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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ISSA).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 8, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DARRELL E. ISSA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, if Members care about livable communities, they should be encouraged with the recent discussions surrounding the flooding in the Upper Mississippi.

We cannot make families safe, healthy, and economically secure unless we squarely address how we manage these disasters. Despite massive construction efforts to stave off harm over the last 40 years, losses adjusted for inflation are six times greater than before we started. The reasons are quite clear.

First, we have often made the problems worse by our efforts to prevent disasters. We have channelized the rivers, we have narrowed them, we have reduced the capacity to carry water while they increase the velocity. And we leave no place for the water to go when it floods.

Number two, we have a decided lack of careful planning for land around the edges of rivers and other bodies of water. Water is a magnet for development, especially when we implement things that appear to increase safety, like build more and higher sea walls and dikes. This has encouraged people to develop in flood plains, which by their very nature puts people at risk. There is a reason why they are called flood plains.

Nationally, we have developed over half our Nation's wetlands with houses and parking lots. In some communities 90 percent or more of the original wetlands have disappeared, taking with it the capacity for the ground in low-lying areas to soak up water and to have relatively benign pools, ponds, and temporary lakes. The swamps, which are always targeted to be eliminated, were actually very effective devices to prevent floodwater from inflicting more damage.

Into this volatile mix, we need to factor global climate change. There are some who still argue, well, we should just study it. But the strong consensus from the scientific community is that global warming and climate change is a reality. There is a very high degree of probability that the warming we have seen in the last century will continue and even accelerate. And while many people associate this with severe droughts and much higher temperature in urban areas and nighttime temperatures, there is another significant factor, extreme storm events. There have been many incidents recently where communities have set all-time records for rainfall in a 24-hour period. This

combination of mismanaged flood protection, inappropriate development, and the likelihood of things getting worse in terms of increased precipitation makes these questions even more significant.

There is a golden opportunity for environmentalists to join with the administration, for fiscal conservatives to join with people who are concerned about preventing human misery to agree to simple, common sense steps that will provide for true improvement.

First, there ought to be an incentive, an emphasis, on prevention. We should not discourage or eliminate promising programs like Project Impact, which help people prepare to resist disasters before the fact.

Second, there ought to be increased local responsibility. There is no question that local communities must bear the consequences for decisions they make about the location and nature of development. There is no question that more expensive or intrusive measures should require more local or State support. However, the Federal match should be higher for things that are going to be preventative in nature while subsidy should be reduced or eliminated for things that are more likely to make it worse. Local communities should implement sound land-use planning and building codes to help themselves.

There is no excuse to put hog waste lagoons in flood plains, to not have reasonable building requirements for window covering for areas that are subject to extreme tropical storm damage, or to allow people to maintain a residence in repeatedly flooded areas. All these people should be given clear signals that they are going to have to accept responsibility to mitigate these clearly avoidable damages.

Finally, a simple, common sense step should be to reform the flood insurance program to eliminate Federal subsidy for repetitive flood-loss payments.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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It is critical that we not make this into a political tug of war at a time when there is consensus in the scientific community, environmentalists, the professionals who work in disaster mitigation about what will work, what will make things better, what will keep people out of harm's way. We need to work cooperatively to make our communities more livable with a better match between private responsibility and government policy at all levels.

ARSENIC STANDARDS IN DRINKING WATER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned about attacks made on the Bush administration for their decision to not immediately implement the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to reduce the standard on arsenic in drinking water from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion until further research and data is provided. Since nearly everyone has heard of individuals being poisoned with arsenic, it is assumed that any amount of arsenic is detrimental and that not immediately implementing a lower standard of 10 parts per billion is anti-environment and insensitive to human health concerns. The 50 parts per billion standard has been in effect since 1942, and there is no sound evidence that having a standard of 50 parts per billion has led to increased health problems in the United States.

Most people are not aware of the fact that arsenic is a naturally-occurring substance and is present in the groundwater in most western States and parts of the Midwest and even some parts of New England. It is not put there by pesticides, fertilizers or human beings. Ninety-seven percent of the communities exceeding the 10 parts per billion of arsenic in their water supplies are small towns with populations of less than 10,000 people. There are 69 such communities in the State of Nebraska that exceed 10 parts per billion of arsenic. Nearly all of these are small rural communities, and most of them have only 11 to 15 parts per billion of arsenic in their groundwater. In order to meet the 10 parts per billion standard, nearly all of these communities would have to be assessed several hundred dollars per family and several million dollars per community.

Much of the EPA reasoning for dropping the arsenic standards to 10 parts per billion has been extrapolated from studies done in Taiwan where water contains an average arsenic level of 250 parts per billion. Some health problems have been detected as a result of the high levels of arsenic in Taiwan. Now, if there is a linear relationship in regard to the level of arsenic and health concerns, reducing the standard

level of arsenic from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion would theoretically, and this is theoretically only, prevent three cases of bladder cancer and could possibly prevent a handful of deaths from all causes that might possibly be related to arsenic in the United States annually. If a linear relationship exists, even 1 part per billion poses at least some slight health risk.

At the present time, however, there is no clear evidence that there is a linear relationship between arsenic level and health. It is very possible there may be some point that a certain amount of arsenic in the water poses absolutely no health risk. Arsenic is necessary for human life and is present in every person's body. Therefore, 50 parts per billion, 40 parts per billion, 30, or 20 parts per billion could prove to be perfectly safe. We just do not know what that level is.

The cost of lowering this standard from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion has been estimated by the EPA to cost \$181 million annually. However, the American Waterworks Association has stated that the cost would actually be \$600 million annually with an additional \$5 billion in capital outlays to pay for the treatment plants. There is a huge discrepancy, obviously, in these figures.

The EPA told the State of Nebraska's Department of Health to dump extracted arsenic on open fields, as arsenic is nontoxic. However, a short time later the EPA reversed its opinion and said that arsenic extracted from water must be shipped to toxic waste dumps. It does not appear that the EPA has factored the cost of shipping arsenic to toxic waste sites into their cost estimates. It would seem that the Bush administration's decision to delay implementation of standards until further study has been done is warranted. In short, it seems that all of the evidence that we currently have would indicate that an arbitrary level of 10 parts per billion may be excessively low and it is quite likely not based on any sound evidence. Further data from independent sources is clearly warranted.

INTRODUCTION OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PRINTING OF "ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICANS IN CONGRESS"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I proudly rise to introduce a concurrent resolution authorizing the printing of a book entitled "Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress."

Each year during the month of May, we celebrate the rich heritage of Asian

and Pacific Islander Americans throughout the country, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Congressmen Frank Horton and Norman Mineta, who sponsored legislation celebrating the first official Asian Pacific American Week in 1978. In 1992, Congressman Horton authored legislation expanding the week into a permanent month-long celebration of the proud mosaic of histories and ethnicities of this most diverse national community.

Asian and Pacific Islanders are indeed a diverse constellation of peoples from 40 major subpopulation groups of Pacific Islander Americans including Chamorros, Native Hawaiians and Samoans; Southeast Asian Americans such as Cambodians, Vietnamese, Hmong and Laotians; East Asian Americans including Chinese, Japanese and Koreans; and South Asian Americans, including Indians and Pakistanis. Our national community boasts the most diverse minority group within the country, comprised of both immigrant and indigenous populations.

The history of Congress includes 33 Asian and Pacific Islander Americans that have served from 1903 to the present. These Members come from backgrounds ranging from Chinese, Chamorro, Filipino, Asian Indian, Japanese, Korean, Hawaiian, and Samoan. Thirteen of these Members were Resident Commissioners from the Philippine Islands during the time it was a territory from 1898 until it became independent in 1946. Currently, there are nine Members serving in the 107th Congress. Amongst them are two Senators, two delegates, and five Representatives.

Delegate Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, a Native Hawaiian prince and Member of the Hawaiian royal family, was the first Pacific Islander American elected to Congress. Delegate Kuhio represented the Territory of Hawaii from 1903 to 1923.

Hawaii, not surprisingly being the State with the highest per capita population of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, has a history of many other firsts in Congress. Senator Hiram Fong was the first Chinese American in Congress. Representative PATSY MINK was the first Asian Pacific American woman in Congress. Senator DANIEL K. INOUE is the first Japanese American and has served in Congress since being elected in 1959 after statehood for Hawaii. Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA is the first U.S. Senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry.

Amongst the other firsts, Representative Dalip Singh Saund of California was the first Asian American U.S. Representative from 1957 to 1963. Guam's first Delegate to Congress, Antonio Borja Won Pat, was the first Chamorro elected in 1973. Delegate Fofa Iosefa Fiti Sunia, the first American Samoan in Congress, was elected in 1981. And Representative Jay Kim was the first Korean American elected to the 103rd Congress.