

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

CEDAW HEARING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me thank the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, for raising the issue that today is International Women's Day—it is a very important day for women around the world and their rights—and to thank her for her work on the resolution asking the Foreign Relations Committee to hold a hearing on CEDAW, which is a very important resolution. It is time that we as a Senate hear what is involved and have a chance to get testimony and to possibly move forward on it. It would be a great step forward.

PIPELINE SAFETY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to publicly thank my colleague from the State of Washington, Mr. GORTON, for endorsing my bill, S. 2004, the Pipeline Safety Act of 2000. I am delighted Senator GORTON joined with me on this very important public safety issue. Senator GORTON has the respect of many in the Senate leadership, and I expect he will be a great help in helping us pass this pipeline safety bill. I look forward to working with him to make sure that the tragedies he talked about today—such as the one that occurred in Bellingham, WA—don't happen again.

I also wish to take a moment to recognize the efforts of many, many people in my home State of Washington—especially the mayor of Bellingham, Mark Asmundson, who has done more than anyone I know to raise public awareness about pipeline dangers and to call for stronger safety measures.

I encourage my colleagues, many of whom I have met personally over the last several months on this issue, to take this opportunity now to join Senator GORTON and me in helping to ensure the safety of the pipelines that transport natural gas, oil, and other hazardous liquids throughout our communities.

Since 1986, there have been more than 5,700 pipeline accidents nationwide. These accidents have killed 325 people and injured another 1,500. Three of those people died in Bellingham, WA, last June. We want to make sure we take steps this year to ensure that does not happen again to any other community. It is time to act. It is time to prevent another disaster.

My bill, S. 2004, would expand State authority. It would improve inspection practices, a move that is drastically needed. It would expand the public's right to know.

For any of you who may suffer from a disaster in the future, you will quickly find that your communities and cit-

ies won't have the ability to ask pipeline companies whether pipelines have been inspected, and what problems there are, or actions they have taken to solve those problems, unless we pass the public's "right-to-know provision." It will improve the quality of pipeline operators, and it will increase funding to improve safety.

I look forward to working with the rest of the Washington State delegation to put the lessons that we learned all too tragically in Bellingham, WA, into law.

I ask my colleagues, many with whom I have met, to again take a look at this legislation and join us in sponsoring it, and for this Senate and Congress to move on this very important piece of safety legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE FAA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes at this time to congratulate the majority leader, Chairman JOHN MCCAIN, Senator SLADE GORTON, Representative BUD SHUSTER, and everyone in Congress who has worked so hard to produce a conference report on the FAA. Many of my colleagues have discussed the importance of this bill to our national aviation infrastructure, so I will not repeat now their comments. It is my purpose to remark to the Senate how important this bill is to my State of Alaska.

Mr. President, 75 percent of Alaska's communities are accessible only by air. We have enormous needs and, frankly, those needs have often taken a back seat to major metropolitan areas of the lower 48. It is my hope this bill will address some of those inequities, and I congratulate my Congressman, DON YOUNG, for his hard work on this bill.

We have 71 unlighted airports in Alaska. In an area where we spend half of our year in darkness, those airports are unlighted. One hundred and fifty airports in my State are less than 3,300 feet in length. More than half of our rural airports are without minimal passenger shelters. You reach the airport, get off the airplane, and there is literally nothing there. One hundred and seventy-six public use airports do not have basic instrument approach capability, and 194 locations in Alaska lack adequate communication, navigation, and surveillance.

This bill does not address all of those needs, and I hope to work with the

Members of the House and Senate on the Appropriations Committee to fill a few of those gaps. This is a classic case in which some congressional earmarking is appropriate because the national administration too often has written off Alaska as a priority in matters relating to aviation.

I am pleased my colleagues agreed with my proposal to increase the percentage of airport improvement program funds that flow to airports engaged in cargo operations. This modification will bring additional moneys, almost \$6 million, to the Anchorage International Airport, which is now the busiest cargo airport in this Nation—Anchorage, AK.

It is also encouraging to see the committee once again included my language to allow the Administrator of the FAA to modify regulations to take into account special circumstances in Alaska. Sometimes rules that appear to make sense in the lower 48 simply do not work in our north country. That is why the conference agreed to exempt Alaska from provisions that bar new landfills within 6 miles of an airport. This provision is literally unworkable in Alaska where most of our remote villages are surrounded by Federal refuges and, despite repeated efforts, we are not even allowed to build a road a mile long because of intervention of an alphabet soup type of Federal agency domination.

That may sound strong, but it is literally true.

Many of you may have heard I was concerned about a provision in the budget treatment section of the final compromise package on the FAA. That is true, and I would like to briefly discuss it.

The practical effect of the provision that the House ultimately agreed to delete from this bill would have been to bar any Senate bill or conference report or budget resolution from being considered that did not slavishly adhere to the legislative structure or levels of funding in this bill. Such a provision amounted to an ultimatum to the Senate that presented an unwarranted intrusion into the legislative process. The provision would have given a small number of House Members the ability to completely derail an appropriations conference report, agreed to by the House and the Senate, on completely procedural grounds.

This provision could have had severe and damaging unintended consequences. For example, the House insistence on the across-the-board cuts in last year's wrapup bill would have triggered that provision, and the omnibus bill would not have been in order on the floor of the House.

The minority party in the House could have used this provision to oppose a transportation appropriations conference report, a supplemental conference report, or an omnibus bill if the