Mr. GRAMM. I am proud to support this amendment. I think the administration has become dominated by people who are more concerned about the specific elements of the environment, as they define it, than they are concerned about the environment based on good science. I think they are more concerned about their values than the well-being of the people who do the work and pay the taxes and pull the wagon in America.

It is easy for a planner or an idealist to set out a policy and act as if destroying the livelihood of a coal miner is as irrelevant as simply overturning a regulation. But we know the difference between a regulation and the livelihood of a coal miner. It is because we know the difference that we are here.

I hope this amendment passes. I hope it sends a signal that the National Administration has become an extremist administration in terms of the environment. This is a bipartisan effort. I think it is important. I think it pulls us back to the center in recognizing we want a better environment. But we want to balance costs and benefits. We want to look at science. When we are putting thousands of people out of work, we ought to stop and reflect on what we are doing. Senator BYRD is asking us to do that today. I am proud to join him in this effort.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I am appreciative of the 10 minutes granted to speak on a different subject. I understand that mining is an important issue and deserves attention. Until it is resolved, we will probably be working for many days. I know that the Senate Committee from West Virginia feels very passionately about this issue, and other Members may want to add their remarks as the evening goes on, so I will try to be brief.

A week from tomorrow, many of us will head home to be with our families and celebrate Thanksgiving. In my mind, it is extremely appropriate that National Adoption Month is a wonderful idea that we hope will go on for many days. Many of us are more concerned about their values than the environment based on good science. I think they define it, than they are concerned about specific elements of the environment, as they define it, than they are concerned about the environment based on good science. I think they are more concerned about their values than the well-being of the people who do the work and pay the taxes and pull the wagon in America.

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love and dedication, these children have a family to call their own.

From Spartanburg, South Carolina, we have selected Fletcher Thompson and Jim Thompson, nominated by our colleague in the House, James Demint. Having practiced adoption for over 25 years, they are rightly considered adoption experts. They place over 100 children a year. They practice law in a way that helps build families and brings hope to children and joy to parents. We thank them for their great work.

I would also like to mention, the Angel from Idaho—since the Senior Senator from that State was on the floor earlier speaking about the important mining issue,—as Co-chair of the Congressional Coalition he nominated Earl and Judy Priest from Caldwell, Idaho. For over 25 years, they have opened their hearts and home to children of all ages and abilities. They are parents of five children, three of whom are adopted. In addition, they have fostered 180 other children.

Hay and Garnett, from my own home State of Louisiana, founded and personally funded an agency that has placed over 200 children. They have also reached out to help young mothers in crisis.

There are many examples, from California to New York to Louisiana to Michigan. There have been examples of judges, attorneys, parents who have adopted children, advocates in the community, agencies, who are really contributing to making our goal of finding a home for every child in America and the world a reality.

In closing, I would like to remind my colleagues, of several pieces of pending legislation concerning adoption. First, we look forward to passing, with the Priorities and Eficiencies, and Senator Biden’s leadership, the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption. This treaty will, for the first time, lay out a framework for international adoption. Mr. Chairman, as a lawyer and a former prosecutor, you must certainly know the importance of laying out a legal framework to prevent fraud and abuse, reduce costs and make the process easier for families adopting abroad. Together with Senator Abraham, I have introduced the Adoption Awareness Act to fund a nationwide campaign promoting adoption. Through this campaign, we hope to encourage potential adoptive parents to open their homes to a waiting child.

Finally, we hope to be able to increase the present adoption tax credit from $5,000 to $10,000.

As you can see, there is a lot of work we have to do when we come back. I want to take this opportunity, once again, to recognize all of our “Angels in Adoption,” and to thank my colleagues for all the good work they have done on this issue. I look forward to working with them when we return to make the reality of a permanent and loving home real for so many children who need it.

Thank you.
I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

BYRD-MCCONNELL MINING AMENDMENT

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I think we all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the senior Senator from West Virginia.

What we have now is a situation concerning mining in the U.S. where a crucial decision is either going to be made to maintain an atmosphere where mining can continue or through the prevailing attitude within the Clinton administration to simply drive the industry offshore.

The Clinton administration, by its actions, evidently opposes the working people of America who are involved in mining.

Those opposing Senator Byrd’s proposal basically are destroying the entire coal industry which exists west of the Mississippi—the mine workers whose jobs depend on that industry, the railroad workers, the barge men, and the truck drivers.

I think it is important to note that Senator Byrd’s amendment directs the application of the Clean Water Act to be returned to the way it was at the beginning of October of this year.

Senator Byrd’s amendment does not change the law. It does not change any practice that has been followed over the years. It is our job to change the law—not the White House and not the courts.

Senator Byrd’s amendment gives the Congress and the Federal agencies time to apply existing law without destroying the coal mining industry of this country—time to apply the law, or make such adjustments that are necessary in a way that protects the environment, the coal mining industry, and all those who depend upon that industry for their well-being.

We are looking for a balance. The administration’s proposal throws this out of balance.

The amendment goes further. There are two additional issues involved.

One deals with the recent Solicitor’s opinion that would throw out 127 years of precedent on the size of mill sites—only 5 acres per claim, if followed through with, this would make mining on public lands absolutely impossible.

I do not know how many Members have an idea about what it takes to make up a mine. The mine needs a mill site, grading and crushing facilities, shops, processing plants, tailings disposal, headquarters, a water plant, parking lots, and roads. This simply cannot fit on the space provided within the 5-acre mill site per claim. It simply can’t be done. This is how they propose to eliminate mining. In my State of Alaska, we would not have a new mine developed, much less.

You are depriving us and this country the right to produce minerals from the rich resources we have.

Make no mistake; the Solicitor wrote the opinion to end mining in the West, to drive mining offshore, to drive the jobs offshore, and to drive the dollars offshore.

The provision in this amendment would allow mining operations that have been submitting plans prior to a recent Solicitor’s opinion to continue under the law and the precedent that was relied on the developed plan.

The second issue is also a simple provision that would require the administration to follow sound science for a change instead of emotion.

The provision would limit the ability of the Secretary of the Interior to propose new hard rock mining regulations for those areas where the National Academy of Science found that there were deficiencies. Why not give science a chance instead of emotion?

Finally, the National Academy of Science found that State and current Federal regulations on hard rock mining sufficiently protected the environment and needed only a few changes to bring it up to current standards.

What is wrong with the objective of the National Academy of Science?

There are two simple provisions: One that provides fundamental fairness by allowing companies that have relied on 127 years of interpretation to continue while the courts sort out whether our interpretation is legal; and one that requires the administration to follow and comply with sound science.

We are calling for fundamental fairness and sound science. But the White House, in its single-minded determination to end the domestic mining industry, seems to have denied us both.

I certainly appreciate the support of the senior Senator from West Virginia. He has a sympathy and an understanding for the needs of the mining industry.

Unfortunately, we have seen these differences of opinion between the West and the East. But we certainly now have a common interest.

There is going to be little for the domestic mining industry to celebrate this Thanksgiving.

The White House, to serve its environmental constituency and the aspirations of, I guess, the Vice President, has abandoned the call for sound science. They are appealing to emotion.

We need fairness. We need to meet the needs of the men and women who labor in our mines.

This Nation will pay the price as coal mines in West Virginia, mining sites throughout the West, and in my State of Alaska close. Good, honest jobs that