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Senate

BROWNFIELDS REVITALIZATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes this afternoon to express my support for S. 350, the Brownfields Revitalization and Restoration Act. It is a bill which I hope we will vote to pass today and, hopefully, it will be enacted in the House as well. The bill before us this afternoon represents years of discussion, countless hearings and a genuine compromise. Some people in this Chamber have been part of those discussions and have worked hard to achieve this compromise.

We have heard from others today who talked about the balance this bill represents and some of the compromises it contains. I want to focus in my remarks on what this bill means to our States, including the State I am privileged to represent, Delaware, where this legislation can make and will make a real and significant impact.

This morning, I came to work by train, as I do most mornings. I caught the train in Wilmington and headed down to Washington. I looked out, as I often do, the left side of the train as we pulled out of the Amtrak station in Wilmington, and I looked over to an area that during World War II was a prime area for building ships, along the magnificent

Christina River. Between roughly 1941 and 1945, some 10,000 men and women worked along the banks of the Christina River in Wilmington. They built all kinds of ships, destroyer escorts, troop landing ships,

Liberty ships, and other vessels that really helped to win World War II.

When the war was over in 1945, not surprisingly, all of those people were no longer needed. Eventually, within a few years after the end of the war, that vibrant shipbuilding community along the Christina folded up and all of those jobs, for the most part, went away. What had been a vibrant area with manufacturing vitality began to go to seed, and over the years it eventually turned into an abandoned wasteland.

To be honest, as Delaware's Congressman during the late 1980s, as I rode that same Amtrak train to work, I looked out that window and said to myself, boy, this looks awful. And it did. Today it doesn't. Today, we have a river walk, we have a beautiful park, we have buildings that have been restored or are being restored, we have museums, restaurants, and places to shop. We have a stadium where one of the greatest minor league baseball teams in America plays, the Wilmington Blue Rocks.

A couple years ago, as Delaware's Governor, I signed legislation that enabled us to go in and turn that industrial wasteland into the riverfront jewel that it is becoming today for the State of Delaware. We returned to productive use some land that had been forgotten and that in a way, served as a buffer to keep people away from the river.

I want to thank several people, certainly our subcommittee chairman, the ranking

Democrat, and Senator CHAFEE, who headed the subcommittee to develop this bill and nurtured it over the years. I thank Senator SMITH, chairman of the committee, for his good work, and Senator REID of Nevada, who has spent a fair amount of time in these vineyards in the last couple of years.

As a freshman Senator who joined this important debate a little late, they were kind enough to work with me and teach me a thing or two about these issues and listen to my concerns and to reflect some of them in the final bill. I don't see my friend from Ohio on the floor, but I want to say a word about Senator VOINOVICH, who chaired the National Governors' Association during the time when I was its vice-chairman, and who has worked on this bill with me. We had the opportunity to work a little together on this legislation and he was instrumental in making a good bill even better. I am pleased to say to colleagues today and fellow Governors across the country that included in this bill is a provision that will go some distance toward ensuring that State certification of brownfields cleanup will actually result in the revitalization of thousands of underutilized sites in States across the country.

I thank Senator VOINOVICH for his work on this, as well as the other members of our committee who have worked very hard and patiently over the last several months and years, and who didn't pass up

the opportunity this year to make this bill the best it could be. I believe what we have today is a brownfields bill that moves EPA's existing program a significant step forward.

This bill protects our environment and encourages businesses to reuse these sites. In my opinion, it just makes good sense. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Before I yield, I want to say, in reflecting on my first roughly 3 months here as a Senator, I have had the opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner in the Chamber on a couple of major initiatives, such as bankruptcy reform, along with the Presiding Officer, who was instrumental in it; but the bill passed with 85 votes, with broad bipartisan support. There was also campaign finance reform, which enjoyed a lot of Democratic and Republican support as well. We had the budget resolution, which ended up enjoying a fair amount of Democratic support as well as Republican support, and today we have the brownfields legislation, which I believe will pass this Chamber with broad bipartisan support. I am encouraged at this degree of bipartisan support we have seen on these issues. Maybe we will somehow set the stage today for debate which is to begin maybe tomorrow or next week, and that is to bring up the education issues, to try to redefine the Federal role regarding the education of our children.