families living with autism deserve our support now, and they deserve answers.

I'd like to conclude by thanking my colleagues, Senator SANTORUM, Chairman ENZI, ranking member Senator KENNEDY, and their staffs, as well as Chairman BARTON and ranking member Representative DINGELL and their staffs, for their extraordinary hard work on this bill. I also wish to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of the individuals who are personally affected by autism and the many advocacy groups who represent them for their continued dedication and passionate commitment to this legislation.●

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS

● Mr. JEFFORDS. There are many issues on which we have made progress during my tenure as both chair and ranking member of the EPW Committee, and many issues on which we need to take steps forward. I want to thank Senator BOXER for her consistent leadership on environmental issues over the years, and I know she will do a phenomenal job leading the EPW Committee. There is an issue of great importance to many small Vermont farmers that we have not addressed this year, and that is the issue of concentrated animal feeding operations and CERCLA. I have written to Senator BOXER and provided her with some language reflecting the ideas I described in my statement, asking her to consider this approach as she holds hearings and moves forward on this issue in the 110th Congress.

Mrs. BOXER. I have received the Senator's letter, and he has my assurances that these ideas will be considered as the EPW Committee looks at this issue during the next Congress.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I thank the Senator.●

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

SMALL FARM SUSTAINABILITY: ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS AND CERCLA

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about two issues that are of great importance to Vermonters—sustainable agriculture and environmental protections. Over the years, I have fought for education dollars when it seemed none were available. I have fought to protect the environment when its champions were few. But my greatest priority has been to find ways to ensure that Vermont agriculture, the lifeblood of our economy and our culture, remains sustainable and competitive into the future.

I have worked successfully in both the House and the Senate to help assure dairy farmers of a fair and stable price for their milk, through the dairy compact and MILC Program. I have worked hard to provide strong Federal support for conservation programs, helping farmers to be good stewards of the land, while never comprising my commitment to environmental protection. I have supported the cider and cheese industries in the face of increasing Federal regulation and have promoted tax policy that allows for the intergenerational transfer of farms.

Today, I stand before you somewhat perplexed. For several months now, two of the issues where I have dedicated the majority of my time in public service—the environment and agriculture—have been seemingly at odds with one another.

In some States, lawsuits have been brought against large agricultural operations under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, CERCLA. I have been contacted by a number of Vermont farmers very concerned about whether CERCLA applies to them and about what it would mean to be sued under this law.

In response to this concern, proposals have been made that would unnecessarily adopt expansive exemptions from the Superfund statute for major pollution streams stemming from very large agricultural operations. I cannot support these proposals that would eliminate one of the tools of last resort for communities with waters contaminated by large-scale animal feeding operations.

I have watched with regret as the face of American agriculture in some regions has changed from one of the individual family, working hard to extract their living from their land, to one of the corporate executive, leading massive agribusiness operations. With this type of consolidation, we have lost in many places, though not in Vermont, the reality of the hard-working family farming using sustainable practices. In many parts of the Nation, we see massive animal feeding operations, often controlled by corporate interests located outside the State, contributing significantly to local water quality problems. Allowing these large operations to simply walk away from the damage that they can cause to our local communities allows them to cut costs, tipping the economic scales in their favor when compared with smaller farms that have less environmental impacts. I wish to do everything in my power to ensure that this scenario never becomes the norm in Vermont.

Vermonters have a long tradition of strong feelings about water quality. In 1972, when the Clean Water Act was adopted by Congress, our Nation was faced with a water pollution crisis. Toxic materials were routinely dumped into pristine water bodies by industrial polluters. It was standard practice in municipalities to have underground pipes deliver raw sewage from homes directly into rivers and streams without any intervening treatment. Citizens demanded action to solve our environmental problems. In 1970, I was the state attorney general of Vermont. My office worked to create Vermont Act 252, which enacted the toughest water pollution laws in the country at the time. I had the honor of testifying before this Committee during Senator Muskie's chairmanship during the first phases of the debate on the 1972 Clean Water Act. Some of the concepts in Act 252 are today part of Federal water pollution laws. One of my fondest memories from this period is of the slogan, ''Jeffords Won't Let Them Do it in the Lake,'' which came about as we successfully fought off efforts by International Paper to dump untreated waste into Lake Champlain.

Despite progress on wastewater treatment and point sources of pollution like International Paper, by the mid-1980s, it was clear that without action on other water quality issues such as toxics like mercury and nonpoint source pollution from urban and agricultural sources, we would not be able to meet our clean water goals. In 1987, our own Senator Stafford of Vermont worked with champions like Senator John Chafee, Senator Mitchell, and Senator Bentsen to write the 1987 Clean Water Act amendments, overcoming the third Presidential veto in the act's history. Many of the key pieces of the 1987 amendments, in particular, nonpoint source pollution, continue to resonate in our clean water debate today.

Despite our progress on these issues, there is much to be done. According to the EPA, the overwhelming majority of the population of the United States—218 million people—live within 10 miles of a polluted river, lake or coastal water. Almost 40 percent of these waters are not safe for fishing, swimming, boating, drinking water or other needs. The EPA estimates that nonpoint sources of pollution are responsible for 50 percent of our water quality problems.

I discuss this history because it is relevant. I understand the impacts of nonpoint sources of pollution on water quality. I also understand the importance of small-scale farming to my home State of Vermont, and I do not believe that CERCLA is well suited, or was ever intended, to apply to the normal operations on Vermont-scale farms.

I am here today with my colleague from California, Senator Barbara Boxer, who will be taking over the helm of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. I know that the committee will be in good hands.

I have written to Senator BOXER and asked her to consider an alternative approach that I have put together on this issue of animal manure and CERCLA during the Committee's deliberations on this issue in the 110th Congress. This proposal takes steps to equalize the playing field between