

of S. Res. 227, a resolution calling for the protection of the Mekong River Basin and increased United States support for delaying the construction of mainstream dams along the Mekong River.

S. RES. 380

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 380, a resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

S. RES. 419

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 419, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the United States during Public Service Recognition week.

S. RES. 436

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 436, a resolution designating the week of April 22 through 28, 2012, as the "Week of the Young Child".

S. RES. 439

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 439, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Village Voice Media Holdings, LLC should eliminate the "adult entertainment" section of the classified advertising website Backpage.com.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. ENZI:

S. 2374. A bill to amend the Helium Act to ensure the expedient and responsible draw-down of the Federal Helium Reserve in a manner that protects the interests of private industry, the scientific, medical, and industrial communities, commercial users, and Federal agencies, and for other purposes: to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce the Helium Stewardship Act of 2012, along with my cosponsors, Senators BARRASSO, WYDEN, and ENZI. This bipartisan bill addresses the need for ongoing stewardship of the nation's helium reserve in Amarillo, Texas. The helium reserve is not only a domestic treasure, but it also provides nearly 30 percent of the world's helium.

Helium is a commodity that is frequently overlooked and often only considered when you are going to the florist to purchase party balloons for your child's birthday party. I want to take a moment and highlight the importance of this commodity, as well as the importance of the U.S. helium reserve in the world's helium market.

Helium is critical to a wide range of industrial, scientific, and medical markets, including medical devices such as MRIs, industrial welding, high tech manufacturing of microchips and fiber optic cables, manufacturing magnets for wind turbines, space exploration at NASA, and other important scientific research that is conducted at national laboratories like those in my State.

The current sales and management structure for the helium reserve is distorting the private helium market and threatening helium supplies for Federal medical and scientific research, and other private commercial applications. The low government sales price is also a barrier to the development of private sources of helium. But more importantly, if Congress does not act, the helium program will disappear altogether in less than three years, leaving our hospitals, national labs, domestic manufacturers, and helium producers high and dry.

This bipartisan bill will address these issues by authorizing prudent helium sales and management beyond 2015 and securing private access to Federal supplies. It will also allow for the continued repayment of the national debt by selling helium at fair market prices—providing a good return on investment to the American taxpayer. This will bolster the private helium sector, and help to create long-term jobs in this American resource sector, as well as ensure the continued success of domestic manufacturers that utilize helium in their manufacturing process.

Finally, this bill will ensure secure access to helium for our national labs, scientific researchers, NASA, medical institutions, and universities, who rely on helium to push the boundaries of science and technology here in the USA. In particular, as the reserve is sold off, a 15 year supply of helium will be set aside exclusively for Federal researchers to guarantee continuity of our research programs as we transition to purely private sources of helium.

The bill is based on stakeholder input of the National Academies of Science, Bureau of Land Management staff, scientific researchers, high-tech manufacturers, and the private helium industry to address the most pressing problems facing Federal helium users and the helium industry today.

I would like to conclude by taking a moment to acknowledge the exceptional efforts of Dr. Marcius Extavour who was the AAAS Science policy fellow and physicist working on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee last year. He worked diligently to help craft this important piece of legislation and I thank him for his efforts.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2374

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Helium Stewardship Act of 2012".

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 2 of the Helium Act (50 U.S.C. 167) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "; and" and inserting a period; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) FEDERAL HELIUM RESERVE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘Federal Helium Reserve’ means helium reserves owned by the United States.

“(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘Federal Helium Reserve’ includes—

“(i) the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir;

“(ii) the federally owned helium pipeline system; and

“(iii) all associated infrastructure owned, leased, or managed under contract by the Secretary for storage, transportation, withdrawal, purification, or management of helium.

“(5) LOW-BTU GAS.—The term ‘low-Btu gas’ means a fuel gas with a heating value of less than 250 Btu per standard cubic foot measured as the higher heating value resulting from the inclusion of noncombustible gases, including nitrogen, helium, argon, and carbon dioxide.”.

#### SEC. 3. SALE OF CRUDE HELIUM.

Section 6 of the Helium Act (50 U.S.C. 167d) is amended to read as follows:

#### “SEC. 6. SALE OF CRUDE HELIUM.

“(a) PHASE A: BUSINESS AS USUAL.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary may offer for sale crude helium for Federal, medical, scientific, and commercial uses in such quantities, at such times, and under such conditions as the Secretary, in consultation with the helium industry, determines necessary to carry out this subsection with minimum market disruption.

“(2) MINIMUM QUANTITY.—The Secretary shall offer for sale during each fiscal year under paragraph (1) a quantity of crude helium that is not less than the quantity of crude helium offered for sale by the Secretary during fiscal year 2012.

“(3) PURCHASE BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Federal agencies, and extramural holders of 1 or more Federal research grants, may purchase refined helium under this subsection for Federal, medical, and scientific uses from persons who have entered into enforceable contracts to purchase an equivalent quantity of crude helium from the Secretary.

“(4) DURATION.—This subsection applies during the period—

“(A) beginning on the date of enactment of the Helium Stewardship Act of 2012; and

“(B) ending on the date on which all amounts required to be repaid to the United States under this Act as of October 1, 1995, are repaid in full.

“(b) PHASE B: MAXIMIZING TOTAL RECOVERY OF HELIUM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may offer for sale crude helium for Federal, medical, scientific, and commercial uses in such quantities, at such times, and under such conditions as the Secretary, in consultation with the helium industry, determines necessary—

“(A) to maximize total recovery of helium from the Federal Helium Reserve over the long term;

“(B) to manage crude helium sales according to the ability of the Secretary to extract and produce helium from the Federal Helium Reserve;

“(C) to respond to helium market supply and demand;

“(D) to give priority to meeting the helium demand of Federal users in event of any disruption to the Federal Helium Reserve; and  
“(E) to carry out this subsection.

“(2) PURCHASE BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Federal agencies, and extramural holders of 1 or more Federal research grants, may purchase refined helium under this subsection for Federal, medical, and scientific uses from persons who have entered into enforceable contracts to purchase an equivalent quantity of crude helium from the Secretary.

“(3) DURATION.—This subsection applies during the period—

“(A) beginning on the day after the date described in subsection (a)(4)(B); and

“(B) ending on the date on which the volume of recoverable crude helium at the Federal Helium Reserve (other than privately owned quantities of crude helium stored temporarily at the Federal Helium Reserve under section 5 and this section) is 3,000,000,000 standard cubic feet.

“(C) PHASE C: ACCESS FOR FEDERAL USERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may offer for sale crude helium for Federal uses (including medical and scientific uses) in such quantities, at such times, and under such conditions as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this subsection.

“(2) PURCHASE BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Federal agencies, and extramural holders of 1 or more Federal research grants, may purchase refined helium under this subsection for Federal uses (including medical and scientific uses) from persons who have entered into enforceable contracts to purchase an equivalent quantity of crude helium from the Secretary.

“(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection applies beginning on the day after the date described in subsection (b)(3)(B).

“(d) PRICES AND DETERMINATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Sales of crude helium by the Secretary shall be at prices established by the Secretary that approximate the crude helium price in the private market as of the date of the offer for sale.

“(2) DETERMINATION OF SALE PRICE.—The Secretary may make a determination of the prices described in paragraph (1) using—

“(A) a confidential survey of qualifying domestic helium sourcing transactions to which any holder of a contract with the Secretary for the acceptance, storage, and redelivery of crude helium in the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir is a party;

“(B) current market crude helium prices inferred from any amount received by the Secretary from the sale or disposition of helium on Federal land under subsection (f); and

“(C) in consultation with the helium industry, the volume-weighted average cost among helium refiners, producers, and liquefiers, in dollars per thousand cubic feet, of converting gaseous crude helium into bulk liquid helium.

“(3) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall require all persons or entities that are parties to a contract with the Secretary for the acceptance, storage, and redelivery of crude helium to disclose, on a strictly confidential basis in dollars per thousand cubic feet, the weighted average price of all crude helium and bulk liquid helium purchased or processed by the persons in all qualifying domestic helium sourcing transactions during the fiscal year.

“(4) QUALIFYING DOMESTIC HELIUM SOURCING TRANSACTIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In establishing the prices described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider subparagraphs (B) and (C) to ensure a reasonable number of transactions.

“(B) INCLUSIONS.—For the purposes of this subsection, qualifying domestic helium sourcing transactions include any new agreement in the United States for the purchase of at least 20,000,000 standard cubic feet of crude helium or liquid helium in the fiscal year in which the Secretary collects the data.

“(C) EXCLUSIONS.—For the purposes of this subsection, qualifying domestic helium sourcing transactions do not include—

“(i) purchases of crude helium from the Secretary; or

“(ii) transactions at prices indexed to the posted crude helium price of the Secretary.

“(5) USE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary may use the information gathered under this subsection to approximate the current fair market price for crude helium to ensure recovery of fair value for the taxpayers of the United States from sales of crude helium.

“(6) PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Secretary shall adopt such administrative policies and procedures that the Secretary considers necessary and reasonable to ensure robust protection of the confidentiality of data submitted by private persons.

“(e) HELIUM PRODUCTION FUND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—All amounts received under this Act, including amounts from the sale of crude helium, shall be credited to the Helium Production Fund, which shall be available without fiscal year limitation for purposes considered necessary by the Secretary to carry out this subsection.

“(2) CAPITAL INVESTMENTS AND MAINTENANCE.—The Secretary may use funds credited to the Helium Production Fund to fund capital investments in upgrades and maintenance at the Federal Helium Reserve, including—

“(A) well head maintenance at the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir;

“(B) capital investments in maintenance and upgrades of facilities that pressurize the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir;

“(C) capital investments in maintenance and upgrades of equipment related to the storage, withdrawal, transportation, purification, and sale of crude helium at the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir; and

“(D) any other scheduled or unscheduled maintenance of the Cliffside Field helium storage reservoir and helium pipeline.

“(3) EXCESS FUNDS.—Any amounts in the Fund described in paragraph (1) that exceed the amounts that the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out paragraph (1) and any contracts negotiated under this Act shall be paid to the Treasury and credited against the amounts required to be repaid to the Treasury under subsection (a).

“(f) EXTRACTION OF HELIUM FROM DEPOSITS ON FEDERAL LAND.—All amounts received by the Secretary from the sale or disposition of helium on Federal land shall be paid to the Treasury and credited against the amounts required to be repaid to the Treasury under subsection (a).”

#### SEC. 4. HELIUM RESOURCE ASSESSMENT, CONSERVATION RESEARCH, AND HELIUM-3 SEPARATION.

The Helium Act is amended by striking section 15 (50 U.S.C. 167m) and inserting the following:

#### “SEC. 15. HELIUM GAS RESOURCE ASSESSMENT.

“Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Helium Stewardship Act of 2012, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey, shall—

“(1) in coordination with appropriate heads of State geological surveys—

“(A) complete a national helium gas assessment that identifies and quantifies the quantity of helium, including the isotope helium-3, in each reservoir, including assess-

ments of the constituent gases found in each helium resource, such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and natural gas; and

“(B) make available the modern seismic and geophysical log data for characterization of the Bush Dome Reservoir;

“(2) in coordination with appropriate international agencies and the global geology community, complete a global helium gas assessment that identifies and quantifies the quantity of the helium, including the isotope helium-3, in each reservoir;

“(3) in coordination with the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, complete—

“(A) an assessment of trends in global demand for helium, including the isotope helium-3;

“(B) a 10-year forecast of domestic demand for helium across all sectors, including scientific and medical research, manufacturing, space technologies, cryogenics, and national defense; and

“(C) an inventory of medical, scientific, industrial, commercial, and other uses of helium in the United States, including Federal and commercial helium uses, that identifies the nature of the helium use, the amounts required, the technical and commercial viability of helium recapture and recycling in that use, and the availability of material substitutes wherever possible; and

“(4) submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing the results of the assessments required under this paragraph.

#### “SEC. 16. LOW-BTU GAS SEPARATION AND HELIUM CONSERVATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

“(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall support programs of research, development, commercial application, and conservation (including the programs described in subsection (b))—

“(1) to expand the domestic production of low-Btu gas and helium resources;

“(2) to separate and capture helium from natural gas streams at the wellhead; and

“(3) to reduce the venting of helium and helium-bearing low-Btu gas during natural gas exploration and production.

“(b) PROGRAMS.—

“(1) MEMBRANE TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH.—The Secretary of Energy, in consultation with other appropriate agencies, shall support a civilian research program to develop advanced membrane technology that is used in the separation of low-Btu gases, including technologies that remove helium and other constituent gases that lower the Btu content of natural gas.

“(2) HELIUM SEPARATION TECHNOLOGY.—The Secretary of Energy shall support a research program to develop technologies for separating, gathering, and processing helium in low concentrations that occur naturally in geological reservoirs or formations, including—

“(A) low-Btu gas production streams; and

“(B) technologies that minimize the atmospheric venting of helium gas during natural gas production.

“(3) INDUSTRIAL HELIUM PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Energy, working through the Industrial Technologies Program of the Department of Energy, shall carry out a research program—

“(A) to develop low-cost technologies and technology systems for recycling, reprocessing, and reusing helium; and

“(B) to develop industrial gathering technologies to capture helium from other chemical processing, including ammonia processing.

**SEC. 17. HELIUM-3 SEPARATION.**

“(a) INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.—The Secretary shall cooperate with the Secretary of Energy, or a designee, on any assessment or research relating to the extraction and refining of the isotope helium-3 from crude helium at the Federal Helium Reserve or along the helium pipeline system, including—

“(1) gas analysis;

“(2) infrastructure studies; and

“(3) cooperation with private helium refiners.

“(b) FEASIBILITY STUDY.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, or a designee, may carry out a study to assess the feasibility of establishing a facility to separate the isotope helium-3 from crude helium at—

“(1) the Federal Helium Reserve; or

“(2) an existing helium separation or purification facility connected to the helium pipeline system.

“(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Helium Stewardship Act of 2012, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that contains a description of the results of the assessments conducted under this section.”.

**SEC. 5. MISCELLANEOUS.**

Section 102 of the Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act of 2006 (30 U.S.C. 262 note; Public Law 109-338) is amended by striking “5-year” and inserting “7-year”.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) (by request):

S. 2467. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Senator MCCAIN and I are introducing, by request, the Administration’s proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013. As is the case with any bill that is introduced by request, we introduce this bill for the purpose of placing the administration’s proposals before Congress and the public without expressing our own views on the substance of these proposals. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, we look forward to giving the administration’s requested legislation our most careful review and thoughtful consideration.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

S. 2468. A bill to establish the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness in the State of New Mexico, to provide for the conveyance of certain parcels of National Forest System land in the State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act which will designate approximately 45,000 acres in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in northern New Mexico as wilderness. I am pleased that my colleague, Senator TOM UDALL, is a cosponsor of this legislation.

Located in the Carson National Forest in Taos County, the Columbine-

Hondo is one of the last remaining segments of this high alpine ecosystem to receive permanent wilderness protection. The concept of wilderness has deep roots and a long history in the Carson National Forest. For example, in the early 1900s, Aldo Leopold, known as the father of wilderness, spent his early career in the Forest Service in the Carson where he quickly reached the post of Forest Supervisor. There is no doubt that he spent much time traveling through this landscape that likely helped cultivate his thoughts on the importance of wilderness.

Leopold’s concept of wilderness evolved over time and heavily influenced policy makers and the growing conservation community. He wrote, “Wilderness is the raw material out of which man has hammered the artifact called civilization. . . . To the laborer in the sweat of his labor, the raw stuff on his anvil is an adversary to be conquered. So was wilderness an adversary to the pioneer. But to the laborer in repose, able for the moment to cast a philosophical eye on his world, that same raw stuff is something to be loved and cherished, because it gives definition and meaning to his life.” One person who shared that definition and meaning with Aldo Leopold was former New Mexico Senator Clinton P. Anderson. In fact, due in large part to the conversations he had with Leopold forty years earlier, Senator Anderson led the effort in Congress to pass the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In that 1964 Act, the Wheeler Peak Wilderness became the first wilderness area in the Carson National Forest, which lies just south of the Columbine-Hondo area. Shortly thereafter in 1970, the Taos Pueblo-Blue Lake Wilderness, adjacent to Wheeler Peak, was established, further demonstrating that the idea of wilderness is a valuable concept to Indian tribes wishing to protect their most sacred sites for future generations. Another decade had to pass before Congress protected additional lands in New Mexico as wilderness in 1980, including the Latir Peak Wilderness, north of the Columbine-Hondo. In that same Act, the Columbine-Hondo was designated as a Wilderness Study Area to allow Congress further time to review the merits of designating this area as wilderness.

Aldo Leopold laments in *A Sand County Almanac* that progress in conservation is slow—a fact that hasn’t changed much in modern times. “Despite nearly a century of propaganda,” he wrote, “conservation still proceeds at a snail’s pace.” In this context, it is unfortunately not surprising that it has taken Congress over 30 years to review the merits of the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Study Area.

But the time to permanently protect the Columbine-Hondo is now before us. After many years of hard work by local community leaders, a nearly unanimous consensus has formed in support of protecting this landscape as wilderness. This is due to the longstanding

recognition by the surrounding communities and their residents of the benefits that wilderness provides them. The mountains provide communities with clean air and act as a watershed, providing them with fresh and clean water. Sportsmen benefit from the protection of quality habitat that will ensure the elk, deer, and antelope found in the mountains and the fish in the mountain streams will continue to thrive. Communities like the Towns of Taos and Red River and the Villages of Questa and Taos Ski Valley can find economic benefits by attracting visitors seeking opportunities for solitude and quiet recreation, including hiking, birding, horseback riding, and even the occasional llama trekking. And community members can create job opportunities through outfitting and other service industries to assist residents and visitors alike explore these gateways to a more primitive era.

Wilderness also ensures that the way of life of many local ranchers will remain protected from threats like mining or disruptive off-road vehicle use. Local mountain biking coalitions have also recognized that a balance can be reached to protect wilderness values while making practical and common sense boundary adjustments that will help promote sustainable mountain biking opportunities in the region.

During my tenure in the Senate, it has been relatively uncommon to find such overwhelming support for the establishment of a new wilderness area. I commend the dedication and perseverance exhibited by the many local wilderness advocates who have devoted many years to see this effort come to fruition. Without their help, it may have taken another decade before Congress addressed this long outstanding matter. Congress has had 32 years now to review the designation of the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. With such broad support having been developed, I urge my colleagues to support this initiative to protect this area without further delay.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2468

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

**TITLE I—ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM**

Sec. 101. Designation of the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness.

Sec. 102. Wheeler Peak Wilderness boundary modification.

Sec. 103. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE II—LAND CONVEYANCES AND SALES.

- Sec. 201. Town of Red River land conveyance.
- Sec. 202. Village of Taos Ski Valley land conveyance.
- Sec. 203. Authorization of sale of certain National Forest System land.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) RED RIVER CONVEYANCE MAP.—The term “Red River Conveyance Map” means the map entitled “Town of Red River Town Site Act Proposal” and dated April 19, 2012.
- (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.
- (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of New Mexico.
- (4) TOWN.—The term “Town” means the town of Red River, New Mexico.
- (5) VILLAGE.—The term “Village” means the village of Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico.
- (6) WILDERNESS.—The term “Wilderness” means the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness designated by section 101(a).
- (7) WILDERNESS MAP.—The term “Wilderness Map” means the map entitled “Columbine-Hondo, Wheeler Peak Wilderness” and dated April 19, 2012.

TITLE I—ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

SEC. 101. DESIGNATION OF THE COLUMBINE-HONDO WILDERNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), the approximately 45,000 acres of land in the Carson National Forest in the State, as generally depicted on the Wilderness Map, is designated as wilderness and as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, which shall be known as the “Columbine-Hondo Wilderness”.

(b) MANAGEMENT.—Subject to valid existing rights, the Wilderness shall be administered by the Secretary in accordance with this Act and the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), except that any reference in that Act to the effective date of that Act shall be considered to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) INCORPORATION OF ACQUIRED LAND AND INTERESTS IN LAND.—Any land or interest in land that is within the boundary of the Wilderness that is acquired by the United States shall—

- (1) become part of the Wilderness; and
- (2) be managed in accordance with—

(A) the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.);

- (B) this section; and
- (C) any other applicable laws.

(d) GRAZING.—Grazing of livestock in the Wilderness, where established before the date of enactment of this Act, shall be administered in accordance with—

(1) section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(4)); and

(2) the guidelines set forth in the report of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives accompanying H.R. 5487 of the 96th Congress (H. Rept. 96-617).

(e) COLUMBINE HONDO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA.—

(1) FINDING.—Congress finds that, for purposes of section 103(a)(2) of Public Law 96-550 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note; 94 Stat. 3223), any Federal land in the Columbine Hondo Wilderness Study Area administered by the Forest Service that is not designated as wilderness by subsection (a) has been adequately reviewed for wilderness designation.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The Federal land described in paragraph (1) is no longer subject to subsections (a)(2) and (b) of section 103 of Public Law 96-550 (16 U.S.C. 1132 note; 94 Stat. 3223).

(f) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prepare maps and legal descriptions of the Wilderness.

(2) FORCE OF LAW.—The maps and legal descriptions prepared under paragraph (1) shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct errors in the maps and legal descriptions.

(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The maps and legal descriptions prepared under paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(g) FISH AND WILDLIFE.—Nothing in this Act affects the jurisdiction of the State with respect to fish and wildlife located on public land in the State, except that the Secretary, after consultation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, may designate zones in which, and establish periods during which, hunting or fishing shall not be allowed for reasons of public safety, administration, the protection for nongame species and associated habitats, or public use and enjoyment.

(h) WITHDRAWALS.—Subject to valid existing rights, the Federal land described in subsections (a) and (e)(1) and any land or interest in land that is acquired by the United States in the Wilderness after the date of enactment of this Act is withdrawn from—

- (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;
- (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and
- (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

SEC. 102. WHEELER PEAK WILDERNESS BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The boundary of the Wheeler Peak Wilderness in the State is modified as generally depicted in the Wilderness Map.

(b) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights, any Federal land added to or excluded from the boundary of the Wheeler Peak Wilderness under subsection (a) is withdrawn from—

- (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;
- (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and
- (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

SEC. 103. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this title.

TITLE II—LAND CONVEYANCES AND SALES.

SEC. 201. TOWN OF RED RIVER LAND CONVEYANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this section, the Secretary shall convey to the Town, without consideration and by quitclaim deed, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the 1 or more parcels of Federal land described in subsection (b) for which the Town submits a request to the Secretary by the date that is not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The parcels of Federal land referred to in subsection (a) are the parcels of National Forest System land (including any improvements to the land) in Taos County, New Mexico, that are identified as “Parcel 1”, “Parcel 2”, “Parcel 3”, and “Parcel 4” on the Red River Conveyance Map.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to—

- (1) valid existing rights;
- (2) public rights-of-way through “Parcel 1”, “Parcel 3”, and “Parcel 4”;

(3) an administrative right-of-way through “Parcel 2” reserved to the United States; and

(4) such additional terms and conditions as the Secretary may require.

(d) USE OF LAND.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (a), the Town shall use—

- (1) “Parcel 1” for a wastewater treatment plant;
- (2) “Parcel 2” for a cemetery;
- (3) “Parcel 3” for a public park; and
- (4) “Parcel 4” for a public road.

(e) REVERSION.—In the quitclaim deed to the Town under subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide that any parcel of Federal land conveyed to the Town under subsection (a) shall revert to the Secretary, at the election of the Secretary, if the parcel of Federal land is used for a purpose other than the purpose for which the parcel was conveyed, as required under subsection (d).

(f) SURVEY; ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—

(1) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the National Forest System land conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey approved by the Secretary.

(2) COSTS.—The Town shall pay the reasonable survey and other administrative costs associated with the conveyance.

SEC. 202. VILLAGE OF TAOS SKI VALLEY LAND CONVEYANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this section, the Secretary shall convey to the Village, without consideration and by quitclaim deed, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the parcel of Federal land described in subsection (b) for which the Village submits a request to the Secretary by the date that is not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The parcel of Federal land referred to in subsection (a) is the parcel comprising approximately 4.6 acres of National Forest System land (including any improvements to the land) in Taos County generally depicted as “Parcel 1” on the map entitled “Village of Taos Ski Valley Town Site Act Proposal” and dated April 19, 2012.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to—

- (1) valid existing rights;
- (2) an administrative right-of-way through the parcel of Federal land described in subsection (b) reserved to the United States; and
- (3) such additional terms and conditions as the Secretary may require.

(d) USE OF LAND.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (a), the Village shall use the parcel of Federal land described in subsection (b) for a wastewater treatment plant.

(e) REVERSION.—In the quitclaim deed to the Village, the Secretary shall provide that the parcel of Federal land conveyed to the Village under subsection (a) shall revert to the Secretary, at the election of the Secretary, if the parcel of Federal land is used for a purpose other than the purpose for which the parcel was conveyed, as described in subsection (d).

(f) SURVEY; ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—

(1) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the National Forest System land conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey approved by the Secretary.

(2) COSTS.—The Village shall pay the reasonable survey and other administrative costs associated with the conveyance.

SEC. 203. AUTHORIZATION OF SALE OF CERTAIN NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this section and in exchange for consideration in an amount that is equal to the fair

market value of the applicable parcel of National Forest System land, the Secretary may convey—

(1) to the holder of the permit numbered “QUE302101” for use of the parcel, the parcel of National Forest System land comprising approximately 0.2 acres that is generally depicted as “Parcel 5” on the Red River Conveyance Map; and

(2) to the owner of the private property adjacent to the parcel, the parcel of National Forest System land comprising approximately 0.1 acres that is generally depicted as “Parcel 6” on the Red River Conveyance Map.

(b) DISPOSITION OF PROCEEDS.—Any amounts received by the Secretary as consideration for a conveyance under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) deposited in the fund established under Public Law 90-171 (commonly known as the “Sisk Act”) (16 U.S.C. 484a); and

(2) available to the Secretary, without further appropriation and until expended, for the acquisition of land or interests in land in the Carson National Forest.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to—

(1) valid existing rights; and

(2) such additional terms and conditions as the Secretary may require.

(d) SURVEY; ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—

(1) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the National Forest System land conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey approved by the Secretary.

(2) COSTS.—The reasonable survey and other administrative costs associated with the conveyance shall be paid by the holder of the permit or the owner of the private property, as applicable.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUE):

S. 2474. A bill to improve the health of minority individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am proud to once again introduce legislation addressing the health care disparities in racial and ethnic minority communities, the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2012. I would like to thank my cosponsor, Senator INOUE, along with a number of our colleagues in the House of Representatives, for all their support and contributions to this important legislation, and for raising awareness of this widespread problem.

While there are glaring health disparities based on racial and ethnic identity alone, they are further exacerbated by factors such as socioeconomic, geography, and sexual orientation and identity. Although the exact causes for the current state of health disparities in our country may be debatable, it is undeniable that ethnic, racial, geographic, and other minorities across the United States are plagued by disproportionately high rates of disease and experience a diminished quality of health care. Statistics paint a disturbing picture of minority health, consistently showing higher rates of illness and death for members of minority and marginalized groups.

For instance, HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on minorities in the U.S. In 2009, ethnic minorities ac-

counted for over 70 percent of newly diagnosed cases of HIV. That year, nine out of ten babies born with HIV belonged to minority groups. The Office of Minority Health reported that, compared to Caucasians, Hispanic individuals are 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS; Native Americans are 1.4 times more likely; and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are 2.4 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS.

Cancer is the number one killer of Asian American Pacific Islanders and the second leading cause of death for most other racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Cancer also affects African Americans at particularly alarming rates and has a disproportionate prevalence in the population of Hispanic women, who are 1.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer than non-Hispanic women. In addition, Native Americans are twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to develop stomach or liver cancer.

The infant mortality rates for African Americans are one-and-a-half to 3 times higher than the rates for infants born to women of other races and ethnicities. Hispanic individuals are three times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS than Caucasian individuals. As our nation continues to struggle with obesity, trends show increasingly high rates of obesity in minority groups, with young Mexican-American men under the age of 20 experiencing obesity at a rate of 25 percent of the population, while white men of the same age have a rate of just 15 percent.

Circulatory diseases are a growing problem in the Pacific region. These diseases not only lower patients' quality of life, but they are also very costly. Data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shows that eliminating preventable hospitalizations that are associated with lower incomes would save \$6.7 billion in health care costs each year. However, the numbers alone do not capture the full extent of health disparities since there are additional issues with data collection and multiple factors often contribute to deaths.

In 2005, I introduced a similar piece of legislation, S. 1580, because many of the indigenous and ethnic minority communities across the United States and its territories lacked essential access to health care and suffered from certain key diseases at disproportionately high rates. The bill I am introducing today addresses many of the same issues and also takes into account the strong advances made by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In 2008, the landmark health care reform legislation laid the foundation to start reducing some of those health disparities. Senator INOUE and I are introducing this legislation today to build on the work of the Affordable Care Act, and to advance the national discussion on how we can better achieve health equity.

While the Affordable Care Act expanded care in diverse communities across the country, such as Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, it is important that we take further steps to ensure that all Americans, regardless of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, physical, and geographic circumstances, have affordable access to high-quality health care. Because the causes of health care disparities are wide-ranging, the scope of this bill must be equally encompassing. Therefore, my bill focuses on two main strategies: first, encouraging research on diseases and conditions that disproportionately impact minority individuals; and second, improving access to effective care for minority communities.

We must make it easier to identify existing disparities through comprehensive data collection, ensure workforce diversity, target diseases that disproportionately affect minorities, and make culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services available to all.

We need more comprehensive data on the most significant health care problems experienced by minority individuals and the factors that play a role in how these diseases affect different communities. The more we know about the way populations are affected by disease, the better prepared health care professionals will be to create strategies to both treat and prevent each high-impact disease in specific communities. My bill will help to accomplish this by strengthening both data collection and the reporting of health data.

To complement our efforts in data collection, we must also target disease awareness education and effective preventative services towards communities with large populations of ethnic and racial minorities at high risk for certain diseases. Community-based programs as well as comprehensive disease-specific programs already in place are helping to ensure that the health needs of minority communities are being met. My legislation would revitalize efforts in community health and preventive services, which are the most cost-effective ways of providing care.

This bill builds upon the Affordable Care Act's historic investment in prevention and calls for resources to target communities striving to overcome negative social factors. This bill encourages these investments and focuses on preventing fatal diseases, which could save thousands of lives each year and lower health care costs.

Although prevention plays a critical role in finding ways to close disparities, we also have to invest in research to develop better treatment plans for diseases that disproportionately affect indigenous, racial, and ethnic minorities, and to ensure that currently underserved communities have access to care. My bill proposes focused approaches to combat a variety of diseases and conditions, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and HIV/

AIDS, which have a disparate impact on racial and ethnic minorities. This legislation also helps to provide affordable and culturally appropriate access to care in several ways.

My bill, the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2012, includes proposals to remove significant barriers to health care coverage and access and maximize the positive impact of federal investments in health care in minority communities. For example, it would re-establish Medicaid eligibility for citizens of the Compact of Free Association nations living in the United States. This would greatly ease the financial burden on States like Hawaii and Arkansas, which have been forced to absorb the costs of providing health and social services, education, and public safety for Compact migrants in accordance with unfunded Federal mandates since 1996.

My bill would also make health care more affordable and improve access by providing a 100 percent Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage, FMAP, for Native Hawaiians who receive health care from Federally Qualified Health Centers or the Native Hawaiian Health Care System. The increased FMAP will ensure that Native Hawaiians have access to the essential health services provided by community health centers and the Native Hawaiian Health Care System. These provisions would provide treatment for Native Hawaiians that is similar to that already provided to Native Alaskans through the Indian Health Service or tribal organizations.

This legislation will make it easier for minorities with cultural and language barriers to improve their health outcomes by enhancing language access services, making health literacy a priority in patient care, and making sure there is culturally competent care in the health care delivery system. My bill will support professionals who are well-equipped to provide quality health care that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. As a part of this effort, this legislation creates training opportunities for willing and competent minority candidates to enter the health care workforce.

The Health Equity and Accountability Act also seeks to ensure that communities of color benefit from the rapid advances in health information technology, or health IT. It also encourages new investments in health IT infrastructure, which will serve as the foundation for improving the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency for all Americans in our future health care system. Improvements in health IT and health IT infrastructure will also make it possible for rural communities to access mobile health services and other treatment and diagnostics that were previously unavailable.

Another vital service that my bill seeks to make more accessible is mental health care. The Affordable Care Act fundamentally improved services for individuals with mental health and

addiction disorders. Despite the improvements, mental health treatment remains underutilized, especially by minorities, due to social stigma and cultural resistance. To develop access and encourage treatment, my bill incorporates culturally competent strategies to address mental and behavioral health problems affecting minority communities and authorizes investment in researching and treating these serious conditions.

However, we cannot simply put these provisions in place and believe that they will eliminate all health disparities. We must have accountability and regular evaluation of these programs to ensure they are being carried out as they were intended, and that they are meeting their goals. To that end, my bill strengthens oversight by the Department of Health and Human Services, requiring the Department to make regular scheduled reports to Congress on the impact of these initiatives to ensure that they are continuing to reduce health disparities.

April is National Minority Health Month, and as we work diligently to transform health care in America, it is essential that we strive to eliminate the health disparities that affect our minority groups. This bill would significantly improve the quality of life for indigenous people, ethnic and racial minorities, as well as other marginalized groups. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation, and begin an open dialogue on how we can close the gap in health care across the country.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 440—RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEXICAN HOLIDAY OF CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. REID, Mr. BENNET, Mr. AKAKA, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mrs. HUTCHISON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

##### S. RES. 440

Whereas May 5, or "Cinco de Mayo" in Spanish, is celebrated each year as a date of great importance by the Mexican and Mexican-American communities;

Whereas the Cinco de Mayo holiday commemorates May 5, 1862, the date on which Mexicans who were struggling for independence and freedom fought the Battle of Puebla;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo has become widely celebrated annually by nearly all Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, north and south of the United States-Mexico border;

Whereas the Battle of Puebla was but one of the many battles that the courageous Mexican people won in their long and brave struggle for independence and freedom;

Whereas the French army, confident that its battle-seasoned troops were far superior to the less-seasoned Mexican troops, expected little or no opposition from the Mexican army;

Whereas the French army, which had not experienced defeat against any of the finest troops of Europe in more than half a century, sustained a disastrous loss at the hands of an outnumbered and ill-equipped, but highly spirited and courageous, Mexican army;

Whereas, after 3 bloody assaults on Puebla in which more than 1,000 French soldiers lost their lives, the French troops were finally defeated and driven back by the outnumbered Mexican troops;

Whereas the courageous spirit that Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza and his men displayed during that historic battle can never be forgotten;

Whereas many brave Mexicans willingly gave their lives for the causes of justice and freedom in the Battle of Puebla on Cinco de Mayo;

Whereas the sacrifice of the Mexican fighters was instrumental in keeping Mexico from falling under European domination while, in the United States, the Union Army battled Confederate forces in the Civil War;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo serves as a reminder that the foundation of the United States was built by people from many countries and diverse cultures who were willing to fight and die for freedom;

Whereas Cinco de Mayo also serves as a reminder of the close ties between the people of Mexico and the people of the United States;

Whereas, in a larger sense, Cinco de Mayo symbolizes the right of a free people to self-determination, just as Benito Juarez, the president of Mexico during the Battle of Puebla, once said, "El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz" ("Respect for the rights of others is peace"); and

Whereas many people celebrate Cinco de Mayo during the entire week in which the date falls: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the historic struggle of the people of Mexico for independence and freedom, which Cinco de Mayo commemorates; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe Cinco de Mayo with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise with Senators CORNYN, MENENDEZ, BINGAMAN, REID, BENNET, STABENOW, AKAKA, FEINSTEIN, and HUTCHISON to submit a resolution commemorating Cinco de Mayo.

We all love Cinco de Mayo for the food and festivities that we have grown so accustomed to across the country. However, the day is also of great historical relevance, commemorating the Battle of Puebla, an unlikely Mexican military victory over the French in 1862. Since then, Cinco de Mayo has come to represent Mexican-Americans' many contributions to the United States. For many decades Coloradans and communities across the country have celebrated this day in a way that brings pride to the contributions of the Mexican-American community of our state.

The commemoration of Cinco de Mayo also highlights the courage that Mexican forces displayed on May 5, 1862, a courage that was welcomed by the Union Army as it battled Confederate forces in the American Civil War. The victory of the beleaguered force of Mexican troops at the Battle of Puebla was a setback for Napoleon's France