

rise in support of H.R. 2964, the Captive Primate Safety Act, which prohibits the sale of nonhuman primates such as chimpanzees, monkeys, and lemurs.

I am concerned about both the public health and animal welfare implications of nonhuman primate ownership, which this legislation addresses. For example, nonhuman primates can spread disease and inflict serious injury on their owners. They require a special diet and large habitats, two things most pet owners are unable to provide, particularly as these animals grow in size and strength.

Federal health regulations currently prohibit importing primates into the U.S. as pets, and many States prohibit pet ownership of primates as well. In spite of this, an estimated 15,000 primates are owned by private individuals, and are available for purchase around the country.

The bottom line is, the average pet owner does not have the ability to properly care for these animals and, because of this, both they and their pets are at risk.

It is appropriate we protect nonhuman primates, man's closest animal relative, by prohibiting pet ownership of this kind. I strongly support adoption of H.R. 2964.

Ms. BORDALLO. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2964, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MONTANA CEMETERY ACT OF 2008

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3702) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain land in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana, to Jefferson County, Montana, for use as a cemetery, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3702

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Montana Cemetery Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COUNTY.—The term "County" means Jefferson County, Montana.

(2) MAP.—The term "map" means the map that is—

(A) entitled "Elkhorn Cemetery";

(B) dated May 9, 2005; and

(C) on file in the office of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Supervisor.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE TO JEFFERSON COUNTY, MONTANA.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act and subject to valid existing rights, the Secretary (acting through the Regional Forester, Northern Region, Missoula, Montana) shall convey by quitclaim deed to the County for no consideration, all right, title, and interest of the United States, except as provided in subsection (e), in and to the parcel of land described in subsection (b).

(b) DESCRIPTION OF LAND.—The parcel of land referred to in subsection (a) is the parcel of approximately 9.67 acres of National Forest System land (including any improvements to the land) in the County that is known as the "Elkhorn Cemetery", as generally depicted on the map.

(c) USE OF LAND.—As a condition of the conveyance under subsection (a), the County shall—

(1) use the land described in subsection (b) as a County cemetery; and

(2) agree to manage the cemetery with due consideration and protection for the historic and cultural values of the cemetery, under such terms and conditions as are agreed to by the Secretary and the County.

(d) EASEMENT.—In conveying the land to the County under subsection (a), the Secretary, in accordance with applicable law, shall grant to the County an easement across certain National Forest System land, as generally depicted on the map, to provide access to the land conveyed under that subsection.

(e) REVERSION.—In the quitclaim deed to the County, the Secretary shall provide that the land conveyed to the County under subsection (a) shall revert to the Secretary, at the election of the Secretary, if the land is—

(1) used for a purpose other than the purposes described in subsection (c)(1); or

(2) managed by the County in a manner that is inconsistent with subsection (c)(2).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Guam?

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3702 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to convey approximately 9.67 acres of land in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Montana, to Jefferson County, MT for use as a cemetery. The parcel to be conveyed to Jefferson County is currently being used for these same purposes, and is known as "Elkhorn Cemetery." The conveyance will provide land to accommodate all known grave sites and any additional sites that may be outside of the concentration of known graves.

The bill also provides for the continued protection of the historic and cultural values associated with the property.

Mr. Speaker, we have no objections, and it is time to put this bill to rest.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentlelady from Guam has adequately explained this bill. I'd like to commend congressman DENNY REHBERG and his staff for their diligence in this particular bill; grateful for all for allowing the conveyance of this 10 acres of excess Forest Service land to the community of Jefferson County, MT to be used as their cemetery.

I join the gentlelady from Guam in saying that I am glad that we can finally put this issue to rest in peace.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I again urge Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3702, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. How did you count? You said a sufficient number having arisen. I only see four Members in here, and I only saw one rise.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair's count is not subject to appeal.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Okay. Well, all right. But further parliamentary inquiry. If there's four of us in here, and one stands up, is that, in the Chair's opinion, enough to call for a vote?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair stated that a sufficient number had arisen and his count is not subject to appeal.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF AMERICAN EAGLE DAY

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the

resolution (H. Res. 1247) supporting the goals and ideals of "American Eagle Day", and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the American bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1247

Whereas the bald eagle was designated as the national emblem of the United States on June 20, 1782, by our country's Founding Fathers at the Second Continental Congress;

Whereas the bald eagle is the central image used in the Great Seal of the United States and the seals of the President and Vice President;

Whereas the image of the bald eagle is displayed in the official seal of many branches and departments of the Federal Government, including—

- (1) Congress;
- (2) the Supreme Court;
- (3) the Department of Defense;
- (4) the Department of the Treasury;
- (5) the Department of Justice;
- (6) the Department of State;
- (7) the Department of Commerce;
- (8) the Department of Homeland Security;
- (9) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- (10) the Department of Labor;
- (11) the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (12) the Department of Energy;
- (13) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- (14) the Central Intelligence Agency; and
- (15) the United States Postal Service;

Whereas the bald eagle is an inspiring symbol of the American spirit of freedom and democracy;

Whereas the image, meaning, and symbolism of the bald eagle have played a significant role in American art, music, history, literature, architecture, and culture since the founding of our Nation;

Whereas the bald eagle is featured prominently on United States stamps, currency, and coinage;

Whereas the habitat of bald eagles exists only in North America;

Whereas by 1963, the number of nesting pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 States had dropped to about 417;

Whereas the bald eagle was first listed as an endangered species in 1967 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act, the Federal law that preceded the Endangered Species Act of 1973;

Whereas caring and concerned citizens of the United States in the private and public sectors banded together to save, and help ensure the protection of, bald eagles;

Whereas in 1995, as a result of the efforts of those caring and concerned citizens, bald eagles were removed from the endangered species list and upgraded to the less imperiled threatened species status under the Endangered Species Act of 1973;

Whereas by 2006, the number of bald eagles in the lower 48 States had increased to approximately 7,000 to 8,000 nesting pairs;

Whereas the Secretary of the Interior removed the bald eagle from the Federal list of threatened species effective August 8, 2007;

Whereas the bald eagle remains subject to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and on May 28, 2008, the Secretary of the Interior issued regulations providing continued protection under the Act popularly known as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act;

Whereas bald eagles would have been permanently extinct if not for vigilant conservation efforts of concerned citizens and strict protection laws;

Whereas the dramatic recovery of the bald eagle population is an endangered species success story and an inspirational example for other wildlife and natural resource conservation efforts around the world;

Whereas the initial recovery of the bald eagle population was accomplished by the concerted efforts of numerous government agencies, corporations, organizations, and individuals; and

Whereas the sustained recovery of the bald eagle populations will require the continuation of recovery, management, education, and public awareness programs, to ensure that the populations and habitat of bald eagles will remain healthy and secure for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of "American Eagle Day"; and

(2) encourages—

(A) educational entities, organizations, businesses, conservation groups, and government agencies with a shared interest in conserving endangered species to collaborate on education information for use in schools; and

(B) the people of the United States to observe American Eagle Day with appropriate ceremonies and other activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Guam?

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 1247, as amended, celebrates the recovery of the American bald eagle, the symbol of our country displayed on American currency and government agency seals, including the seal of the United States Congress. The bald eagle's recovery is a huge success story for the Endangered Species Act and the conservation laws which preceded it.

In 1963, there were just 487 pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 States. Today, Mr. Speaker, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are an estimated 9,789 breeding pairs.

Effective August 8, 2007, the bald eagle was removed from the list of threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, demonstrating that it had truly recovered. At the same time, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act continue to provide important protections for this magnificent bird.

I commend our colleague, Congressman DAVID DAVIS from Tennessee, for introducing this resolution encouraging organizations and government agencies working on the conservation of endangered species to collaborate on educational information for use in our schools.

The resolution further encourages the American people to observe American Eagle Day with appropriate ceremonies.

This resolution merits our support.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I wish to yield, before I make my statement, to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS), the sponsor of this particular resolution, as much time as he may consume.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1247, a bill I introduced, to support the goals and ideals of June 20 as American Eagle Day. The bill also highlights the successful recovery story of the American bald eagle, the official national emblem of the United States.

The American bald eagle has been a part of American culture for hundreds of years. In 1782, the Second Continental Congress established that the bald eagle was the official emblem of the United States because of its uniqueness to North America. It can be seen on the United States seals in public buildings, schools, and even here in the House Chamber. Over the years, the bald eagle has become a living symbol of the United States spirit, freedoms, and continual pursuit of excellence.

Mr. Speaker, just 45 years ago the United States had only about 400 nesting pairs of the American bald eagle. Through conservation, education and careful planning, today we have seen a significant rise to about 7,000 nesting pairs of the American bald eagle.

Because of the successful recovery exhibited by the American bald eagle, the Department of the Interior has taken the bald eagle off both the endangered and threatened species list. The bald eagle has been a national symbol, and its recovery has been a national success story.

H.R. 1247 will not only honor the now thriving American bald eagle, it will also encourage support of the United States Mint bald eagle commemorative coin program which has been a success for the past few years. Currently, this coin program has raised over \$5 million for the American Eagle Foundation, which is located in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, which is located in my district.

The American Eagle Foundation is a successful not-for-profit organization seeking to protect and fully restore the bald eagle population across North America. They also care for the injured and orphaned birds that have a strong environmental presence through educating thousands of families who visit Pigeon Forge, Tennessee each year.

Furthermore, this bill encourages school systems, businesses, governmental agencies and conservation groups to share information on the American bald eagle that will benefit children and schools across our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting H.R. 1247, a bill I introduced to support the goals and ideals of June 20 as American

Eagle Day, and celebrate the recovery and restoration of this great bird, the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise also in support of House Resolution 1247 which endorses the goals and ideals of the American Bald Eagle Day, or American Eagle Day.

226 years ago the Second Continental Congress decided to use the image of the American bald eagle on the great American, great seal of the United States. Since that time, the image of this majestic bird has graced our art, our culture, currency, stamps, headbands, and rubber things you put around your wrist. It's been the subject of more than 2,500 published books, making the bald eagle the most extensively studied bird in North America.

While we estimate there were nearly 500,000 bald eagles on this continent, this species was particularly devastated by a reproductive failure. In response, Congress did enact the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the bird was listed on the Endangered Species Act.

□ 1500

From its all-time low of 417 nesting pairs in the continental United States during the Lyndon Johnson administration, extraordinary conservation efforts have saved the bald eagle since that time, and we have witnessed a significant population increase.

Today, there are just under 10,000 breeding pairs in the lower 48, not to mention to 30,000 bald eagles living in Alaska. By any objective stand, the recovery of the bald eagle has been remarkable and sadly, one of the few success stories of the Endangered Species Act, an act that obviously needs significant reform.

The Secretary of Interior has removed the bald eagle from the Federal list of threatened endangered species, and there is no question that the bald eagle will continue to inspire millions of America, but it symbolizes fundamental values of this country: courage, freedom, patriotic spirit, and of energy development.

Under the terms of House Resolution 1247, the people of the United States are encouraged to observe American Eagle Day on June 20, to provide educational information about the bald eagle and our Nation's wildlife resources. And I also urge a "yes" vote.

And I want to commend and compliment the author of this resolution, Congressman DAVIS of Tennessee, for his effective leadership in proposing this celebration of American Eagle Day.

I will reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. In that case, Mr. Speaker, I also reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the gentlelady from

North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for what time she may choose to consume.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Utah for yielding me time, and I want to congratulate and commend my colleague from Tennessee (Mr. DAVIS) for his work on this resolution.

I want to say that this Capitol Building in which we are working today and which people are visiting every day is one of the most wonderful symbols of our country. The American bald eagle is another symbol of our country.

An intangible symbol of our country has always been our independence and our innovative nature and our freedom. The people all around the world know this country for what we stand for: freedom, and the rights of individuals, and the ability to solve problems, and to create ways to solve those problems.

But right now our way of life is being threatened because of the price of gasoline in this country, and there are many who believe that there are liberals in this country who think that the United States should be taken down a peg or two, that we shouldn't be allowed to be the great Nation that we are; and that one way of doing that is by crippling the United States through the inability to be independent with gas and oil.

But I want to say that that's not the direction that Republicans want to be going. Republicans want us to have the supply that we need for gasoline so that we can bring down the price of gasoline. We know that Democrats have blocked our ability for that. I spoke about that a few minutes ago, and I'm not going to repeat that; but I heard my colleague on the other side of the aisle talking about the argument that there are many, many leases out there that oil companies are not utilizing. That's another tactic of the Democrats: blame the oil companies, blame George Bush, blame everybody else for the problems that we have. Don't take the responsibility yourself. But again, unfortunately, we have the facts to back up what we know is true, which is Democrats have voted against our increasing supplies.

They're also wrong on the issue of leases. They talk about "use it or lose it." They want to introduce a bill that has no basis. They're inventing false arguments again.

"Use it or lose it" is already the law. For Federal onshore competitive oil and gas leases, an oil company must have a producing well by 10 years. This comes from section 17(e) of the Mineral Leasing Act. Prior to 1992, the lease term was 5 years. The Energy Policy Act of 1992, under a Democratically controlled House, modified it to 10 years. So it's the Democrats who changed the leasing terms.

For Federal offshore oil and gas leases, an oil company must produce energy between 5 to 10 years. It's in the government's discretion. This is from the Outer Continental Shelf Land Act. So Democrats, House Democrats, do

not even know what is the existing law now.

What Democrats would have you believe is that a lease is a license to produce oil and gas. It is not. A lease is only the start of a process involving several steps the government requires an oil company to take before it may even receive permission to drill.

Democrats are effectively arguing that we should pull leases away from oil companies before they receive permission to drill. This is like saying we should flunk a first grader on his first day of school because he has not yet taken his final exam.

Most of the drilling on Federal leases has been for natural gas, and natural gas production was up, way up last year, and so was demand. In fact, the industry is producing more gas under these leases, but they cannot keep up with the demand because Democrats and their radical environmental allies will not allow the leasing of new areas and 97 percent of Federal offshore areas are not leased; 94 percent of Federal onshore areas are not leased.

We can solve our energy problems in this country, and we do have them, but they've been brought on by the Democrats who say, We can't drill our way out of this. No, but we can do many things, including drilling. That will be a part of what we can do, and we can be energy independent. But again, many of them don't want us to be.

They don't want us to have a Nation that soars into greatness like the bald eagle that we are honoring in this resolution or continue the great reputation that we have had over the years for being the greatest Nation on earth. They would like to take us down a peg or two. I know Republicans and most Americans don't agree with them.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would say to the gentlelady that we are here to salute the American eagle. I would say that the American eagle would not be proud that 68 million acres of Federal energy lands are being held hostage by big oil companies.

To respond to the points just made, number one, current law allows leaseholders 10 years to develop oil or gas. The Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act cuts that down to 5 years. While existing leases can be canceled if leaseholders fail to comply with lease provisions, laws, or regulations, such as public safety and environmental requirements, there is no law or regulation that requires diligent development of Federal oil and gas leases.

The next point. As long as leaseholders pay the required annual rental fee, the government cannot compel diligent development of the lease lands.

Next. The Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act requires oil and gas operators to diligently develop Federal oil and gas leases as is currently required of coal leaseholders. This requirement was enacted in the 1970s to

prevent coal operators from using Federal resources for speculation that would drive up prices.

And finally, no such requirement is placed on oil and gas operators. And H.R. 6251 corrects that situation.

And again, I would like to repeat, and I would say to the previous speaker, that we are here this afternoon to salute the American eagle. And I would say that the American eagle would not be proud that 68 million acres of Federal energy lands are being held hostage by big oil.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may wish to consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA).

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, only on this floor would we debate how the American eagle would feel. I'm astonished that the Democrats have the hubris to talk in terms of how the American eagle would feel. As a matter of fact, the American eagle and countless thousands of birds and other wildlife have been used as an excuse for a generation for 68 million acres—yes, they are leased, but a lease is in fact not a right to drill. Just because you have a lease doesn't waive any environmental consideration. So beyond the requirement to find out if in fact there is oil on a lease site, you have to go through a myriad of hoops before you can begin drilling.

It's one of the reasons that, in fact, offshore drilling has become so popular. Not only are there vast resources out there, but in fact, the fish simply swim away; and in deep water, particularly over 400 meters, it is unlikely to find an environmentalist at the bottom claiming that there is some new form of life that is not only new but highly in danger.

So with all fairness to the Nation's bird, I would say that what we need to do is stop talking about 68 million acres that are "available for production" when in fact, the vast majority of that has little or no usable oil.

And I just want to give you a fairly short statement, Mr. Speaker. It is not a question of whether or not you have acreage, it's a question of whether the acreage is valid acreage for oil. I will give you the easiest example. West Virginia. It's a wonderful State. Beautiful State. They take a tremendous amount of coal out of there. They also take a quite a bit of oil. As a matter of fact, with 3,400 oil wells, they take a total of 5,000 barrels a day out of there. To the contrary, or to the other example, Alaska, with only 1,700, half as many wells, take 700,000 barrels a day.

So it's not, Mr. Speaker, whether or not you have millions of acres, it's do you have the acreage that you are able to drill in, do you have the acreage that is, in fact, yielding oil. And I can assure you at \$134 a barrel, if anyone was holding acreage that yielded barrels that in fact could deliver that kind of revenue, it would be drilled today.

The truth is the vast majority of the acreage is either off limits for environmental reasons or, in fact, would be like West Virginia: 3,400 wells, 5,000 barrels a day.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Guam.

It's probably appropriate that we're here saluting the American eagle because if there is anything that the American eagle represents, it's the spirit of American independence, American self-reliance, American strength.

In the debate we're having today about the resolution honoring the American eagle, I don't want to say the energy debate has hijacked it because in many ways, it's quite relevant. The fundamental question that this country must decide is whether we will pursue a path of energy independence or continue to go hat-in-hand to the oil-exporting countries to try to solve our problems.

Some of you may remember, which for me was the most vivid representation of the American energy policy, and that was a picture on the front page of the New York Times a couple of years ago, when the President of the United States went to Saudi Arabia, and hand-in-hand, as is the custom in many of the Middle East countries, President Bush and the Saudi prince walked in to have a private conversation about America's oil future. And what was going on there was not the spirit of American independence represented by the eagle. It was a spirit of capitulation where our President was imploring a foreign country to solve the problems that we face.

A confident country, an energetic country solves its own problems. It doesn't look to others to help solve those problems. It takes on the challenge. Energy is a big challenge. It takes on the challenge of solving those problems on its own.

And that's the question that this Congress faces: Will we have the self-confidence of a vigorous and strong Nation to chart a course of energy independence?

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Now we're hearing arguments that the problem we face can be solved by drilling our way out of it, and of course, that's an argument that has been pursued vigorously since we discovered oil. But you know, there's enormous evidence that allows us to take a look at this proposition. Will more permits to drill, will more drilling reduce the cost of oil?

And I have here, Mr. Speaker, a chart. The first chart shows the number of wells. The number in red here, we've got the number of leases, and in this blue, we have the number of wells. Starting in 1994, there's been a steady increase of the number of leases and a steady increase in the wells drilled.

And step by step by step, as leases and as drilling has increased, so has the price of a gallon of gas, from \$1 up to about \$4 a gallon today.

So reasonable people would step back and ponder the question, whether more drilling and more leases results in lower prices. History shows us, in nearly the past 20 years, that is simply not the case.

The other proposition is that the problem is the Federal Government is denying leases to the oil companies so that they can't do drilling, and the evidence is overwhelming that's simply not the case.

This chart, the second chart, shows on a pie chart, the whole circle there is the land that is available for leasing. And the green is all that's available, and the red here, or orange, is all that is open for leasing. Pardon me, I have it the opposite way around.

But of all of the land open and available for leasing, 79 percent is open and subject to exploitation and exploration by our oil companies. Only 21 percent is off limits. Yet, of this land where the oil companies have leases, 68 million acres where they can put metal to the ground is not under production, and there's no effort to put it under production.

My friends on the other side have argued that the oil companies have to go through certain environmental permits. I'm not sure you're right about that because much of that work has been done. Assuming that is the case, that's no different than what has been the requirement for the production of oil on federally-owned lands.

You know, there are many people who are asking the question as to whether the fix is in for the oil companies, and there's overwhelming evidence, in fact, that it is. Number one, the amount of speculation that now is core to the energy future trading markets is inflating the price at the pump, inflating the price of home heating fuel. How did that happen? Thanks to Congress.

In 2002, under the Tom DeLay Congress, the Enron loophole was passed at the request of that great company, Enron, that did so much for America's energy situation. Enron passed a loophole that took away any kind of regulatory oversight of the energy future trading market, and it led directly and immediately to an explosion in speculation. Hedge funds, private investors, folks who saw that they could make a lot of money on the misery of a lot of people rushed into the speculation in the oil energy markets. Now, that's wrong. There should be no speculative premium that comes at the expense of American consumers, folks trying to heat their home, small businesses trying to run a business.

This Congress has had an opportunity to get rid of that Enron loophole. House Democrats have passed legislation. It hasn't gotten through because of opposition on the other side, either

in the Senate or the consistent opposition of the President of the United States.

So what can we do if you want to be independent? One, we can get rid of the Enron loophole, wholly and completely. The second thing is that the energy companies, in fact, are hoarding leases, and that's a fact. There's an enormous push on this Congress to open up ANWR, and the argument is made and it has a surface appeal that if you open up ANWR, then it is going to mean a reduction in prices because the supply will go up and demand will go down.

A couple of problems with it. First and foremost, the oil companies have leases on 68 million acres. They're not exploiting them. Why? We don't know exactly why because they won't say. They will come in, raise their hand, take an oath, acknowledge that they're paying their executives 10s of millions of dollars, acknowledging that when one executive was retiring he was given a \$400 million payday to say good-bye, but they won't tell us why they're not putting drill bits to earth to exploit the leases they have.

But you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what the motive may be. If they keep that lease and the oil or the natural gas sits in the ground and it goes from \$28 to \$48 to \$68 to \$134 a barrel, that's sound money for those companies, and it will fatten the already extraordinary profits, \$125 billion in profits for the oil companies last year, the big five oil companies.

Second, oil companies push hard to bring online as much Federal land for leases as possible because the Big Oil companies have been extremely successful in crowding out some of our small, independent producers, and in fact, my view is that's a detriment and a reason why this 68 million acres aren't exploited. If you had smaller, more independent, hungry, energetic companies that had an opportunity to make good money at \$134 a barrel, and they owned those leases, they'd be drilling.

So what you have is a situation where the oil companies are doing quite fine, they really are, and the status quo serves them very well. What may not serve them so well is the self-confident Congress, the self-confident President saying, you know what, we're not going to play that game anymore. There are other ways.

We're going to take away the tax breaks, about \$13 billion that American taxpayers are turning over to our oil companies, and that, with all due respect, is just an astonishing public policy. Our folks are paying over \$4 a gallon for gas. In my home State of Vermont, we're paying over \$4.25, \$4.40 for a gallon of home heating fuel, and taxpayers are paying the oil companies about \$13 billion in tax breaks. That's your money and mine. It's hard to see how that's justified, but the oil companies are quite happy to take that taxpayer subsidy.

But what they won't like is what the House is pushing, and that's a policy of energy independence, where we take those tax breaks, we steer them, as America has frequently done when there's something important for the American people, and it's taken a push from our taxpayers to get us over that initial technological hump, and that's having those tax breaks go as incentives to alternative energy sources, wind and solar, biofuels.

You know, if we could step back a minute and take a look at some of our friends in Europe and the leadership they're taking because of self-interest, a recognition in Portugal that investing in alternative fuel is a way to strengthen the economy, or Germany, investing in solar, Germany has less sun than Vermont. And let me tell you, I'm here to tell you that Vermont doesn't have as much sun as we need and I want. They have less sun than we do, but they are leading in solar technology.

So, the bottom line question is really very simple. Do we want leadership, as best exemplified by President Bush when he was with the Saudi prince, exploring the Saudi prince to rescue us from ourselves, or do we want leadership where we say we will take care of our own future, that particularly in face of what I think are unfounded arguments, that we can drill our way out, that Congress or the American government is an impediment to drilling that is available immediately for our oil and natural gas companies, and that there isn't supply that we can achieve through efficiency and alternative energy.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. May I inquire how much time is left for the bald eagle to discover oil?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah has 7½ minutes. The gentlewoman from Guam has 4 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Let me yield myself as much time as I will go through here.

We're now looking at a whole bunch of issues that deal from an Endangered Species Act that has few examples of success—this one happens to be one of those few—to an energy policy that we have developed over the last 40 years which can only be described as discombobulated.

It seems there are a group of people who control this floor whose past policy towards energy development and energy independence was to blame Big Oil, and now that prices of gasoline are at \$4 a gallon, \$1.75 more than when this Congress started, it seems now we try to have an expanded policy which is to blame Big Oil and allow lawyers to sue OPEC to give us more oil.

Simply, it does not come back to the reality of the situation that we have locked resources within this country, both onshore and in this country, that can produce our own energy independence.

We have laws that already say if you have a lease, you have 5 to 10 years.

The Secretary of the Interior has power already under law that if he thinks that is not being used properly, they have power to abrogate those contractual leases. However, for each one of those, we have 7 to 10 years of regulation, litigation and study, including an Interior appropriations bill that will be coming to the floor either this week or next week, which expands those restrictions and expands the moratorium that we have.

The bottom line is 30 years ago this country was producing about 11 million barrels of oil a day, and our need was 17. We had to import. Today, we produce about 8 million barrels of oil a day, and our need is 20, which means we have to import more.

We have a 22 percent reduction in production in this United States, and we're the only country in this continent that does that. Mexico has increased. Canada has increased. We have decreased our energy production, even though our needs have come up.

The chart you were looking at is somewhat skewed because it deals with only the offshore, and there's a difference to land that's documented and open and not opened to lease. The bottom line is, offshore, there's 1.7 billion acres of area that we could do to produce energy. We are doing 68 million acres. That leaves 1.6 billion acres still undiscoverable, locked away, not usable. That's 85 percent of everything we have.

The gentleman from Vermont was correct in which he said speculation is indeed driving the cost of oil, but the speculation is driving the cost of oil because the speculators believe this country will not continue to produce, that we will decline in our production. And until we have a policy that says we are going to increase our production, speculation will continue to increase, and those costs will increase.

What this Congress has to have is a comprehensive policy that says we will do more for conservation and we will do more for production of all sources of energy, alternative as well as carbon-based, and we will come up with new and innovative ways of delivering that energy. And until this Congress actually sits down and says we will have a comprehensive energy policy, all the data, all the instructions, everything else we're talking about is nothing more than useless rhetoric.

Interesting facts, totally irrelevant to the needs of the time. The needs are people are suffering now, and we need to do something to help those people who are suffering. And we have to have a comprehensive policy which does include increases of production of all sources of energy.

The gentlelady from Guam will be happy to know, I'm the last speaker on this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time. Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to say, as Mr. WELCH stated, ANWR, everybody keeps talking about ANWR. But if you opened

ANWR today, you would not get any energy production tomorrow. You wouldn't get any for a decade or more. Whereas right now, the oil companies have 68 million acres of land available for development, and they are not exploiting them.

□ 1530

I don't care how much rhetoric goes on here today, there is still the 68 billion acres of land available for development. They have access to enough acreage to produce six times the amount of energy that we might get from ANWR. So again, I'll repeat over and over, "use it or lose it."

I urge support for House Resolution 1247.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1247, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING THE ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1199) commending the Orange County Water District and its employees for their sound financial management and innovative groundwater management, water quality, water efficiency, and environmental programs, on its 75th anniversary.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1199

Whereas the Orange County Water District (OCWD) is celebrating its 75th anniversary of providing high quality groundwater to millions of residents in northern and central Orange County, California, and upon this occasion, deserves special recognition;

Whereas OCWD was created in 1933 by the California State Legislature's passage of Senator N.T. Edwards' SB 1201, which was signed into law on June 14, 1933;

Whereas OCWD was empowered to manage Orange County's large groundwater basin, to protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater, to conserve and manage groundwater supplies, to protect Orange County's water rights to the flow of the Santa Ana River, and to ensure that the water needs of the people of Orange County, who depend on the groundwater basin, are provided for;

Whereas in the 1950s, OCWD initiated the region's first sustained artificial recharge re-

plenishment system, which today is one of the most sophisticated and efficient recharge systems in the country;

Whereas in 1972, OCWD built the internationally-acclaimed Water Factory 21, the Nation's first and largest wastewater purification plant, to use reverse osmosis to purify sewer water for injection along the coast to prevent seawater intrusion;

Whereas in 1989, OCWD published a comprehensive Groundwater Management Plan for increasing water supplies, cleaning up contamination, and improving basin management, which became the model for groundwater management across the State;

Whereas in 1991, OCWD's Green Acres Project became operational as the Nation's first landscape irrigation wastewater treatment plant that provided water to local parks, golf courses, highway medians, and industry, freeing high quality drinking water for more valued uses in the arid Orange County;

Whereas in 2008, OCWD began operating the Groundwater Replenishment System, the world's largest sewer water purification project of its kind built to protect groundwater from seawater intrusion, delaying the need for another ocean outfall and making the region less dependent on imported water from the San Joaquin-Delta and Colorado Rivers by providing a new supply of high quality, locally controlled and energy efficient water to Orange County;

Whereas OCWD has one of the best water quality monitoring and protection programs, testing for twice the amount of chemicals required by law, maintaining a proactive philosophy of looking for emerging contaminants, and developing southern California's largest constructed wetlands to naturally purify Santa Ana River flows into Orange County;

Whereas OCWD has one of the highest financial ratings in the State, won every major water award, begun eliminating the invasive arundo donax through its environmental programs, and developed experimental wetlands to clean up dairy wastewater; and

Whereas OCWD has also developed basin-cleaning vehicles to enhance recharge efficiency, sponsored the Nation's largest Children's Water Education Festival, and brought back the least Bell's vireo, an endangered California songbird: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the Orange County Water District and its employees for their sound financial management and innovative groundwater management, water quality, water efficiency, and environmental programs, on its 75th anniversary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Guam?

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 1199 commends the Orange County, California Water Dis-

trict and its employees for their sound financial management and innovative groundwater management, water quality, water efficiency, and environmental programs upon the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

During its 75-year history, the Orange County Water District has been a model for implementing groundwater recharge projects. Starting in 1950, the Water District developed the region's first sustained artificial recharge replenishment system. Earlier this year, the District opened its groundwater replenishment system, the world's largest sewer water purification project. This project, Mr. Speaker, currently is providing a new supply of high-quality water to Orange County, while making the region less dependent on imported water from Bay Delta and the Colorado River.

I wish to commend my colleague from California, Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, for sponsoring this very important resolution before us today, and I ask my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution that was introduced by our colleagues from southern California.

The Orange County Water District has experienced rapid changes since it was created in 1933. It once relied on pumping ground water for agriculture, now it uses a combination of sources, including imported and recycled water, for its urban needs. Due to environmental litigation, the Orange County Water District will more than likely experience significant imported water cutbacks, leading to higher water costs that will be passed on to the consumers.

These same water reductions are forcing family farmers to fallow ground and let their crops die. The situation is so dire the Governor of California, Governor Schwarzenegger, last week declared parts of California under a state of emergency. These same family farmers are experiencing higher costs of living caused by the high cost of water as well as the high cost of gasoline prices. It is almost a perfect storm, and yet we have done nothing to help them to reduce those gas and oil prices.

This resolution is a nice reward to Orange County Water District for its hard work over the years, but Congress' time actually should be spent in devising energy solutions because, once again, real people are suffering and real needs are there.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) such time as she may consume.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today