

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the benefit of Members and the public that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has scheduled a hearing to receive testimony on S. 430, the New Mexico Statehood and Enabling Act Amendments of 1997.

The hearing will take place on Monday, May 5, 1995, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Those wishing to testify or submit written statements for the record should contact James Beirne, senior counsel to the committee at (202) 224-2564 or Betty Nevitt, staff assistant, at (202) 224-0765 or write the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

NOTICE OF WORKSHOPS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public, the workshops which have been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to exchange ideas and information on the issue of competitive change in the electric power industry.

The first workshop will take place on Thursday, May 8, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. The topic of discussion will be the effects of competition on fuel use and types of generation.

The second workshop will take place on Thursday, May 22, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in room 216 of the Hart Building. The topic of discussion will be the financial implications of restructuring.

The third workshop will take place on Thursday, June 12, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. The topic of discussion will be the benefits and risks of restructuring to consumers and communities. Participation is by invitation. For further information please write to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, attn: Shawn Taylor.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO
MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 1997, at 2 p.m. to hold a hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 1997 begin-

ning at 9:30 a.m. to receive testimony from Senator MARY L. LANDRIEU, Louis "Woody" Jenkins, and/or their counsels in connection with a contested U.S. Senate election held in Louisiana in November 1996.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ACQUISITION AND
TECHNOLOGY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Acquisition and Technology of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 15, 1997, in open session, to receive testimony on the trends in the industrial and technology base supporting national defense in review of S. 450, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC
AFFAIRS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 1997, at 10 a.m. to hold a hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Employment and Training of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources be authorized to hold a hearing on innovations in adult training during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 15, 1997, at 9:30 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 15, 1997 in open session, to receive testimony regarding environmental and military construction issues in review of S. 450, the National Defense authorization bill for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and S. 451, the military construction authorization bill for fiscal year 1998.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE IRS AND TAXPAYERS AT
RISK

• Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, on the final day for taxpayers to file their tax returns, I think it is appropriate for Congress and the American people to assess how well the Internal Revenue Service [IRS] is doing managing the collection of 1.4 trillion taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, the answer is not very well. The Committee on Governmental Affairs held a hearing last

week on the IRS programs on the General Accounting Office's [GAO] high risk list which identifies those Federal programs most vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. To the taxpayer's dismay, the IRS made the list six times. IRS programs have been consistently on GAO's high risk list since its inception in 1990 and GAO has issued over 200 reports in the past 5 years critical of the problems at IRS.

The problems at IRS are considerable. For example:

IRS still can't pass an audit—something that the private sector has been doing since the 1930's and State governments since the 1980's. Because IRS' financial statements are so poor, it is likely the entire Government will not be able to pass its first congressionally required audit of its financial statements this fall. Shouldn't IRS live up to the same accounting standards it imposes on the taxpayer?

For three decades IRS has been attempting to overhaul its outdated 1960's era computer systems. In its third unsuccessful attempt at modernization, IRS has spent over \$3 billion, with very little to show for it. This has become a case study in how not to buy computers.

In the area of tax collections, GAO finds that IRS has no real basis for determining how much it is owed or, in any comprehensive sense, by whom. This is important because every dollar owed which is not collected due to inaccurate filing or ineffective collection comes out of the pocket of every honest taxpayer.

Despite an IRS pledge to have zero-tolerance for snooping by IRS personnel through taxpayer's files, GAO finds that the practice continues. Only one IRS computer system has a very limited ability to detect snooping. As for the rest of IRS systems and paper files there are few controls to protect sensitive taxpayer records from this invasion of privacy.

All of IRS' computers are at risk of not operating properly on January 1, 2000, because of the antiquated computers' inability to deal with the year 2000 date change. In less than 1,000 days, the collection of revenue and the entire tax processing system will be in jeopardy.

It is estimated that \$200 billion is lost each year to fraud and nonpayment of taxes. While IRS caught \$131 million in fraudulent returns in 1995, GAO lists filing fraud as a high risk area and it is uncertain how many fraudulent returns slip through the system.

But these concerns are even surpassed by new ones raised by GAO in January in a confidential report on IRS security weaknesses which is now being released in very restricted form. IRS has very serious physical and information security problems which jeopardize its ability to function and puts taxpayer data at risk of being improperly used, changed, or destroyed. It should concern us all that GAO's findings of IRS' vulnerability to security