

the wolves or the musk ox and the birds that come through into the wilderness and the refuge.

They further say there would be immense spills. They go one step further and suggest the greasy oil slick surrounding the Galapagos is somehow connected to the danger and exposure to this area.

It is paramount to recognize the connection between the nominee for the Secretary of the Interior and this particular issue. She will not be making the decision. She will simply be forwarding the facts to the Congress and to the administration surrounding whether or not it can be opened safely.

I implore those following this debate to recognize one significant issue that concerns California today. If one will look at what has happened to California as a consequence of a decision made some time ago to depend on outside energy sources, outside the State of California, for their gas and for their electricity, and the consequences of what has happened. Twenty-five percent of the energy of California comes outside that State. There hasn't been one new generating plant built there of any consequence in the last decade. California environmentalists made decisions and those decisions have come back today. Those California environmentalists have to bear the responsibility for those decisions. They are pretty hard to find right now. You don't see them around saying, maybe we did make a mistake, maybe we should have encouraged an energy supply within the State of California. They were very instrumental in saying we will buy the energy from Washington State, we will buy it from British Columbia where they have a lot of hydropower. We won't develop it within our State.

They are paying the price now. Their two major utilities are in bankruptcy. A bankruptcy judge may come in and say, all right, California consumer, this is what it will cost you for your energy. I am not prepared to go into this at this time but the Energy and Natural Resource Committee will be holding a hearing Wednesday and go into this matter at length.

I draw the parallel. We know what happened in California today by depending on outside energy sources. The parallel is, this Nation today, the United States of America, is 56 percent dependent on imported oil. Where is it coming from? It is coming from Saudi Arabia, it is coming from Mexico, it is coming from Venezuela. Where else is it coming from? It is coming from Iraq, our old friend Saddam Hussein. We are importing 750,000 barrels a day of oil from Iraq. We fought a war over there in 1992. We lost 147 American lives. We had over 400 wounded. How quickly we forget.

What is Saddam Hussein doing? We know he is developing a missile capability. We know he is developing a biological capability. Who is it aimed at in the Middle East? Israel. Iraq is the

greatest threat to the peace process in the Middle East—Saddam Hussein. What are we doing about it? We are turning around and buying more oil, importing it to the extent that we are 56 percent dependent today. The Department of Energy suggests by the year 2004 we will be 64 percent dependent.

The parallel is there. California and their dependence on outside sources for their energy and the United States today dependent 56 percent on oil.

The energy bill we are proposing, we are committed to reduce our dependence to less than 50 percent by initiating exploration in the continental United States in the overthrust belt, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, Montana, and my State of Alaska, and part of that involves opening up the small area of the coastal plain, using science and technology, the winter roads, the icy roads, and the expense we have had for 30 years where there has never been a proven exposure to the caribou associated with exploration for oil and gas.

So, let's remember this parallel. You depend on outsiders, you lose your leverage, and you pay the price. It happened in California. It can happen today. As far as I'm concerned, it is happening.

Whether we want to reduce that risk associated with this issue which has become a part of the deliberation of Gale Norton is up to us. I think it is fair to say we can probably terminate the debate on the nomination.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I am pleased to join my colleagues today in supporting the president's nomination of Mrs. Gale Norton to be the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

As the ranking minority member on the appropriations subcommittee which provides funding for the Interior department, I have a particular interest in this Cabinet position. I know that effectively managing this department—an organization of 69,000 employees and an \$8.4 billion budget—is not an easy task. The Interior Secretary is charged with overseeing the 379 parks of the National Park System, the 521 refuges and the 66 national fish hatcheries of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the 264 million acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and serving the needs of 1.4 million American Indians. Clearly, with a portfolio that broad, it is easy to see that the programs under the jurisdiction of the Secretary have a direct impact on every state in the union and nearly every American citizen.

I am aware of the controversy that has surrounded this nomination. I know that there are those who do not see Mrs. Norton as an ally. There have been many accusations made concerning the nominee's public policy positions, and she has been, in my opinion, unfairly derided as a result of certain past working relationships. Despite this, I remain confident that, as Secretary, Gale Norton will be respon-

sive to the concerns of the American people, particularly those concerns expressed by the Congress.

I have personally talked with Mrs. Norton, and while I will not say that we had an in-depth discussion of all the issues which come before the Interior Department, I can say that, with respect to those subject matters we did discuss, I found Gale Norton to be well informed. More importantly, I found her willing to consider various points of view. Obviously, Senators cannot expect a Cabinet Secretary to agree with us on all things at all times. But what we should expect is to have an opportunity to present our views, or present the case of those we represent, and to have those views heard in a fair and unbiased manner. I believe Mrs. Norton will deliver quite well on that expectation.

Madam President, I wish Gale Norton well as she embarks on a difficult assignment, and she will work with the Congress to ensure that we fulfill our land management and trust responsibilities to the American people in a fair, economical, and efficient manner.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent the Senate now go into a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

NOMINATIONS

SENATOR SPENCER ABRAHAM TO BE SECRETARY OF ENERGY

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I supported the nomination of Senator Spencer Abraham as the next Secretary of Energy, and I look forward to working with him in his new position. While I know that Senator Abraham will be facing a host of new issues at the Department of Energy, I welcome his appointment.

I believe that Senator Abraham has a commitment to address the many complicated, intertwining energy, environmental, and economic questions that he will be faced with on a daily basis as Energy Secretary. In recent years, the Department of Energy has been rocked by high profile scandals and security breaches and criticism for failing to address compounding energy policy problems. The Department of Energy has longstanding internal problems regarding agency morale, a complicated system of laboratories, the cleanup of DOE's nuclear complex, and competition between fuel and industry interests. Secretary Abraham will have a defining role in determining the needs and priorities for our national security, energy policy, science and technology, and environmental management.

First and foremost, he will need to work with Congress in the development of a balanced, comprehensive national energy policy. If our ultimate national