

S. RES. 174

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 174, a resolution recognizing May 2015 as “Jewish American Heritage Month” and honoring the contributions of Jewish Americans to the United States of America.

S. RES. 177

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 177, a resolution designating the week of May 10 through May 16, 2015, as “National Police Week”.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1294. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Agriculture to collaborate in promoting the development of efficient, economical, and environmentally sustainable thermally led wood energy systems; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am proud to introduce the Bioenergy Act of 2015.

Managed in an environmentally responsible way, woody biomass presents a carbon-neutral alternative to fossil fuels for heating and powering homes, schools and businesses. Much of the woody biomass in the U.S. that could be used for energy production is either waste from the forest products industry, or small trees that contribute to the overcrowding of forests and wildfires. In 2013, wildfires burned 4.3 million acres of American forests and rangeland, and the Federal Government spent \$1.7 billion to fight them. Additionally, about 2 billion metric tons, or 30 percent, of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions came from fossil fuel use in space heating, water heating or electricity generation for American homes and businesses. Using woody biomass for heat and power can help fund wildfire risk reduction and forest restoration, all while creating low-carbon energy and a stable source of jobs in rural economies across the country.

Despite this potential, the U.S. Department of Energy, DOE, has not invested in biomass heat, bioheat, and power, biopower, projects and research. This bill introduces modest steps to develop this resource, learn more about its full potential, and improve inter-agency coordination between DOE and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Forest Service on this topic.

Specifically, the bill will establish a competitive cost-share grant program at the Department of Energy to improve technologies for processing woody biomass and bringing down transportation costs, as well as innovative technologies for using biomass for heat and power—from new power plant designs, to neighborhood heating systems called “district energy” systems.

The bill also creates a cost-share grant program through the U.S. Forest Service to support proven biomass technologies, like combined heat and power, CHP. To assist with financing, the bill expands a loan program run by the USDA Rural Utilities Service to include bioheat and biopower, and establishes a new loan program for projects that are not located in a rural utility service territory. Finally, the bill would support continued research into the environmental sustainability and economics of using biomass for heat and power, and would establish a collaborative platform for directing this research across the Departments of Energy and Agriculture.

This bill is good for the environment, good for rural jobs, and good for stopping wildfires before they start. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1294

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Bioenergy Act of 2015”.

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) **BIOHEAT.**—The term “bioheat” means the use of woody biomass to generate heat.
- (2) **BIOPOWER.**—The term “biopower” means the use of woody biomass to generate electricity.
- (3) **INITIATIVE.**—The term “Initiative” means the Bioheat and Biopower Initiative established under section 3(a).
- (4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Energy.
- (5) **STATE WOOD ENERGY TEAM.**—The term “State Wood Energy Team” means a collaborative group of stakeholders that—

(A) carry out activities within a State to identify sustainable energy applications for woody biomass; and

(B) has been designated by the State and Private Forestry organization of the Forest Service as a State Wood Energy Team.

#### SEC. 3. BIOHEAT AND BIOPOWER INITIATIVE.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary, acting jointly with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall establish a collaborative working group, to be known as the “Bioheat and Biopower Initiative”, to carry out the duties described in subsection (c).

(b) **BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Initiative shall be led by a Board of Directors.

(2) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Board of Directors shall consist of—

(A) representatives of the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture, who shall serve as cochairpersons of the Board;

(B) a senior officer or employee, each of whom shall have a rank that is equivalent to the departmental rank of a representative described in subparagraph (A), of each of—

- (i) the Department of the Interior;
- (ii) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- (iii) the National Science Foundation; and
- (iv) the Office of Science and Technology Policy; and

(C) at the election of the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture, such other mem-

bers as may be appointed by the Secretaries, in consultation with the Board.

(3) **MEETINGS.**—The Board of Directors shall meet not less frequently than once each quarter.

(c) **DUTIES.**—The Initiative shall—

(1) coordinate research and development activities relating to biopower and bioheat projects—

(A) between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy; and

(B) with other Federal departments and agencies;

(2) provide recommendations to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy concerning the administration of this Act; and

(3) ensure that—

(A) solicitations are open and competitive with respect to applicable annual grant awards; and

(B) objectives and evaluation criteria of solicitations for those awards are clearly stated and minimally prescriptive, with no areas of special interest.

#### SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAMS.

(a) **DEMONSTRATION GRANTS.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish, within the Bioenergy Technologies Office, a program under which the Secretary shall provide grants to relevant projects to support innovation and market development in bioheat and biopower.

(2) **APPLICATIONS.**—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, the owner or operator of a relevant project shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(3) **ALLOCATION.**—Of the amounts made available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall allocate—

(A) \$15,000,000 to projects that develop innovative techniques for preprocessing biomass for heat and electricity generation, with the goals of—

(i) lowering the costs of—

(I) distributed preprocessing technologies, including technologies designed to promote densification, torrefaction, and the broader commoditization of bioenergy feedstocks; and

(II) transportation and logistics costs; and

(ii) developing technologies and procedures that maximize environmental integrity, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollutants and bolstering the health of forest ecosystems and watersheds; and

(B) \$15,000,000 to innovative bioheat and biopower demonstration projects, including—

(i) district energy projects;

(ii) innovation in transportation and logistics; and

(iii) innovative projects addressing the challenges of retrofitting existing coal-fired electricity generation facilities to use biomass.

(4) **REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION.**—In selecting projects to receive grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, diverse geographical distribution among the projects.

(5) **COST SHARE.**—The Federal share of the cost of a project carried out using a grant under this subsection shall be 50 percent.

(6) **DUTIES OF RECIPIENTS.**—As a condition of receiving a grant under this subsection, the owner or operator of a project shall—

(A) participate in the applicable working group under paragraph (7);

(B) submit to the Secretary a report that includes—

(i) a description of the project and any relevant findings; and

(ii) such other information as the Secretary determines to be necessary to complete the report of the Secretary under paragraph (8); and

(C) carry out such other activities as the Secretary determines to be necessary.

(7) WORKING GROUPS.—The Secretary shall establish 2 working groups to share best practices and collaborate in project implementation, of which—

(A) 1 shall be comprised of representatives of feedstock projects that receive grants under paragraph (3)(A); and

(B) 1 shall be comprised of representatives of demand and logistics projects that receive grants under paragraph (3)(B).

(8) REPORTS.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing—

(A) each project for which a grant has been provided under this subsection;

(B) any findings as a result of those projects; and

(C) the state of market and technology development, including market barriers and opportunities.

(b) THERMALLY LED WOOD ENERGY GRANTS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish a program under which the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide grants to support commercially demonstrated thermally led wood energy technologies, with priority given to projects proposed by State Wood Energy Teams.

(2) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, the owner or operator of a relevant project shall submit to the Secretary of Agriculture an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary of Agriculture may require.

(3) ALLOCATION.—Of the amounts made available to carry out this section, the Secretary of Agriculture shall allocate \$10,000,000 for feasibility assessments, engineering designs, and construction of thermally led wood energy systems, including pellet boilers, district energy systems, combined heat and power installations, and other technologies.

(4) REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION.—In selecting projects to receive grants under this subsection, the Secretary of Agriculture shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, diverse geographical distribution among the projects.

(5) COST SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of a project carried out using a grant under this subsection shall be 50 percent.

[(C) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—]

[(1) \$30,000,000 to the Secretary to provide grants under subsection (a); and]

[(2) \$10,000,000 to the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants under subsection (b).]

#### SEC. 5. LOAN PROGRAMS; STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH.

(a) LOW-INTEREST LOANS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish, within the Rural Development Office, a low-interest loan program to support construction of thermally led residential, commercial or institutional, and industrial wood energy systems.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The program under this subsection shall be carried out in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary of Agriculture may establish, by regulation, in taking into consideration best practices.

(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the

Secretary of Agriculture to carry out this subsection \$50,000,000.

(b) ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION LOAN PROGRAM.—In addition to loans under subsection (a), thermally led residential, commercial or institutional, and industrial wood energy systems shall be eligible to receive loans under the energy efficiency and conservation loan program of the Department of Agriculture under section 2 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 902).

(c) STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting jointly with the Secretary of Agriculture (acting through the Chief of the Forest Service), shall establish a bioheat and biopower research program—

(A) the costs of which shall be divided equally between the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture;

(B) to be overseen by the Board of Directors of the Initiative; and

(C) to carry out projects and activities—

(i)(I) to advance research and analysis on the environmental, social, and economic costs and benefits of the United States biopower and bioheat industries, including associated lifecycle analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and net energy analysis; and

(II) to provide recommendations for policy and investment in those areas;

(ii) to identify and assess, through a joint effort between the Chief of the Forest Service and the regional combined heat and power groups of the Department of Energy, the feasibility of thermally led district wood energy opportunities in all regions of the Forest Service regions, including by conducting broad regional assessments, feasibility studies, and preliminary engineering assessments at individual facilities; and

(iii)(I) to offer to communities technical assistance to explore thermally led wood energy opportunities; and

(II) to provide enhanced services to smaller communities that have limited resources and capacity to pursue new thermally led wood energy opportunities.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture—

(A) \$2,000,000 to carry out paragraph (1)(C)(i);

(B) \$1,000,000 to carry out paragraph (1)(C)(ii); and

(C) \$1,000,000 to carry out paragraph (1)(C)(iii).

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. UDALL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. REID):

S. 1299. A bill to revise and extend provisions under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by Senators MURKOWSKI, UDALL, DURBIN, COONS, WARREN, SCHATZ, HEINRICH, DONNELLY, AYOTTE, KLOBUCHAR, BLUMENTHAL, STABENOW, TESTER, HIRONO, MERKLEY, SANDERS, GRASSLEY, COLLINS, and REID in the introduction of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization.

This legislation is named for the son of our former colleague, Senator Gordon Smith, who took his own life at the young age of 22. After this tragedy, Senator Smith worked to gain the support of members across the aisle and in both chambers to prevent other children from doing the same with passage of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act in 2004.

Although great strides have been made over the last decade, suicide remains the third-leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, youth suicide results in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year. Additionally, the CDC reports that 157,000 young adults in this age group are treated for self-inflicted injuries annually, often as the result of a failed suicide attempt.

More work must be done to address the mental and behavioral health of children and young adults before they hurt themselves and others. Parents also need help in identifying early warning signs of mental illness and accessing the appropriate treatment before it is too late.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act authorizes critical resources for schools—elementary schools through college where children and young adults spend most of their time—to be able to reach at-risk youth. Since 2005, this law has supported 370 youth suicide prevention grants in all 50 States, 46 tribes or tribal organizations, and 175 institutions of higher education.

The bill my colleagues and I are introducing today, with the support of over 40 member organizations of the Mental Health Liaison Group, would increase the authorized grant level to States, tribes, and college campuses for the implementation of proven programs and initiatives designed to address mental illness and reduce youth suicide. It will enable more schools to offer critical services to students and provide greater flexibility in the use of funds, particularly on college campuses. This change to the Campus Suicide Prevention Program comes at a vital time.

Over the last decade, we have seen an increasing trend in the number of students seeking help for mental health issues on college campuses. Of these students seeking services for mental health issues, over 30 percent report that they have seriously considered attempting suicide at some point in their lives. With more students seeking mental health services, we must work to ensure that college and university counseling centers are equipped with the necessary tools to meet this demand.

We can play a role in helping these children and their families. Indeed, passing the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act Reauthorization is one way we can better address the mental health needs of this population. I urge our colleagues to work with us to pass this legislation.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. CORKER):

S. 1300. A bill to amend the section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Adoptive Family Relief Act, which would provide support and relief to American families seeking to bring their adoptive children from the Democratic Republic of Congo home to the U.S. It would also provide relief to similarly situated adoptive families should barriers arise in other countries in the future. I thank my colleagues, Senators RON JOHNSON, CHUCK GRASSLEY, MITCH MCCONNELL, AMY KLOBUCHAR, BARBARA BOXER, and BOB CORKER for joining me as original cosponsors.

Within the past few years, over 350 American families have successfully adopted children from the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, since September 25, 2013, they have not been able to bring their adoptive children home to the United States because the Democratic Republic of Congo suspended the issuance of "exit permits" for these children until its parliament passes new laws regarding international adoption. These exit permits are necessary for adopted children to leave the Democratic Republic of Congo and be united with their American families in the U.S. As the permit suspension drags on, however, American families are repeatedly paying visa renewal and related fees, while also continuing to be separated from their adopted kids.

The Adoptive Families Relief Act would grant flexibility to the United States Department of State to waive immigrant visa renewal fees for adoptive American parents in extraordinary circumstances like this, where the cause of delay is due to factors not in the control of the child or parents. The Department of State is fully supportive of this legislation and is eager to provide some relief to the many families who are affected.

Under current law, adopted children from abroad must secure U.S. immigrant visas in order to travel to the United States to unite with their adoptive parents. However, these visas expire after 6 months. Ordinarily, such visas are used within the allotted 6 months. However, in rare circumstances, such as the suspension of exit permits in the Democratic Republic of Congo, adopted children are prohibited from leaving their country of birth and cannot use their U.S.-issued visas within the prescribed timeframe.

Adoptive parents consequently pay \$325 in visa renewal fees every 6 months if they want to preserve the validity of their adopted child's visa to travel to the U.S. To renew the visa,

the child must also complete another medical exam, which costs the child's adoptive family approximately \$200. Many families from across the country have already paid for at least three visas, which amounts to \$975 per child, plus costs for medical exams. Additionally, many families are also paying monthly childcare or foster care fees, and some families have adopted more than one child. So, in addition to the emotional stress of being separated from their adoptive children, American parents face a financial burden while the situation goes unresolved.

This bill would not change any of the substantive requirements for issuance of a renewed visa, such as necessary medical exams and background checks. It simply allows the Department of State to waive the visa renewal fee to alleviate the financial burden imposed on American families to renew their child's visa, and reimburses those who have already renewed their child's visa since the exit permit suspension.

The Department of State does not anticipate this waiver authority to be used broadly based on its past experiences and its other adoption programs abroad. The bill would not be a financial burden on the United States. According to the State Department, once the initial visa, which the parents must pay for, is issued, the subsequent work for consular officers involved with renewing a visa is relatively quick and simple. The work involved to renew the visa therefore does not amount to the full cost of the visa renewal fee, so the State Department maintains it would not impact its consular resources.

This legislation builds on the efforts of other members who have tried to resolve the Democratic Republic of Congo's exit permit suspension in various ways. Last April, 171 Members of Congress sent a letter to Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila asking for his intervention. In June of 2014, 167 Members of Congress also sent a letter to President Obama requesting his outreach to President Kabila to resolve this situation. Members of Congress sent a letter to the Democratic Republic of Congo Parliament offering technical assistance on October 28, 2014, and the Senate passed S. Res. 502 in the 113th Congress, concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo's suspension of exit permits for Congolese adopted children. This year, the Senate passed an amendment to promote the return of legally adopted children from the Democratic Republic of Congo. My Senate colleagues and our staff have met with our constituents directly affected by the Democratic Republic of Congo's exit permit suspension, and heard their call for help. Furthermore, I, and other Senators, have also had individual meetings with Congolese Ambassador to the U.S., Faïda Mitifu.

However, since the exit permit suspension continues despite these efforts, it is imperative to bring some relief to

our American adoptive parents. While we continue to urge the Democratic Republic of Congo to lift its exit permit suspension, I urge my colleagues to pass the Adoptive Family Relief Act to provide some relief to American families caught powerless in this difficult situation. Should other adoptive parents face similar obstacles in the future with their adoption process in other countries, this bill will also serve as a source of relief to them.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 178—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL NURSES WEEK FROM MAY 6, 2015, THROUGH MAY 12, 2015

Mr. MERKLEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 178

Whereas, since 1991, National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6, also known as National Recognition Day for Nurses, through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing;

Whereas National Nurses Week is a time of year to reflect on the important contributions that nurses make to provide safe, high-quality health care;

Whereas nurses are known to be patient advocates, acting fearlessly to protect the lives of those under the care of nurses;

Whereas nurses represent the largest single component of the health care profession, with an estimated population of 3,100,000 registered nurses in the United States;

Whereas nurses are leading in the delivery of quality care in a transformed health care system that improves patient outcomes and safety;

Whereas the Future of Nursing report of the Institute of Medicine has called for the nursing profession to meet the call for leadership in a team-based delivery model;

Whereas, when nurse staffing levels increase, the risk of patient complications and lengthy hospital stays decreases, resulting in cost savings;

Whereas nurses are experienced researchers, and the work of nurses encompasses a wide scope of scientific inquiry, including clinical research, health systems and outcomes research, and nursing education research;

Whereas nurses provide culturally and ethnically competent care and are educated to be sensitive to the regional and community customs of persons needing care;

Whereas nurses are well-positioned to provide leadership to eliminate health care disparities that exist in the United States;

Whereas nurses are the cornerstone of the public health infrastructure, promoting healthy lifestyles and educating communities on disease prevention and health promotion;

Whereas nurses are strong allies to Congress as they help inform, educate, and work closely with legislators to improve the education, retention, recruitment, and practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients for whom they care;

Whereas increased Federal and State investment is needed to support programs such as the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (authorized under title VIII of the