

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 interests are ever to be achieved, we must address the overarching concerns witnessed by the current price hikes in gasoline, home heating oil, electricity, and natural gas. Though I am certain that, in time, these crises will pass as most crises do, I fear that, as a nation, we will sink back into energy somnolence. The alarm bells are ringing loudly today, and it is time to wake up and address our need for a serious comprehensive national energy strategy. At the same time, a comprehensive energy strategy must also incorporate a strong environmental policy and economic incentives to benefit our nation as a whole.

The new Energy Secretary agreed with me that coal is integral to any na-

tional energy strategy. When I met with him, we discussed Clean Coal Technologies and other research that can utilize many of our domestic energy resources in economically and environmentally sound ways. Since 1985, when I established the Clean Coal Technology initiative with a Congressional authorization of \$750 million, more than \$2.4 billion has been invested in this successful program. Secretary Abraham voiced Administration support for these efforts. By utilizing our nation's knowledge and resources, we can meet our energy demands while also improving the environment.

Additionally, I urged the new Energy Secretary to find ways to address the global climate change challenge. I hope he will continue to support long-standing initiatives that can address climate change as well as find more ways to deploy our advanced technologies in the market, both domestically and internationally. These new technologies and ideas have been paid for by the American people, tested in our laboratories, and demonstrated with the support and assistance of the private sector, and must be deployed if the global community is ever going to seriously tackle the problem of global climate change.

In the coming months, there certainly will be debate over how best to protect the environment, without risking the economic security of our own country. Adopting a commonsense national energy policy that takes advantage of our advanced technologies, while also utilizing our vast energy resources, can be a win-win situation for the environment and the economy.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### COMMENDING THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES, COACHES, AND SUPPORTERS

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the Idahoans who will participate in the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska, this March 4th through 11th. The Special Olympics World Games is an event of Special Olympics, Inc. It is an international competition offered once every two years in Olympic tradition, alternating winter and summer games.

Chris Fonk of Burley and Wendy Newsom of Boise will compete in Alpine skiing. Eric Dille of Burley will be the Alpine skiing alternate. Chad Moe and Lacy Cummings, both of Lewiston, will compete in Nordic skiing. Janet Bush of Mountain Home and Jeff Frost of Pocatello will be the Nordic skiing alternates. April Empey of Blackfoot, Chris Blair of Burley and Dennis Knifong of Boise will compete in snowshoeing.

Snowshoe coach, Terry Kinkead of Burley, and Nordic coach, Manny

Sheibany of Moscow, will also take part in the 2001 World Winter Games. The efforts of Terry, Manny, and so many other coaches, volunteers, and supporters has helped the Idaho Special Olympics program offer the opportunity to benefit through sports training and competition to thousands of people with mental retardation.

In turn, every Special Olympics competition leaves its spectators with a better understanding of people who have mental retardation. Through their spirited participation, we learn that these athletes appreciate challenges and benefit greatly from encouragement. We are shown that excellence is a matter of passion and determination. Most important, we are made to realize that the emotional and spiritual health of people with special needs is largely a reflection of the respect and acceptance they receive in their community at large.

I am very proud of these Idaho athletes, their coaches, and their supporters. Special Olympics enlighten us, and then leave our souls soaring. ●

##### TRIBUTE TO JOHN A. VATTES

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to honor John A. Vattes, Staff Accountant for the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, upon his retirement.

John, who received two Associate Degrees from Hesser College, has faithfully served the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and the surrounding community for many years. In addition to holding the position of Staff Accountant at the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, he has also been the Supervisor of Large Power Billing for Public Service Company of New Hampshire for thirty years. I applaud his hard work and dedication in these positions.

In addition to giving to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and Public Service Company of New Hampshire, John worked tirelessly on New Hampshire political campaigns for former U.S. Senator Gordon J. Humphrey. John has also been a trusted and longtime friend to me for my Congressional elections since the beginning of my political career. He has worked diligently on behalf of New Hampshire political candidates on the local, state and federal levels for over two decades.

A veteran of the Korean conflict, Vattes served New Hampshire and his country with honor as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps. He has worked selflessly within his local community for the South Little League in Manchester for 5 years as player agent and has served as a member of the Knights of Columbus.

John Vattes is truly an extraordinary individual and loyal friend. He has devoted countless hours as a volunteer in his community while still finding time for his family. He and Doty,