

however, our economy and our national security are at risk. We need to move rapidly toward energy independence. Renewable energy and conservation must also play a significant role as, together, we look for ways to diversify our portfolio of energy sources and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. As we work to attain energy independence, we can also strengthen our economy, increase our national security, and protect our air, land, and water.

During Dr. Bodman's confirmation hearing before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I had the opportunity to discuss with Dr. Bodman a few of the many issues affecting Colorado, to which I hope Dr. Bodman will immediately turn his attention upon being confirmed today.

First, Dr. Bodman understands the importance of DOE's environmental cleanup at Rocky Flats, and he assures me that he will continue to make this a priority for the Department until the site is cleaned up and a large portion of it converted to a national wildlife refuge.

The cleanup of Rocky Flats serves as a model for the cleanup of DOE facilities nationwide, and it is therefore important to the people of my State and to the country as a whole for DOE to make its plant closure mission at Rocky Flats a priority and to complete environmental cleanup, waste management, and decommissioning by December 2006.

Second, I specifically requested that Dr. Bodman look into the Department's refusal, so far, to comply with the State of Colorado's institutional control laws, which were passed unanimously by the Colorado legislature and signed into law by our Governor. DOE has refused to put those restrictions in an environmental covenant, as required under State law. DOE has refused to comply with other States' institutional control laws as well. This refusal has raised serious questions about the long-term reliability of the cleanup now underway at DOE facilities across the country.

I strongly urge the Department to adopt a policy to comply with State institutional control laws. These are valid State laws. They enhance the safety of cleanups, and the cost of compliance is minimal. In my judgment, DOE is required to comply with these laws under the Federal Facility Compliance Act.

Dr. Bodman assured me that he would look into this important matter promptly, and I intend to hold him to that promise.

Third, Dr. Bodman pledged his support for the Department's National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, CO. As you know, Mr. President, NREL is the Department of Energy's primary national laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development. I am a proud supporter of NREL and its research projects. Providing NREL with the resources it needs will lead our Nation to greater energy independence and security.

In response to my questions, Dr. Bodman assures me the Department fully supports the construction of NREL's new Science and Technology Facility—the first new research laboratory on the lab's main campus in nearly a decade. The new facility will house key elements of NREL's world-class research in hydrogen and other promising renewable energy technologies and will push the envelope on sustainable, energy efficient building design. Construction of the facility is scheduled for completion in early 2007.

With these and other answers to my questions, I am pleased to vote today in support of Dr. Bodman's nomination to be our country's next Energy Secretary. But I want to make clear that I will continuously work to ensure that Dr. Bodman and the Department of Energy live up to these commitments to Colorado—that is my duty and I intend to fulfill it.

The Congress will work on an energy bill again this year. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and with Dr. Bodman to do everything we can to help develop a comprehensive and sustainable energy strategy that is also protective of a healthy environment in the West and across the country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today the Senate is expected to confirm the nomination of Samuel Bodman to be the next Secretary of Energy.

As Secretary of Energy, Mr. Bodman will face challenges that are critically important to our economy and our national security. We depend on a stable supply of energy to keep our economy moving. Yet, the United States continues to rely too heavily on oil imports from other parts of the world, especially the Middle East. We import about 55 percent of the oil we consume, and this percentage is expected to increase to 70 percent by 2025. Similarly, we are relying more and more on imports of natural gas. This dependency puts us at a strategic and economic disadvantage. The Secretary of Energy must work with the diverse energy interests, the administration, and the Congress to develop a comprehensive Energy bill that will move us toward energy independence.

The Secretary of Energy position is especially important to North Dakota's energy producers and economy. North Dakota can be a significant supplier of electricity to the rest of the country. My State is blessed with an 800-year supply of lignite coal and the potential to be the biggest wind energy producer in the country.

The main challenge we face is developing a transmission grid that will allow our electricity producers to fully utilize these resources and send power to the rest of the country. We need to invest significant new resources in finding new ways to upgrade and expand our transmission capacity and reliability.

We also need to increase investment in, and more aggressively pursue, the development of clean coal technology. By reducing pollution from coal-burning power plants, clean coal technology will ensure that this plentiful, domestic source of energy remains a vital part of our national energy portfolio.

The nomination of Samuel Bodman is encouraging. Mr. Bodman has proven himself to be an effective manager as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury and Deputy Secretary of Commerce. In addition to his exemplary managerial skills, Mr. Bodman has the background knowledge and intellect to understand the importance of research on, and development of, advanced energy technologies. These technologies, including clean coal technology, will help us meet our country's energy challenges. I look forward to working with Mr. Bodman on the funding and development of grant programs to bring advanced technology to North Dakota's power producers and transmitters.

Today I offer my support for Senate confirmation of Mr. Samuel Bodman as our next Secretary of Energy.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

DEATH OF REUBEN LAW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my native State of Nevada has always honored the brave men and women who fight to defend our Nation's freedom.

We have in Nevada a higher percentage of veterans than any other state except Alaska. We are fiercely proud of them, and we recognize that we owe them a tremendous debt.

So today, on behalf of all Nevadans, I rise to honor the life and memory of Reuben Law, who died on New Year's Day in Carson City at the age of 106.

He was a veteran of the First World War . . . one of 4.7 million who served in that conflict.

He was the last surviving Nevada resident who served in that war . . . and one of fewer than 200 surviving World War I veterans in the Nation.

Reuben Law grew up in Minnesota. He was working at a Ford plant in Minneapolis, assembling Model-T Fords, when he as a teenager enlisted in the Army.

He almost died before he ever set foot in Europe. The great influenza epidemic of 1918 was raging, and the flu claimed the lives of more than 60 soldiers on the transport ship that carried him to France.

But Reuben survived, and he served as an Army sergeant in eastern France in 1918 and 1919, transporting supplies and wounded soldiers to a military hospital.

Reuben and some of his buddies celebrated the end of the war by piling into