMENICI, and I are very fortunate to have a very dedicated and experienced professional staff. They service the committee and the Senate well. They deserve our thanks.

On the Democratic staff of the committee, senior counsel David Brooks had the lead role in assembling the bill. He deserves special acknowledgment. In addition, though, I want to particularly thank the committee's staff director, Bob Simon, for his wonderful work on this legislation, as on all the legislation that comes through our committee; our chief counsel, Sam Fowler, for his superb work, as always; counsels Mike Connor, Kira Finkler, and Scott Miller, and professional staff members Angela Becker-Dimmpmann, Jonathan Epstein, and Al Stayman.

I would also like to thank the committee's chief clerk, Mia Bennett; executive assistant Amanda Kelly; communications director Bill Wicker; press secretary David Marks; staff assistants Rosemarie Calabro, Rachel Pasternack, and Gina Weinstock; and our Bevinetto fellow who works on our staff, Karl Cordova.

On the Republican side, let me acknowledge Senator DOMENICI's staff director, Frank Macchiarola, who did an excellent job here; his chief counsel, Judy Pensabene; professional staff members Kathryn Clay, Frank Gladics, Josh Johnson, and Tom Lilly; and executive assistant Kara Weishaar.

In addition, I am very grateful to the committee's nondesignated staff: AnnaKristina Fox, Dawson Foard, Nancy Hall, Amber Passmore, Monica Chestnut, and Wanda Green.

Finally, let me acknowledge the great help in bringing the bill to the floor we received from the majority leader and his staff: Neil Kornze, Chris Miller, Randy DeValk, Gary Myrick, and, as always, the secretary for the majority, Lula Davis.

All of these fine staff members had a hand in putting S. 2739 together and moving it through the legislative process. We would not have been able to pass the bill without their hard work and their professionalism. I wish to thank each and every one of them for the good work.

Mr. President, I know the Senator from Colorado is here to speak.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

CONSOLIDATED RESOURCES ACT

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak with regard to S. 2739, the bill we approved earlier this afternoon.

First, I wish to acknowledge Chairman BINGAMAN and Senator DOMENICI for their great work in this legislation.

As I worked over the last 2, 3 years on many of the bills that are included in this package of land bills we approved this afternoon, it was gratifying to see the bipartisan nature of the Energy Committee working on this legislation which is so important to our Nation.

I very much agree that the process that historically has been used in the Senate where what we do is to bring these pieces of legislation which are important to our States, which are important to our Nation, through a unanimous consent procedure is the way we ought to go. Unfortunately, because of objections from a few Senators on the other side, we were not able to follow that procedure. But, at the end of the day, through the great leadership of both Senator BINGAMAN and Senator DOMENICI, we were able to get that legislation through. To both of them I say thank you very much for your leadership.

I also thank the staff of the Energy Committee. Bob Simon, David Brooks, all of the staff on both sides who labored very hard on the more than 60 pieces of substantive legislation that we approved here this afternoon that will now head to the President's desk for his signature. So I thank them for their great efforts with respect to this legislation.

I want to speak briefly about four of the bills that were included in this legislation which are important to my State of Colorado and are important to the Nation.

The first of those pieces of legislation has to do with the South Platte River and the North Platte River and a multistate compact that involves the State of Colorado and the State of Nebraska.

Over the years, we have had issues between our States, Nebraska and Colorado, and the State of Wyoming as well, with respect to how we deal with the implementation of the Endangered Species Act and how we recover endangered species on the Platte River, mostly working in the State of Nebraska.

After many years of negotiation and involvement by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior, the States came together and developed a recovery implementation program. That is a program which is intended to restore the habitat for the whooping crane in the State of Nebraska, with the participatory effort and obligation on the part of the State of Colorado and the State of Wyoming and the State of Nebraska to recover the whooping crane and to recover habitat and hopefully someday to be able to take that threatened and endangered species off of the list.

In order for us to make progress to get there, we needed to implement this tristate agreement with the Federal Government. The legislation we passed today will help us get there, and I very much appreciate the participation of Senator HAGEL and Senator NELSON

from Nebraska, as well as Senator ALLARD, Senator BARRASSO, and Senator ENZI from Wyoming on this bipartisan legislation, legislation that is very important to our States.

The second legislative item I want to refer to here briefly is S. 1116, which is the Produced Water bill. This is legislation which was sponsored in the House of Representatives by Congressman MARK UDALL. We pushed it through our Energy Committee because we know this is happening out there in many of our public and private lands across the West; that is, as oil and gas is being developed, there is a huge amount of water that is simply being wasted, that is being disposed of without any kind of beneficial use. For those of us who come from the arid West, who know what it is like to live in places where you only get a few inches of rainfall a year, it is important that we not waste any water whatsoever. So what this legislation will do is it will help us figure out a strategy and a plan forward on how we develop a beneficial use for the water that is being produced from oil and gas production.

The next bill that was included in this package which I wanted to speak about briefly is the Latino Museum bill. That legislation had several dozen cosponsors here in the Senate, including Senator MENEZES, Senator MARTINEZ, and many others who worked on that legislation over the last several years.

It is important that when we look at this legislative piece, we understand the contribution many Americans have made to this country over a long period of time. The Latino community has been here in the United States of America for a very long time. Indeed, as the case with my family, my family helped found the city of Santa Fe, NM, in 1598, now some 410 years ago. That was before Jamestown, before Plymouth Rock. You find the stories of our history across the landscape of this country from Florida, throughout the Southwest of the United States of America. And in my own native valley, you can look out from the 8,000-foot elevation of the San Luis Valley to the mountains on the east side of the valley that are named the Sangre de Cristo Mountains; that is, the "Blood of Christ Mountains." You can look to the west to another set of 14,000-foot peaks named after St. John the Baptist, the San Juan mountain range.

Throughout America, you see the history of the Latino community etched into the landscape of our country. But it is more than that history that started out now more than four centuries ago here in the Nation, it is also the contributions Hispanics have made to this country as we have evolved from one generation to the next.

It was a group of Hispanic soldiers who in many ways helped create this Nation through their service in George Washington's Army. It was a huge