

We cannot ignore the fact that we have more coal in this country in Btus than the rest of the world has recoverable oil. Coal is an excellent energy source, and we should be supporting research that will ultimately provide us with zero emission coal-fired power plants.

International markets are an important component of our energy policy. As we look at the world energy situation, 2 billion people lack access to electricity. Current electric power capacity will have to triple over the next 50 years to meet this demand. The worldwide market for new power equipment is expected to be \$2 trillion per decade for at least the next 5 decades. China alone plans to construct eight to 10 power plants a year for the next 20 years, 75 percent of which will burn coal. This fact alone is the reason we must focus on continued research to develop the most energy-efficient, cleanest-burning coal technology possible.

Natural gas holds great promise in many energy sectors. First, its great abundance in the United States, as well as all of North America, together with its clean-burning attributes, make it a fuel of choice for future power generation in this country. In the fiscal year 2001 interior appropriations bills we have funded a major natural gas infrastructure program. Pipelines and refueling stations are necessary to improve access to clean, efficient domestically produced natural gas.

Our dependence on petroleum-based fuels, gasoline and diesel fuel, for our transportation sector is a more difficult situation to address. We must continue to support alternatives, including natural gas and electric vehicles.

We need to look at how we can make transportation fuels less polluting and how we can combine the use of these fuels with other cutting edge technologies and hybrid vehicles. Again, there is a focus on these efforts in the Interior appropriations bill for next year. The Interior appropriations bill has a strong focus on conservation of our energy and its end use.

While we are doing what we can to provide necessary funding for research to improve emissions and efficiency in our Nation's energy use through funding provided to the Department of Energy, we must examine other important components of our energy picture. Policies which cut off supplies and access are not for tomorrow.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join together to develop a truly comprehensive energy policy. Failure to do so will make today's crisis a permanent crisis.

WHY WE NEED TO ABOLISH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ensure that H.R. 1649, the act to abolish the Department of Energy, does not get pushed behind a copy machine like two highly classified secret hard disk drives were recently.

In 1995, I was the leader of the House task force that first introduced the Department of Energy Abolishment Act. Back then we highlighted four principal reasons why Congress needs to eliminate the Department of Energy. Listen to the same principles which still hold true:

Number one, the DOE no longer serves as a core energy-related mission. In fact, less than 20 percent of the current Department of Energy budget is dedicated to energy-related activities.

Number two, the Department of Energy is a failed cabinet level agency, unable to meet its most basic obligations.

Number three, the Department of Energy has developed into a feeding trough for corporate welfare recipients.

Number four, DOE wastes billions of taxpayer dollars annually.

These four principles still stand true today; and unfortunately, now we can add a fifth principle, a reason why Congress must abolish this agency. That reason is that the Department of Energy has become and continues to be a serious threat to the security of this Nation.

First it was Chinagate, and now we learn that highly classified and secret materials were missing for 2 months until recently discovered behind a copying machine.

The Department of Energy has become a threat to our national security. In 1998 the House of Representatives created a Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military and Commercial Concerns with China, also known as the Cox Committee. I have with me a copy of one of three volumes of the Cox report I am holding in my hand outlining problems within the Department of Energy.

The Cox Committee issued 38 recommendations in response to their conclusion that the security at the Department of Energy nuclear laboratories in Sandia, Los Alamos, and Lawrence Livermore do not meet even the minimal standards, and that China has stolen design information on our Nation's most advanced thermonuclear weapons.

Into the House Cox Committee, President Clinton appointed former Senator Warren Rudman, chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, to also evaluate security at the DOE labs. In my hand I have that report that was submitted by Senator Rudman. It has at the top "science at its best, security at its worst."

Some of the examples of the Department of Energy mismanagement as reported by the Rudman report is, one, a Department of Energy employee was dead for 11 months before the security officials realized that four classified documents were still assigned to him.

It also took 45 months to fix a broken doorknob that was stuck in an open position, allowing access to classified nuclear information. Department of Energy officials also took 35 months to write a work report to replace a lock at a weapons lab facility which contained classified information. Several months passed before the security audit team discovered that a main telephone frame door at a weapons lab had been forced open and the lock had been destroyed.

During this Congress, in separate reports, Congressman Cox and Senator Rudman have reached the same conclusion regarding the Department of Energy: the agency is incapable of reforming itself and has a culture of waste, fraud and abuse.

What does Secretary Richardson have to say about these problems? On March 9, 1999, Secretary Richardson said, "Security at the labs right now is good."

On March 14, 1999, Secretary Richardson said, "We have top notch security right now in our national labs." He also said on that day, "Our labs are very security conscious now." On March 16 he said, "Security is being tightened dramatically at the labs. This should not happen again."

What Bill Richardson said yesterday was, "What I did not take into account was that the lab culture needs more time to be changed. I did not take into account the human element," on Meet the Press on June 18, 2000.

I think this is the final straw, Mr. Speaker. On May 7, highly classified computer disks containing nuclear secrets were discovered missing from the Department of Energy lab in Los Alamos. Although the disappearance was discovered on May 7, it was not until 24 days later that the director of the lab was notified, along with the Department of Energy Secretary, Bill Richardson and the FBI. To date, no one has been fired or taken off the payroll.

While I recognize progress in the announcement this week by chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services of his intentions to introduce legislation to examine whether the nuclear weapons program should be turned over to the Department of Defense, what we do not need is another commission telling us what we already know.

The Department of Energy is a threat to our national security, and all defense-related functions currently housed within the Department of Energy should be transferred to the Department of Defense.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I believe it is time to turn out the lights at the Department of Energy by passing H.R. 1649.

DEMOCRATIC VS. REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr.

MCDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the majority leader said it on Wednesday, we will embark upon a very important bill, that is, giving prescription medications for seniors in this country. There is an enormous difference between the Republican and the Democratic plan, and I would like to lay out the differences.

The Democratic prescription medication plan is part of Medicare. It is a core benefit. The Republican plan is not a part of Medicare; it is simply a chance to buy a private insurance policy or join an HMO.

The Democratic plan is secure. Seniors can count on it, just like they count on Medicare. Under the Republican plan, your insurance company or your HMO could leave your area, disrupt your life, as they are doing today with regular benefits, while you look for another company. This is just one more example of the HMO in pharmaceuticals.

Now, the Democratic prescription plan is simple and easy. It is a part of Medicare. Under the Democratic prescription medicine plan, you will not have to change anything that you now do to get your prescriptions. You can continue to get your prescriptions from your local pharmacist, just as you do now.

On the other hand, the Republican plan is complex and difficult. The Republican plan would require you to find an insurance company or an HMO and sign up. Then you would get your prescriptions by mail order. The chairman of the committee came before the Committee on Ways and Means and held up a letter from a mail order house in Florida. All your drugs would come from Florida, and you would have to wait 8 to 10 days.

Under the Democratic plan, you would pay \$25. The one that will be brought to the floor has a guarantee of a \$25 premium. Under the Republican plan, your premium would be set by the insurance company, which would have to be high enough to cover the marketing costs and profits.

There is no guaranteed premium in the Republican plan. Seniors have already been through this with HMOs. They joined an HMO, they were going to get all these benefits. Then they took away the benefits. Then they said we have taken away the benefits, but we are going to charge you a policy premium. That is what will happen under the pharmaceutical plan of the Republicans.

The Republicans say we are going to give you choice. They really take away choice. The only choice that a senior will have is which plan do they go into, which insurance company do they sign up with.

The HMO, or the private insurance company, will limit the choice of what pharmaceuticals they receive. Now, when I am a physician and I write a prescription and I hand it to a patient

and they go to the pharmacy, I know what the patient got. But when it goes through this HMO, they could say, well, that is not on our formula. We will give you something that is close, or we will give you something that we think is just as good, and that choice of the physician and the patient will be interrupted. We will have to put an amendment on the Patient's Bill of Rights on this issue.

The other thing they take away is your choice of pharmacy. If they are a mail order house in Florida, they do not care about your local pharmacy. Your local pharmacist is out of business as far as your being able to do down there and get your medicine with the discount. You will have to pay the old high prices. In my view, the Republican plan really guarantees a benefit to insurance companies or HMOs, not to seniors.

There is no guarantee that the insurance companies will offer an affordable, and I emphasize, affordable prescription drug plan to seniors.

Now, you ask me, why is that? Well, let me tell you the specifics of the bill. Ordinarily a lot of people do not read the bill, but I do. The Republican plan guarantees profits to insurance companies and HMOs by letting them hold the Government hostage.

Page 56 of the Republican plan says that the Government will pay private plans not more than 35 percent of the cost of those medicines. So you have paid your premium through Social Security, and the 35 percent for the Government that has to cover it. But the Congressional Budget Office and the insurance companies say the plan will not work; we will not offer a plan if the Government pays only 35 percent.

So the Republicans answer that. They go around on page 40 and they say the Government may provide financial incentives, including partial underwriting of the risk to get the insurance companies to sell policies to seniors. During the markup in the committee, the chairman of the health subcommittee said that they could cover up to 99 percent. Now, if you are an insurance company out there and they offer you 35 percent, you say, I do not want that. I am going to wait until they offer me 100 percent.

It is a bad bill, and we have to pass the Democratic alternative.

□ 1430

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TOOMEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WOLF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRIVATIZATION OF ENRICHMENT INDUSTRY SHOULD BE REVERSED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues a sad and tragic headline from the Columbus Dispatch of yesterday. It is a headline that reads, "Piketon Plant to Close," and the subheading says, "2000 workers will lose jobs because of the shutdown." Then they say, "Less than 2 years ago, the United States Enrichment Corporation vowed to keep the Piketon plant and a sister facility in Paducah, Kentucky open until the year 2005." This is the plant that employs 2000 southern Ohio men and women.

This industry was privatized less than 2 years ago, and at the time of the privatization, they accepted an obligation, an obligation to operate both the Paducah and the Piketon sites through the year 2004. The day before yesterday, flying in the face of a recommendation from the Department of Treasury and from a strongly worded request from Secretary Richardson, the CEO of this company and the board of directors voted to close this facility. Mr. Nick Timbers, a person that I appropriately refer to as "Slick Nick" Timbers, was quoted in The Washington Post as saying, "It had to be done. It is the reason Congress privatized the company." For Mr. Timbers to utter such a statement is sheer hypocrisy. It shows that this man cannot be trusted or believed. He, as the CEO of this company, accepted an obligation, an obligation entered into through a legal agreement with the Department of Treasury, and he has broken that agreement.

In response to my criticism and the criticism of Senator VOINOVICH and Senator DEWINE from Ohio and others, Mr. Timbers was quoted in an AP story yesterday as saying, "Politicians should stop all this old, tiring finger pointing."

This is a man who negotiated through his own maneuverings a \$3.6 million golden parachute. If he is relieved of his job, he walks away with \$3.6 million and yet, he is willing to lay off thousands of hard-working Americans without giving them due consideration.

Mr. Speaker, privatization of our enrichment industry was an unwise decision. That is why next week I plan to introduce legislation to have the Government renationalize this vital industry. It provides 23 percent of the electricity output in this Nation, and this privatized company is destroying not only the enrichment industry, but the mining industry and the conversion industry as well.

Mr. Speaker, if we are not careful, if we as a Congress do not take appropriate and immediate action, it is possible that 3 or 4 or 5 years from now, this country could find itself totally dependent on foreign sources for 23 percent of our Nation's electricity. We know what dependency on foreign sources for oil does to prices. We know what gasoline is selling for today. Can we imagine how we could be brought to our knees if we were totally dependent