

minutes to my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, and she can divide that among the other Members as she chooses.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments will be brief.

I, too, rise today to speak in favor of cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 22, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

The omnibus bill has been criticized as being large—and it is a large pile of paper. It is almost 1,300 pages. We acknowledge that. But this package of bills before us today also represents a huge commitment of time, a large commitment of resources by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, as well as the other four Senate committees. In the case of the Energy Committee, this package, along with a similar package that was passed by the Senate last spring, represents almost 2 years' worth of hearings, negotiations, and business meetings on all of these public lands issues.

This package contains over 160 public lands bills, the vast majority of which went through the regular committee process, and then sat individually on the Senate calendar at the end of last session. There were 20 Members on my side of the aisle who were the primary sponsors of the bills in this package. Many more of them are cosponsors. Clearly, when you have this many individual pieces of legislation, this bill—this package—does a great many things. It covers the full range of the committee's public lands jurisdictions, whether it be from small boundary adjustments and land exchanges to large wilderness designations.

Some will argue that the number of bills contained in this package is bad and that somehow this is new and unprecedented. The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has traditionally been the most prolific committee in the Senate with regard to substantive legislation. The President pro tempore knows that; he serves on this committee. There are some who may claim it is bad to be advancing so much legislation, but for those of us from the Western States that contain large amounts of public lands, we understand legislation such as is contained in this package is necessary for the day-to-day functioning of the western economy.

Here, in the eastern part of the country, a farmer or a businessman who wants to acquire or sell new property can sign a contract. They can go to the courthouse. But in the West, simple transactions often take literally an act of Congress. That is what we see in so many of these individual bills that are part of S. 22.

This bill also designates those parts of our natural landscape and historical structures that deserve protection. I believe we as a nation can maximize the development of our domestic energy resources while at the same time protect our Nation's other natural resources and wilderness. In fact, the Department of the Interior and U.S. For-

est Service have testified that none of the wilderness designations proposed in this legislation will negatively impact on the availability of oil, gas, or national energy corridors.

Now, there is one section that does restrict oil and gas development in Wyoming, but it is fully supported by the Wyoming State delegation, as well as Governor Freudenthal, and as mentioned by the chairman, the amount of the potential oil is 5 million barrels, not 331 million as argued by some opponents.

Furthermore, every land designation in this package was considered at the request of the affected State's delegation. Almost all of the lands in this bill are already federally managed lands, and most to be designated as wilderness are either within Federal parks or have been managed with restrictions such as wilderness study areas or "roadless" areas. So, therefore, a designation as Federal wilderness does not further restrict uses beyond what has been in place for quite some time.

This bill actually transfers 23,226 acres of Federal lands to private and State sectors through conveyance, exchange, or sale.

Finally, any provisions that received a negative score from CBO have been removed from the bill. Now, the bill does authorize the expenditure of significant amounts of funding, but each of those is dependent on future appropriations that depend on the oversight provided by the Appropriations Committee and Presidential budget requests.

While this process we have in front of us may not be the preferred method for passing legislation, I do believe overall this package will improve our Nation's management of its public lands and parks and will be a long-term benefit to our Nation. So I do respectfully request my fellow Members' support for passage of this important legislation.

With that, I know Senator CRAPO from Idaho and Senator BENNETT also wish to add a few comments. How much time do we have remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There remains 6 minutes.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today on behalf of S. 22, the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act.

To call this legislation bipartisan is an understatement. This bill, as has been mentioned, contains over 150 individual provisions, sponsored by almost 50 different Members of this Chamber—nearly half. It represents every region of the country and has an almost equal number of bills from each side of the aisle. It will provide significant protection to existing public lands, improve recreation, cultural, and historic opportunities, and provide important economic benefits for rural economies such as in my home State of Idaho.

Every bill in the package has gone through regular order. Most have had

multiple hearings and markups in the Energy Committee. All are fully supported by the committee chairman and the ranking member. In fact, many of the provisions, such as my top legislative priority—the Owyhee initiative—are the product of years of extensive collaboration at the Federal, State, county, and local levels, in conjunction with elected officials, tribes such as the Sho Pai, businesses, community leaders, outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists, ranchers, landowners, and other stakeholders.

Additionally, the package does not contain any bills that have a CBO score without an offset. This is not to say that the legislation is without controversy or that it is unanimously supported. Few pieces of legislation that pass through this Chamber are. However, while any omnibus package by nature will contain elements that are troubling to some, the Energy Committee has carefully negotiated the inclusion of each bill in this package to successfully reach a compromise on which all sides could agree.

As with my Owyhee wilderness legislation, not everyone got exactly what they wanted, but the broad array of collaborators achieved enough of their objectives to support the whole package and get behind legislation that offers significant improvement to land management practices and a reduction in decades-old conflict.

Similarly, this omnibus lands bill has broad support in every region of the country. As a result, on balance, this omnibus lands bill is widely supported and represents a diverse group of interests from every region. Recognizing this, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of cloture so that we can pass this legislation and move forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Utah.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I rise to voice my support for this legislation even though there are bills in the package that I do not support.

I oppose the National Landscape Conservation System. I might have preferred that it be separated out so we could have that particular vote. But that is not the way the committee has decided to do it, and this committee, in leadership of both parties, has adopted the pattern of packaging bills together at the end of a Congress, and that is what we are faced with today.

Given that history, I rise to support the bill because most of it is acceptable to me, and one bill in particular is one on which I have been working for close to, if not more than, a decade. The issue of wilderness in southern Utah has been the most contentious issue I have had to deal with in the time I have been in the Senate. It was an issue in my campaign in 1992. It has aroused emotion, and, indeed, something stronger than emotion throughout the State for many years. Working