

Removing select small trees and other hazardous fuels in our forests are critical for preserving our forests over the long term. Not only does this ease the competition large trees face for water, it also reduces the spread of bark beetles and makes the forest less susceptible to catastrophic wildfire.

Between the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act, Congress has provided billions of dollars for hazardous fuels reduction and forest thinning work. What is needed now is the economic infrastructure to support this work.

Unfortunately, the number of sawmills, bioenergy facilities, and other forest-product companies have been shrinking for decades. This is due in part to increased production efficiency, but in other instances, market instability forced the closure of many large mills.

One result of the decrease in sawmills is the inability for the market to react nimbly to supply and demand. In 2020, even though massive wildfires should have meant a boom in salvageable trees, the COVID-19 pandemic constrained mill capacity and throughput. This constraint, along with a surge in consumer demand, led to a near 400 percent increase in lumber prices, which are only now resolving.

An analysis by The Nature Conservancy and Bain and Company management consultants recommended incentives to “bridge the gap between the cost of ecological thinning and the economic viability of wood-processing infrastructure.”

As the report explains, “If more aggressive restoration targets can be met, there will be significant need for additional processing capacity to defray restoration costs and provide valuable end uses for thinned material.”

Our bill would make targeted changes to existing Forest Service grant programs to help the forest product industry grow and provide outlets for the billions of acres of wood that will result from the investments made in the bipartisan infrastructure law and Inflation Reduction Act.

The two grant programs we target in this bill are the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovations Grant Program and the Wood Innovations Program.

These programs would benefit from changes, particularly from higher Federal cost-shares and an increased ability to provide more funding for each project, in addition to a higher authorized funding.

The first of these, the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovations Grant Program, provides grants for the capital cost of small wood products facilities. Our bill would first change the name to avoid confusion with the Wood Innovations Program.

Our bill would also double the authorization level to \$50 million per year, allow the program to fund new facility construction in addition to improvements. The maximum grant

amount would also increase from \$1 to \$5 million, and the Federal cost share would increase from 35 percent to 50 percent, making it easier for small companies to use.

Our bill will also revise the Forest Service’s Wood Innovations Grant Program, which provides grants for innovative uses and applications of wood products and the expansion of related markets. It would similarly allow this program to be used for new facilities in addition to retrofits and improvements and lower the minimum non-Federal cost-share from 50 percent to 33.3 percent.

Congress has an opportunity this year to make these important changes to these grant programs and help stimulate a self-sustaining forest product economy and promote healthier forests. I thank Senators COLLINS, SHAHEEN, and KELLY for their partnership on this bill, and I urge the full Senate to promptly take up this bill and pass it as soon as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 218—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VANCE (for himself and Mr. CASIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 218

Whereas more than 800,000 law enforcement officers in the United States risk their lives daily to serve and protect their communities;

Whereas there are more than 23,000 fallen law enforcement officers honored on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, dating back to 1786, when the first law enforcement officer in the United States died in the line of duty;

Whereas, during the 2 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 800 law enforcement officers died in the United States in the line of duty, the highest number of such deaths over a 2-year period in the history of the United States;

Whereas some politicians and interest groups have responded to the risks faced by law enforcement officers with calls to “defund” or even “abolish” law enforcement agencies across the United States;

Whereas defunding law enforcement agencies or otherwise demoralizing law enforcement officers will make it more difficult for officers to intervene in dangerous situations and high-risk neighborhoods;

Whereas a law enforcement officer will typically encounter between 400 and 600 traumatic events during the career of the officer, compared with 3 or 4 traumatic events encountered by the average citizen;

Whereas the unusually high number of traumatic events experienced by law enforcement officers has contributed to a 54 percent higher suicide rate among officers than among individuals in other jobs;

Whereas the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the Department of Justice has confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference between the rates at which major racial and ethnic groups are stopped in police-initiated interactions;

Whereas the innovative and dedicated efforts of law enforcement officers have successfully brought down crime rates from historic highs;

Whereas the “defund and defame the police” movement that began in 2020 has—

(1) coincided with a dramatic rise in homicides and other violent crimes in cities and towns across the United States; and

(2) caused the retention and recruitment of sworn law enforcement officers to drop to a dangerously low level, with current numbers showing fewer law enforcement officers per resident than at any other time during the 25-year period preceding the date of adoption of this resolution;

Whereas, in 2020—

(1) 60,105 law enforcement officers were assaulted by criminals, resulting in 18,633 injuries; and

(2) the number of arrests made by law enforcement officers throughout the United States dropped to 7,630,000, a 24 percent reduction from 2019 and the fewest number of such arrests in 25 years;

Whereas 72 percent of law enforcement officers surveyed are less willing to stop and question suspicious individuals than they were before 2020;

Whereas the rhetoric associated with the “defund and defame the police” movement has created an increasingly dangerous environment for law enforcement officers in which, in 2022 alone, 331 officers were shot, 62 of whom were shot fatally; and

Whereas supporting law enforcement officers with the equipment, training, and funding needed to protect communities in the United States from criminal violence has long received overwhelming public support from across the political spectrum: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) highly respects and values the law enforcement officers of the United States and greatly appreciates all that those officers do to protect and serve their communities;

(2) remembers and honors law enforcement officers who have experienced a death or injury in the line of duty and the families of those officers;

(3) calls for increased measures to be taken to maximize the safety and well-being of law enforcement officers, including improvements relating to the retention and recruitment of officers, improved training and equipment for officers, tougher penalties for assaulting or killing an officer, and increased mental health resources for officers;

(4) strongly condemns the misguided and disastrous movement to “defund and defame the police”; and

(5) calls on all levels of government to ensure that law enforcement officers receive the support and resources needed to keep all communities in the United States safe.

SENATE RESOLUTION 219—AMENDING THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAJORITY LEADER TO MOVE TO PROCEED TO THE EN BLOC CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN NOMINATIONS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. KING, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 219

Resolved,

SECTION 1. EN BLOC CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN NOMINATIONS.

Rule XXXI of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by adding at the end the following:

"8.(a) In this paragraph, the term 'covered nomination' means a nomination to a position that is not a position—

"(1) at level I of the Executive Schedule under section 5312 of title 5, United States Code;

"(2) as a judge of a court of appeals of the United States; or

"(3) as Chief Justice of the United States or as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

"(b) It shall be in order for the Majority Leader to move to proceed to the en bloc consideration of not more than 10 covered nominations that were reported to the Senate by the same committee of the Senate and placed on the calendar.

"(c) Consideration of a motion to proceed under subparagraph (b), and the en bloc consideration of the nominations that are the subject of the motion, shall be conducted in the same manner as if it were a motion to proceed to the consideration of a single nomination."

SENATE RESOLUTION 220—RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. RISCH, Ms. SMITH, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 220

Whereas the Department of Defense State Partnership Program (referred to in this preamble as the "State Partnership Program") has evolved from a program designed to assist countries emerging from behind the Iron Curtain to one that now involves 100 nations and the National Guard of every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas members of the National Guard work with partner militaries to bolster capabilities, improve interoperability, and enhance principles of responsible governance;

Whereas the State Partnership Program delivers a significant return on investment by broadening the pool of security partners who are willing and able to support defense and security cooperation objectives of the United States around the world;

Whereas most of the earliest State Partnership Program partner countries in Europe have gone on to become United States allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and many of them credit the State Partnership Program and their National Guard State partners with helping to make that possible;

Whereas the State Partnership Program helps ensure that the Department of Defense has capable, trusted, and interoperable partners;

Whereas the State Partnership Program has created 88 enduring, cost-effective partnerships with 100 nations encompassing over ½ of the countries in the world;

Whereas members of the National Guard typically engage in more than 1,000 State Partnership Program events per year;

Whereas the National Guard Bureau is working with the commanders of the combatant commands and the Department of State to increase State Partnership Program partnerships by 2 nations per year for the next 15 years; and

Whereas commanders of the combatant commands and United States ambassadors strongly endorse the State Partnership Program for cultivating long-term relationships with partners: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the historic significance of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Department of Defense State Partnership Program;

(2) expresses deep gratitude for the continuing service by members of the National Guard in support of the Department of Defense State Partnership Program;

(3) recognizes the outsized influence of the Department of Defense State Partnership Program in developing and supporting enduring relationships around the world that serve both the interests of the partner nations and the United States; and

(4) supports the continued expansion of the Department of Defense State Partnership Program in furtherance of global security cooperation.

SENATE RESOLUTION 221—PROMOTING MINORITY HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH IN APRIL 2023, WHICH INCLUDE BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE HEALTH DISPARITIES FACED BY MINORITY POPULATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES SUCH AS AMERICAN INDIANS, ALASKA NATIVES, ASIAN AMERICANS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, HISPANICS, AND NATIVE HAWAIIANS OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 221

Whereas the origin of National Minority Health Month is National Negro Health Week, established in 1915 by Dr. Booker T. Washington;

Whereas the theme for National Minority Health Month in 2023 is "Better Health Through Better Understanding";

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services has set goals and strategies to enhance and protect the health and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas African American women were as likely to have been diagnosed with breast cancer as non-Hispanic White women, but African American women were 41 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than non-Hispanic White women between 2015 and 2019;

Whereas African American women were twice as likely to be diagnosed with and 2.3 times more likely to die of stomach cancer than non-Hispanic White women;

Whereas African American men are 70 percent more likely to die from a stroke than non-Hispanic White men;

Whereas Hispanics are twice as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to be hospitalized for end-stage renal disease caused by diabetes, and are 30 percent more likely to die of diabetes, than non-Hispanic Whites;

Whereas Asian Americans are 40 percent more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than non-Hispanic Whites;

Whereas the HIV or AIDS case rate among Hispanic men is 4 times the HIV or AIDS case rate among non-Hispanic White men;

Whereas Hispanic women are 3 times as likely as non-Hispanic White women to die of HIV infection;

Whereas, in 2019, African Americans accounted for 42.1 percent of HIV infections and Hispanic Americans accounted for almost 30 percent of HIV infections;

Whereas, in 2019, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were 2.4 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than non-Hispanic Whites;

Whereas, in 2018, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were 2.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than non-Hispanic Whites;

Whereas, although the prevalence of obesity is high among all population groups in the United States, 48.1 percent of American Indian and Alaska Natives, 51.7 percent of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, 38.3 percent of African Americans, 34.9 percent of Hispanics, 30 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, and 13 percent of Asian Americans older than 18 years old were obese;

Whereas Asian American and Pacific Islander adults accounted for 30.1 percent of chronic Hepatitis B cases, and non-Hispanic White adults accounted for 13.5 percent of chronic Hepatitis B cases;

Whereas heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes are some of the leading causes of death among American Indians and Alaska Natives;

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have higher prevalence and are at a higher risk of diabetes, substance use, obesity, sudden infant death syndrome, liver disease, viral hepatitis, and suicide than other groups in the United States;

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have a life expectancy that is 2.2 years shorter than the life expectancy of the overall population of the United States;

Whereas African American women die from childbirth or pregnancy-related causes at a rate that is 3 to 4 times higher than the rate for non-Hispanic White women;

Whereas African American infants are almost 4 times more likely to die due to complications related to low birth weight than non-Hispanic White infants;

Whereas American Indians and Alaska Natives have an infant mortality rate twice as high as that of non-Hispanic Whites;

Whereas American Indian and Alaska Native infants are 2.7 times more likely to die from accidental deaths before their first birthday than non-Hispanic White infants;

Whereas approximately 1,000 babies are born with sickle cell disease each year in the United States, with the disease occurring in approximately 1 in 365 newborn Black or African-American infants and 1 in 16,300 newborn Hispanic-American infants, and can be found in individuals of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Indian origin;

Whereas, while more than 1 in 6 older adults have untreated cavities, non-Hispanic Black older adults have between 2 and 3 times the rate of untreated cavities as non-Hispanic White older adults;

Whereas the 2022 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report found American Indians and Alaska Natives received worse care than non-Hispanic Whites for 43 percent of quality measures;