

HURRICANE SEASON

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I know the debate today and for the past several days has been focused on immigration. The Presiding Officer has been active in the negotiations, and I commend him for his good work. It has been a tough debate on a very important issue—an issue of security, fairness, and justice. It is an issue of economics, and it affects all of our States. It affects what America stands for. We have spent an inordinate and appropriate amount of time on that subject.

Tonight, I come to the floor to speak about another issue very close to my heart and to the people of Louisiana, particularly with regard to the closeness of the arrival of the hurricane season. It is hard to believe that we are about ready to face another hurricane season again. June 1, a few days from now, is the first official day of the hurricane season. It comes this year bringing a lot more fright and anxiety to the gulf coast because we were hit by a powerful series of storms last year that devastated parts of Florida and a great part of the gulf coast from Mississippi through the whole of south Louisiana, into the city of New Orleans and the metropolitan area, and then on into Texas.

And two of those storms were the worst to hit the United States of America. The devastation and the amount of damage is still climbing. A report I saw today was that the damage is now \$150 billion and climbing. Hurricane Andrew, which was the greatest storm to hit the United States and to hit your State, Mr. President, was \$40 billion. We are now at \$150 billion and climbing. We have lost, of course, over 1,300 people. People were killed by the storms and the flooding that ensued from the multiple breaks in the levees that have put a major American city and region—not just New Orleans, but St. Bernard Parish and Plaquemines, which often get left out of the debate. They are two of the parishes that lie south of New Orleans, as they hold the Mississippi River, if you will, that splits their parishes in half. It affected the southwestern part of our State as well.

That doesn't get mentioned as much as it should—little towns such as Creole and big towns such as Lake Charles took a tough hit, and parishes such as Vermilion and little towns such as Erath, where almost every home was destroyed or very damaged.

Having said that, it added insult to injury that this particular coast that got battered so badly by these storms is also America's only energy coast. This is the only energy coast in America, the only four States that right now will allow drilling of oil and gas off their shores to provide for the economic vitality of this Nation and to provide the oil and gas necessary to run the electric grid in this country and the transportation systems in this country, and to run energy from lights to the entire energy grid.

I have been on this floor many times in my time in the Senate—now almost 10 years—to talk about this subject. I thought I would take a few minutes tonight, because we are approaching hurricane season, to remind the Senate that while immigration is a very important issue, and we want to bring closure to that this week, I hope that very soon we will get back to another issue of great interest and security for the Nation, and that is the issue of energy security. It starts, in my view, with providing some more understanding and more help to those States that are providing the oil and the gas for this Nation, as we seek to open up new places to drill in the Gulf of Mexico, which has become known as a section of the gulf called lease-sale 181. I hope that bill will be considered. It came out of the Energy Committee that the occupant of the chair and I serve on. I think that bill will come to the floor for some discussion.

As that bill moves to the floor and we move to the focus on energy and energy security, I want to take a few minutes to talk about this gulf coast area and how much we contribute and how, without some stream of revenue—whether we get it from lease-sale 181 or from other offshore drilling—to secure the wetlands that we are losing at an alarming rate, to provide some energy-related protection of this infrastructure, to provide for the restoration of these wetlands this energy coast will continue to be at risk.

If my colleagues and the people in Congress think that \$150 billion is a lot of money, just wait until we go through a couple more hurricane seasons to really feel the effect of underinvestment over time, to a point where it is almost criminal. Let me repeat—an underinvestment over time that borders on being criminal.

I have some new charts, since I have used all my old ones up for 10 years of this debate. This is a satellite photograph from USGS of all of the pipelines and flow lines in the United States off of the shore. I have come down here so many times to say that the offshore oil and gas industry could not even exist if it were not for the partnership, which we have done thus far proudly and willingly—but that is wearing thin—we have done it proudly and supported the oil and gas industry for now almost 45 years off of our shores. You can see this is the Louisiana coastline. This is the Mississippi coastline. This is Texas.

This is all of the pipelines and flow lines connecting thousands of wells that are in the Gulf of Mexico bringing oil and gas to a nation that is thirsty for oil and needing gas, because the supply is so low and the consumption is so high and the prices are going up. The four States that are putting their shoulder to the wheel every day are Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. This is the picture that proves it.

This is out on this map about 200 miles of activity. So for some people

who have said the drilling is so far off your coast that the people of Louisiana don't have anything to do with it, let me explain that you cannot access grids and rigs and oil and gas without pipelines, gadgets, widgets, drills, well heads, and supply boats. It is impossible. Every single widget, gadget, and supply boat either comes by boat or helicopter out of one of these many ports that have proudly supported this industry. You can see the line stops at the Mobile Bay. The reason is because Florida, which consumes more energy than almost any State relative to its lack of production—consumes but has not produced. Florida is not the only State. I could show you a chart of California and Michigan and New York—States that consume a lot of energy but have not been willing to produce it in any way, either by nuclear, by wind, or by strict conservation—except for California; I will give them credit for conservation measures. But other States won't do conservation or production.

I don't know if you can see this thin line. Last year, the industry went ahead, because of this policy, and laid a pipeline all the way to Florida to provide gas to Florida. But we have to drill it off of Alabama's coast and then send it to Florida free of charge.

I am going to show you another chart that says the same thing, but it is a little different. When I say that the gulf coast is America's only energy coast, this is another way to look at it. Every one of these green blocks—this goes out 200 miles into the gulf—were active leases prior to 2003. That is the green. They are active leases issued in 2003, which were the last lease-sales; 185, 187, and 189 are the light yellow. And then the red have been withdrawn from leasing. Not many. The active leases issued in 2004.

Basically, the green and yellow are leases. From these leases are produced, for the Federal Treasury—I remind everybody that we are running a serious deficit. So besides contributing oil and gas, we also contribute a lot of money to the Treasury. We are sending to the Federal Government every year \$6 billion. It was \$2 billion when I got here; now it is \$6 billion. Before I leave, it will probably go up to \$15 billion, assuming I can get here another term. So \$6 billion goes from the royalties by passing all of the communities here that build the widgets, gadgets, supply boats—over all the heads of the workers that drill, over all their homes that are underwater and ruined, over all of the wetlands that are being infringed upon, and in a fairly critical way.

Although we have made a lot of changes in our environmental laws, the problem is that a lot of these canals were drilled in the 1930s and 1940s. I am sorry, I wasn't born to try to help protect them then. But like my daughter said the other day, I am born now. We tried our best in the last couple of years, with the little money Louisiana had to do some of this work, but we

cannot possibly do this work on our own. We should not have to, Mr. President, because we send to the Federal Treasury—which is much wealthier than the State of Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama, three of the poorest States in the Union—and even Texas has a lot of poor and lower middle-income people. We are subsidizing the National Government, giving them the oil, giving them the gas, and then giving them all the money. It just has to stop.

We need some money to restore our coast, to build levees, and to protect the infrastructure that is at risk. We were very fortunate that even with this powerful storm, most everybody in the industry has worked very hard to create very good technology so that these rigs and platforms can withstand a lot of wind pressure and strong waves. Every time a storm comes, the industry, because it is innovative, gets better and better. But there were some close calls with these platforms. They are still not completely up in the gulf.

I will show you one more chart. When people say what about gas, this is oil and gas. I will show you what the gas trunk looks like. This is billion cubic feet flow levels. The areas do not include LNG imports. This is just what we drill ourselves. If we put imports here, I don't know what it would look like because nobody wants to put a liquefied natural gas plant anywhere except where? Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi again. Everybody has siting problems with liquefied natural gas that comes imported. Here we step up again and are building some of the largest liquefied natural gas plants so we can get gas from other places. Agriculture in every State, particularly the Midwest, needs these gas prices to come down. They are having a great deal of difficulty in the Midwest. They are having a great deal of difficulty in Illinois and in New Jersey and in Delaware.

The chemical industry runs on very slim margins. So who comes to the rescue? Louisiana and Mississippi, all the gas coming through here to try to keep everybody happy and working. And we cannot get one penny from these royalties in any significant way.

Well, it is not true that we have not gotten one penny. What is true is that Senator DOMENICI, with his great leadership, recognized this and has been a wonderful help and supporter. Last year, in the Energy bill, he gave us, for the first time, a billion dollars. We were grateful. But it is a billion dollars over a few years. We have to divide it among the States. It sounds like a lot, but it doesn't go very far. We need a long-term commitment so that we can count on money year after year to do what we need to do in this community.

I want to show one more that is even more dramatic. I am going to get to this for Texas and Mississippi and Alabama. But this shows the oil and gas wells inside the coastal zone. This is how many wells we have. If you would

see our whole State, you could not believe it. Most of this land is private land, unlike the Western States that came into the union with a lot of Federal land. This is private land. So private landowners get a royalty. That is fine. The State gets some money. While it looks like a lot of money the State would be getting, these wells were drilled decades ago, in many cases. Some of them are still producing, but some of them are not.

Outside this coastal zone—this is our 3-mile line—outside this coastal zone, according to the law which I am trying to change, we get no revenues from these wells.

The final chart is pretty frightening, actually. This is a chart of the hurricane tracks from 1955 to 2005. This is how many hurricanes have hit the gulf coast and the east coast from 1955 to 2005. The blue line is the track of Hurricane Rita, and the yellow line is the track of Katrina. Both of these storms were at some point in their track category 5 storms. Within 3½ weeks, they hit the east side of Louisiana and then right to the Louisiana-Texas line.

For the State, it was terrible to have two very big storms hit, but as a Senator, I have to tell you, I said a thanksgiving that it didn't hit Houston straight-on because if it had hit Houston and Galveston and put that energy sector out—Katrina had done a great deal to put out Port Fourchon, which is the only energy port in the Nation right on the coast—I don't know what would have happened to the lights in America. Maybe they would have all gone off. But nobody seems to care about that.

I promise my colleagues, as sure as I am standing here, there will be a series of storms that plow into this gulf coast. The water is getting warmer. I don't know how many times people have to write articles, give speeches, or write books about the fact that global warming is happening. One can argue about its causes, but nobody can argue that it is actually happening. When the waters warm, any scientist will tell you these storms are going to pick up in intensity and in frequency.

I need to ask the Congress: What more will it take? What more will it take before we act to give the gulf coast a portion of their revenues to protect themselves so that we can protect everyone else? What more has to happen? How many more storms? How much more loss of property? How many more close calls before we have to shut down the rigs and the pipelines and put America's lights out and put our economy at even greater risk?

I go to my office and I ask my staff: Is there some other chart we can come up with that could show people the danger? Is there some other speech I can give?

I might not be making myself clear, so I am asking the Senate tonight, as we wind down the immigration bill and as we think about moving to lease sale 181 or maybe a mini Energy bill be-

cause we have lots of problems in the energy sector, lots of challenges, can I please ask one more time: Can we please get some funding out of the new revenues that are being generated off America's only energy coast to give the people of the gulf coast some resources so they can protect themselves a little better?

If somebody tries to tell me, Senator, why don't you just have everybody move, if I have to hear one more person say we have to get everybody to move or we have to move out of New Orleans—New Orleans is not even on the coast. We are not on the coast. Miami is on the coast. Savannah is on the coast. Gulfport is on the coast. Beaumont is on the coast. New Orleans is not on the coast. We are 100 miles from the coast. But if these wetlands continue to erode at the rate they are going, we are going to be talking about Little Rock as a coastal city. I know I am exaggerating a little bit, but I promise the Senate that this coastal erosion is moving at such a rapid rate that not only is New Orleans at risk, Baton Rouge is at risk, Lafayette is at risk, Lake Charles is at risk, and then we have Galveston, Beaumont, and Houston.

We just cannot move everybody back 200 miles from the coast. In fact, the last time I looked at this data, all along the coast of the United States and growing mostly in Florida, people are moving to the coast. We may be the only State where people are actually moving away from the coast, but the coast is moving to us. We are not moving to the coast to build condominiums or golf courses. We can't build a golf course in a wetland, and we can't put a big skyscraper up in the wetlands.

We moved little communities so that we could construct a fishing industry for the Nation. We run the great ports that benefit the whole country, and we run the oil and gas industry that benefits the Nation. We are not on the coast sunbathing and building condos. But if the country wants everybody along the coast to move, then I suggest some agency come up with an evacuation and relocation plan that can proceed to move tens of millions of Americans because that is exactly what we are going to have to do because two-thirds of all Americans live within 50 miles of a coast. But New Orleans is not 50 miles from a coast.

The Netherlands has a much better plan. I am going to save that speech for another time. There are countries—not America—in the world that use their technology, use their resources, use their brains, and use the money they get from oil and gas by placing it into good levees, good dikes, good engineering, and they protect their people as best they can. We cannot stop these storms. Nobody can stop them. But a smart country, a country with good policies, mitigates and protects and puts up smart barriers and learns to work with the water and the wind much better than we are doing.

With this chart in the background, I conclude by saying, let us move, after immigration, to an energy subject. Let us take the opportunity Senator DOMENICI is going to give us to bring lease sale 181 up for debate. I will show where it is. Lease sale 181 is going to be a new area, which sits on the border of Alabama and Florida, that we are going to try to open.

I know, Mr. President, this is a sensitive subject for Florida because I have worked with you and Senator NELSON.

The Presiding Officer and Senator NELSON have been outstanding in their advocacy of trying to balance the needs of Florida and their tourism industry, which we have as well, with the needs for the gulf coast.

As we can see on this map, there is plenty of room to give a buffer to Florida that is reasonable and allow for more drilling. That is the idea. It has to be reasonable and provide some additional areas to get some oil and gas far enough off the coast so it will not affect the beaches because Florida does have a tourism industry based on beaches. Our tourism industry is not based on beaches. We only have two beaches, and they are only 7 miles long, and we can't hardly get to them. But we have great wetlands and we are proud of them. We have a lot of ecotourism, pirogues, canoes, hunting and fishing, which is extraordinary in our State, and we are proud of that, just as Florida is proud of its beaches.

Mr. President, you heard me say this to you privately many times. Half the people of Louisiana have grown up on the beaches of Florida. We don't have that much money. We can't go that far. So we manage to go to the Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida beaches. We are happy for the day or two spent on a beach in Florida. We are happy for it. But there is a reasonable compromise to be had.

I have been proud to work with many of my colleagues to try to come up with a way to open up this drilling, provide revenue sharing for these States on the gulf coast that have given so much and that want to continue to give and benefit the Nation, and finally to give our people some hope.

It has been a struggle to build the levees through the years. We needed to repair the levees that broke. The hope that we could give to our people all along the gulf coast as hurricane season starts June 1—hurricane season starts June 1. Millions of people living along this coast are reading the reports that this hurricane season might be worse than last. Wouldn't it be wonderful for the Congress of the United States to say this is a security issue for America, that this means a great deal to us, and we are going to act now to provide some hope to the people of the gulf coast?

We have lived in this area a long time, and we are going to stay living here. We have been living here for over

300 years. We were a colony before there was a country. We were living here, and we are not leaving. Whether the country helps us or not, we are going to stay here and keep doing our job. It has gotten to the point where it is so grossly unfair. We have to find a solution so that the people who live here can have hope that the country they live in actually cares about them, not just about how fast they can get out to the rigs to turn on the oil and gas for everybody else, but maybe we would care enough about their homes that have been flooded and the children's schools they can't go to or their churches that got flooded and help them to rebuild their homes, their schools, their churches so they can continue to work out on these rigs and send the oil and gas to New York and to Illinois and to Florida.

We will build smartly, we have built smartly, and we will build even more in that way, but we cannot abandon this coast because if we did, who would keep the rigs working? Who would keep the pipelines open? Who would navigate the ships up the port?

Mr. President, I have taken all or maybe more of my 30 minutes, and I appreciate the time. Again, when we get to lease sale 181, let's try to come together and come up with a reasonable solution, one that works for the Nation, one that works for the gulf coast States, and one of which we can actually be proud.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL ROBERT LOUIS MOSCILLO

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to U.S. Marine Corps LCpl Robert Louis Moscillo of Salem, NH, for his service and his supreme sacrifice for his country.

Robert, also called Bobby by family and friends, was a 2003 graduate of Salem High School where he played baseball and was on the wrestling team. On January 22, 2005, he answered a call to serve our country during these tense and turbulent times by enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps. He successfully completed recruit training, marine combat training, combat engineer school, and the Martial Arts Program with a Tan Belt and was assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA, where he served as a combat engineer. In February 2006, Bobby deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Free-

dom and the following month was promoted to the rank of lance corporal.

Tragically, on May 1, 2006, this brave 21-year-old marine was killed in action by an improvised explosive device explosion while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in the vicinity of Fallujah in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. His awards and decorations include the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Iraq Campaign Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Patriots from the State of New Hampshire have served our Nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill to Baghdad—and Bobby served in that fine tradition. Daniel Webster said, "God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it." Bobby was one of those proud and dedicated volunteers who believed in fighting for our country and guarding our precious liberty, and for that we will always owe our sincere gratitude. His service and sacrifice are a shining example of the highest caliber of person this country can produce. This athletic and spiritual young man realized a calling and chose to employ his youthful energy and considerable talents for his country. He understood that the freedoms and opportunities provided by this Nation need continuous defense and that they are among the most precious gifts he can give to his family and loved ones.

My heartfelt sympathy, condolences, and prayers go out to Robert's parents, Frank and Donna, and his family and friends who have suffered this grievous loss. Robert was, and forever will be, a strong and integral part of his family and will be missed by all. Because of his devotion and sense of duty, the safety and liberty of each and every American is more secure. May God bless LCpl Robert Louis Moscillo.

ARMY MASTER SERGEANT ROBERT H. WEST

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the life of a fellow Coloradan: Army MSG Robert H. West. Master Sergeant West was killed last week near Baghdad in service to this Nation. He was 37 years old, and lived with his wife and daughter in Arvada, CO.

Master Sergeant West arrived for his second tour of duty in Iraq just 3 months ago. He was there to train Iraqi police officers, shouldering the difficult burden of helping to build lasting peace and democracy in Iraq at a very personal level. Master Sergeant West felt that his firsthand experience as a drill instructor made him a better fit to train Iraqis than many of the young U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq with him. Master Sergeant West's family was not happy about his decision to return to Iraq, but he did so with confidence and courage, telling his aunt, "I'm a trained professional, it'll be all right."

One of the hallmarks of Master Sergeant West's life was his commitment to excellence in everything he did. As a