

making sure that low-income communities, communities of color, are in the middle of this fight for this clean renewable world that we're coming into and are participating fully. Not green for some, green for all, right?

And so, with that, we just want to thank everybody. Here's our Web site. We want to know what you think. We care about your opinion. Check back with us next week at the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the progressive message, hear about the progressive promise, and give us your ideas.

□ 1530

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday was Earth Day, and people around this country and around the world celebrated this great planet that we live on, and all of us, whether we're Democrats, Republicans or Independents, are committed to protecting this climate for the well-being of future generations.

I think most of us would also agree that one of the major issues facing the entire world today relates to the strength of the world's economy and the loss of jobs that is taking place around the world. We know that, right here in America, our unemployment rate is up to about 8.6 percent at this time. Last month, it was about 8.1 percent. In my home State of Kentucky, we have some counties with unemployment of about 15 percent; and I understand that in the State of Michigan, where we've had the automobile difficulties, the unemployment rate in that State is around 15 percent. So as we talk about strengthening the economy, the two most important policies relating to that are tax policy, number one, and energy policy, number two.

It has already been pointed out today by many people that the U.S. Congress is in the process of considering a comprehensive energy bill that would bring about dramatic changes in the way America produces energy. Now, when we talk about energy, of course there are two aspects of it.

Number one, we're talking about: How do we fuel our transportation needs? Everyone knows that we do import a lot of foreign oil, because we're consuming about 22 million barrels of oil a day, and we're not producing that much oil in America. Worldwide, we're consuming about 85 million barrels of oil a day. By the way, that's about what the total production of oil is worldwide, around 85 million barrels of oil a day. So that's one aspect of this energy issue.

A second part of it is: How do you produce electricity? That's vitally im-

portant as we find ourselves in America competing with other countries around the world. In America, we happen to be very fortunate in that we have a 250-year supply of coal. It's our most abundant resource. By the way, not only is it our most abundant resource, but it is also the most economical way to produce electricity.

In my home State of Kentucky, for example, 90 percent of all of the electricity produced in Kentucky is produced with coal, and that's why, in Kentucky, we have some of the lowest electrical rates in the world—between 4 and 5 cents per kilowatt hour. In California, Massachusetts and in other States where they don't really favor the use of coal, they're paying in the neighborhood of 14 cents and 15 cents per kilowatt hour. Now, we recognize—and it goes without saying—that coal is a fuel that produces carbon dioxide and other emissions, and we know that climate change is one of the most important issues facing America today.

One of the great things about our democracy is we can sit around, and we can have debates about the issues. I think it's important for the American people to hear those debates because, as we discuss the emissions of carbon dioxide, we oftentimes listen to the United Nations International Climate Change Panel. That is the scientific group that does the most studies and that does projections about global warming. They use complicated models to predict what the future will hold, and they do core drillings in the ice panels of the North and South Poles to determine how the weather has been in the last thousands of years. We know that there are patterns of heating and warming and heating and warming.

One thing that I would like to point out this evening, because we've heard a lot about global warming—and we have had extensive hearings on energy and on global warming and on climate change. One thing that I would point out to you is that everyone says emphatically that the models cannot predict with any accuracy what the temperature is going to be anywhere in the world 100 years from now. Witnesses have also been very clear in their testimony that, when the United Nations International Climate Change Panel issues a press release from the review of their models that they're predicting on particular issues, they formally take the worst case scenario, and that is what's released to the international news media. So when we read stories in the international news media, there seems to be a tendency to scare people about what's going on with global warming. I think it's important that we recognize that.

One of the leading environmentalists, who was called "Mr. Green" at one time in Europe, is a fellow named Bjorn Lomborg. He is a respected scientist, and he wrote a book called "The Skeptical Environmentalist." In that book, he went into great detail about the flaws in the models that are being

used to project future climate change. I point that out because I've heard many times that the scientific evidence is indisputable and that it cannot be contradicted. I would like the American people to know that I've sat in on many hearings on this issue, and I've heard scientists disagree on this issue, but the important thing is we need to debate it. The American people will finally make their decision about it. They make those decisions in elections, and they vote for whomever they want to vote, and they listen to the arguments, and they decide what they think is in their best interest. That's the way it should be, but I want to get back to coal for just a minute.

In this energy bill that's being considered in the U.S. Congress today, one big part of that is called cap-and-trade, and it plays a prominent part also in President Obama's budget because, in his budget, he indicated that he anticipates revenue from cap-and-trade in the amount of about \$657 billion over 10 years from selling permits to entities so that they can emit carbon dioxide.

Now, I think it's also important to remember that when Peter Orszag, the chairman of the Office of Management and Budget in the Obama White House, testified before Congress, he said that that figure may very well be conservative, that it could be twice or maybe three times that amount. So it could be anywhere from \$657 billion to \$1.7 trillion in cost to implement cap-and-trade, and of course, cap-and-trade is designed to have people pay for emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Now, when people pay that much money to do it, every witness that I've heard—and everyone would almost agree—has said that electricity rates are going to go up, and maybe that's not all bad, because we know that if we're going to have a cleaner environment, we're going to have to pay more.

Just on the cap-and-trade aspect of this which relates specifically to coal, I would like to remind everyone that the European Union initiated a cap-and-trade system 4 or 5 years ago. I may not be exactly right on that. Maybe it was 3 or 4 years ago or 4 or 5 years ago. Last year, they acknowledged that they had more carbon dioxide emissions than they'd had before they implemented cap-and-trade. Now, to be fair, they indicated also when they testified before the Congress that they think that they have fixed that problem and that they feel more confident as they move forward; but this cap-and-trade system is a prominent part in the Obama energy plan that is now before the United States Congress. There's another aspect of it that bothers me.

If you'll recall, I talked about one of the major problems facing all of us today, which is the economy—trying to restore jobs, getting people back to work, getting those stock values back up in their pension plans and retirement plans. In order to do that, America has to be competitive with other

countries. They have to be able to produce products at a competitive price that will sell all around the world. What's one of the biggest competitors of America today? To what country have we lost a lot of jobs over the last 3, 4, 5 years? That country is China. When we've met with the Chinese, they've pointed out, and they've been very proud of the fact that they are bringing on line a new coal-powered plant to produce electricity, a new one every 2 weeks. Now, it's hard to imagine that they would be building that many new coal-powered plants. By the way, most of them don't have scrubbers. They're not capturing the CO₂ emissions because, like in America and like in Europe, the technology is not there.

Now, there are plenty of pilot test projects around. There is one commercial application or two to capture carbon dioxide emissions—one in Canada and one in Norway—but the Chinese are making it very clear that they want to produce more electricity with coal because it is the most economical way to produce electricity; and, therefore, they can produce more products at less cost.

I'll tell you something else they're doing, too. A lot of people in America may say we ought to do this, but they put a cap on the price of fuel that they pay for their transportation needs. Of course, as a result of putting that cap on the fuel, their government buyers, when they're out buying oil in the open market, buy the highest sulfur content oil available because it is the cheapest. What does that do? That pollutes even more.

So as we debate this energy policy just on the cap-and-trade aspect of it, we've got to keep in mind: If we in America act unilaterally, are we going to place ourselves at a disadvantage? Is it going to be more difficult for us to build plants, to create jobs and to produce products that are competitive in the world marketplace? I would submit to you that the answer to that is, yes, it will place us at a disadvantage to do it unilaterally. So I think that's an important thing that we need to discuss as we move forward.

Now, another matter that plays a prominent place in the energy plan being advocated by our respected friends on the other side of the aisle, by our Democrat friends—and I might say that many of the Democrats are very much concerned about it as well—relates to renewable mandates. In America today, 51 percent of our electricity is produced by coal. About 20 percent is produced by nuclear power, and less than 2 percent is produced by renewable. When I'm talking about renewable, there are all sorts of renewable—there's biomass, ethanol, all sorts of things—but I'm talking primarily here about wind power and solar because that plays a prominent role in the renewable mandate being proposed in the energy bill that's now before the Congress.

The energy bill says that by the year 2025—it's either 2020 or 2025—they want 20 percent of all electricity to be produced by renewable energy. In fact, when President Obama was in Europe recently—he's such a great speaker and inspiring fellow—he got up, and he talked specifically about a number of countries. One of the countries he talked about was Spain. He said Spain has been so effective in increasing its production of electricity with renewables, with renewable energy. He said America should be looking to Spain and that we need to get out in front the way Spain has. Spain is no smarter than we are. They're just more bold. They're investing. They're requiring investment in nuclear energy.

□ 1545

I mean, not in nuclear energy, but in production of electricity. And that's precisely what this energy bill is going to do. It's going to dictate 20 percent of the electricity be produced with renewables.

And if it is not produced with renewables, then they are producing a 5-cent-per-kilowatt penalty. And I can tell you what. I think most people who are experts in energy will tell you it's virtually impossible to produce 20 percent of our electricity with renewables by the year 2020 or the year 2025 for a lot of different reasons.

First of all, in States in the Southeast, we've seen repeatedly maps of the Southeast, not only the Southeast but Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Michigan. They do not have the wind power to produce this electricity. And we have a very antiquated grid system today. So you're going to have to dramatically increase the capacity of this grid system if you go to renewables to bring in renewables produced by other parts of the country into the Southeast, particularly.

But one of the primary arguments that we hear from our respected friends on the other side of the aisle is that, look, let's not be concerned about this because as we move into green technology, we're going to create thousands of green jobs. And those jobs will be what will propel America into the future. And none of us in Congress would object to that. And we know that there will be some green jobs created. But, you know, we oftentimes do projections based on models, and models frequently are determined by what you put in, what information you put into those models. But when you use empirical data, hard-core facts of what has happened, you come up with some interesting conclusions.

Now, I have talked about Spain, and there is a gentleman in Spain named Gabriel Alvarez. He's a Ph.D. and he's at the University of Juan Carlos in Spain.

He did a research project, and it's about 45 pages. It's right here. And he particularly looked at this issue of creating new jobs with green technology.

And he came up with a conclusion that he goes into great detail about that for every one job created by green technology, Spain lost 2.2 jobs in traditional industries. Now, is that the kind of tradeoff that America wants? Yeah. We would like to create green jobs, but we don't want to do it if we lose other jobs. And that is precisely what his study shows quite clearly.

And he also goes into a great deal of detail in this study about the amount of money that would be invested in—that was invested in renewable energy in Spain. And that's precisely what they are trying to do in the energy bill: government money to subsidize renewable energies.

And so I think that America, as we debate this energy bill, we need to move forward very carefully because we don't want to unilaterally place ourselves at a competitive disadvantage on the coal sector by using, by implementing a cap-and-trade system that's going to penalize only Americans and raise their electricity rates.

And we also don't want to lose 2.2 jobs for every one job created with green technology if we had the same experience that they did in Spain—and there are reasons to believe that we will, according to this study.

Now, yesterday, we had a hearing about this and we had the Secretary of Energy there and we had the administrator of the EPA there. And they are the ones that have the task of developing this energy policy for America. And when I asked them the question—because they and others had been talking about all of the new green jobs that had been created. When I had asked them if they had even seen this study, both of them said “no.” And so we asked them, well, we think we ought to look at this study because before America adopts an energy policy that will affect every man, woman and child in this country, every business in this country, every automobile driver in this country, what would the impact of it be? So we need detailed studies so that we get both sides of the issue, we said in these hearings. And to be truthful, we all wish that what is being said would be true, that yes, we can automatically go to green and forget coal and forget nuclear. But it is impossible to do.

So instead of looking through rose-colored glasses, let's be realistic as we move forward so we can make and give the American people the opportunity for the best decision that can be made.

Now, on this map right here, there are a lot of red dots. And these red dots represent a nuclear power plant that is currently operating in America. And there are about 109 of them scattered throughout our country. And as I mentioned earlier, about 20 percent of our electricity is produced by nuclear. But it's very sad that in this energy bill that I have been discussing—it's over 657 pages, by the way—it relates to everything. It relates to air conditioners in your car. It relates to appliances in

your home. It relates to efficiencies in building products. It relates to cap-and-trade, a smart grid, technology, global warming, all of those things.

But when you have something that's producing 20 percent of the electricity in America like nuclear, you would think there would be something in this energy bill about nuclear, particularly since we haven't had any nuclear power plants built in a long time because of the complex permitting process that makes it virtually impossible to build one. But there is not one item in this new energy bill about nuclear energy.

And one thing I think is quite clear to the American people and should be clear to all of us, because we know that in the next—by the year 2035, the demand for electricity in America is going to increase by 35 percent and maybe more, and particularly, if we turn the economy around.

So in order to meet that demand, we're going to have to have everything that we have access to. We're going to have to have coal—and there were a lot of people that did not want to use coal and it's going to be impossible. We are going to have to use coal. And that's why developing this technology of carbon capture and sequestration is so vitally important.

And I might say that there is a professor at MIT that is one of the few individuals who actually wrote his dissertation on carbon capture and sequestration. And he's working with a group in the Northeast that is planning to build a \$5 billion carbon capture and sequestration facility to store carbon dioxide in the ocean floor. And it's that kind of innovative technology that we're going to have to have in order to meet our energy needs.

But back to nuclear for just a moment.

As you know, any time you produce nuclear energy, you have some spent fuel, and there are some real problems with spent fuel, so there has got to be a way to store it. And back in, I think it was 1982, the Congress passed a bill that imposed an excise fee on every producer of nuclear energy in America. And the purpose of that was to build a facility in Nevada called Yucca Mountain in which they would store this spent fuel.

But the American taxpayer has already spent \$9 billion on Yucca Mountain. And if it were allowed to be continued within the next 3 or 4 years, it would be licensed, and then 4 or 5, 10 years after that, they could start moving this spent fuel to Yucca Mountain.

So where is this spent fuel right now? Well, the spent fuel right now is located at each one of these 109 sites in America. Where you have a nuclear power plant, you have spent fuel because there is no other place, there is no other place to put it. No other place to take it.

Now, I think the American people would find it interesting—because I don't think most of them really know that a lot of these nuclear power

plants, because they have contractual arrangements with the Federal Government, that they could store that spent fuel at Yucca Mountain. And by the way, President Obama did not put any money in his budget for Yucca Mountain. And so there were a lot of stories going around soon after the budget came out that Yucca Mountain had been put on hold; we didn't know if they were going to continue to build it or try to get the license for it so we can start storing this material or not.

So I suppose it's going to be up to the appropriators in the Congress to decide if they are going to put any money into Yucca Mountain. But we spent that \$9 billion, and because the government had contracts with these nuclear energy producers to take that spent fuel and was not able to fulfill its obligation, what do you think the nuclear energy plants did? They did what any of us would do. They filed a lawsuit because of a breach of that contract.

And as a result of that contract, the U.S. Government right now has a liability to pay those nuclear power plants in the neighborhood of \$7 billion. And that's only for a period of time. And after that, if there is not some mechanism in place to take care of this stored—this spent fuel, there are going to be other lawsuits and there is going to be more money that's going to have to be paid by the American taxpayer.

Now, you know there are a lot of other countries that produce nuclear energy. In fact, in France, which is oftentimes viewed as the green country, most of their electricity is produced by nuclear energy. And France has it, Russia has it, Japan has it, Great Britain has it. A lot of countries have it.

But in America, one of the techniques and one of the things that you can do to minimize the amount of the spent fuel is to reprocess it. And it is a technology that is fully developed and is being used today in France and Japan and other countries around the world. Now, the advantage of reprocessing is that you reduce even more the amount of waste that you have at the end.

But in America, we don't reprocess. And why? Because when Jimmy Carter was President, he made a decision—and I am not criticizing his decision because I don't truthfully know all of the facts that went into his decision, and I am sure he had good reason for his decision—but he signed an Executive order that prohibited reprocessing of spent fuel in America.

□ 1600

But every other country in the world is doing it, with the exception of Canada, and that's because they use heavy water reactors in Canada and in America we use light water reactors.

But the reason that I am disappointed in the energy bill—there is nothing about nuclear—is because this is an issue that the American people and the American Congress must re-

visit and, that is, reprocessing spent fuel because we can drastically reduce the amount of waste.

We also need to expedite the permitting process so that we can produce more nuclear power plants, because it can be done safely, it can be done cleanly, and it is a strategy that we should pursue. Because, as I indicated earlier, we are most dependent upon coal, next nuclear, next we get down to renewables and ethanol and biomass, and all sorts of things.

But I wanted to take this time this evening to just go over this whole process of the dilemma that we face in nuclear, the potential dilemma that we face if a cap-and-trade system is adopted, because it will make us less competitive with countries like China and India, who are building more and more coal power plants; the less competitive it will make us if we implement this renewable mandate that 20 percent of electricity has to be produced by renewables, when the experience in Spain has been for every job created in the renewable industry, green jobs, they lost 2.2 jobs.

So as we move forward, we have many challenges facing our country, no greater challenge than in energy. And all of us respect the wisdom of the American people if they know the facts, and so I think it's our obligation, as Members of Congress and Members of the Senate and President Obama, to go out and talk about these issues, get the facts out there, and let the American people decide. And I think, once they know all these facts, they will recognize that we will have to continue using coal.

We have a 250-year supply, our most abundant resource. We have the pilot projects already working that can help capture carbon dioxide and even use the captured carbon dioxide to put into oil wells to produce more oil. If we are going to be less dependent on foreign oil, we have to produce more oil in America.

That gets me back to tax policy, because one of the difficult issues in President Obama's tax policy is that I understand he wants to do away with the oil depletion allowance. He wants to change some inventory rules. He wants to change some other tax breaks for small independent producers, which makes it more difficult to produce more oil in America.

So those are issues facing us. And with that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of illness.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending a funeral.