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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR CLEAN ENERGY

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I rise today to reemphasize the economic need for the American Clean Energy and Security Act. I proudly supported the energy bill's recent passage here in the House because I know that in addition to protecting our environment and providing for greater national security, it will also control spiraling energy costs and create American clean energy jobs.

Our friends on the other side have attempted to obfuscate the issue by labeling the landmark legislation as a tax bill. They have even cited a study claiming a precise-sounding figure, and at first their mistake perhaps could be forgiven. Perhaps they simply didn't understand the study they cited.

However, Professor John Reilly of MIT, one of the authors of that very study, sent a letter to minority leader JOHN BOEHNER stating that the Republican citation was simply not correct, given the study's data.

That letter was dated April 1. Yet, our friends on the other side persist in using this inaccurate figure. Madam Speaker, I'm here to set the record straight.

Shall we talk about increasing energy prices? How about a \$700 energy increase on every American household

if we don't take action. This isn't a tax. This is the cost of doing nothing. This is more than a \$700 increase each year that has already occurred in this decade due to rising electricity and gasoline prices.

Of course, the costs could be much higher if we used last year's \$4 a gallon cost during the summer. However, even using the current price of \$2.59, the average yearly per capita increase in gasoline costs this decade has been more than \$400 per household. Excluding last year's \$4 a gallon cost, the price of a gallon of gasoline this decade has doubled—from \$1.26 a gallon in 2000, to \$2.59 currently.

Since 2000, the price of electricity in the United States increased more than 38 percent, thereby pushing the average yearly household bill from \$800 to \$1,100 a year.

We know that we send hundreds of billions of dollars each year to foreign countries to import oil. The U.S. imports roughly 9.4 million barrels of oil every day. That equates to more than \$230 billion every year—\$230 billion we could be reinvesting in our economy—creating American energy jobs—rather than sending it overseas, often to countries that view us as a meal ticket at best, or an enemy at worst.

Madam Speaker, we have also heard from the other side that the American Clean Energy and Security Act would eliminate jobs. Perhaps they don't realize that the current system of energy generation is already costing us thousands of jobs.

For instance, the U.S. Department of Labor states that employment in the mining industry will decline every year through at least 2014. This isn't recession related. This is simply an industry in decline. If we do nothing, more Americans will lose their jobs.

We know the cost of doing nothing—continuing increases in energy costs and continuing job losses—costs American families can no longer afford.

However, with the American Clean Energy and Security Act, we will create jobs—green jobs—here in America. The Act will create incentives for American companies to innovate and to expand their investment in alternative sources of energy.

Madam Speaker, we know we can generate American jobs in the renewable energy sector if we just make the investment. From 2000 to 2008, for example, the wind power industry alone—before the passage of this bill—created 35,000 jobs. Of course, wind energy still makes up only a small percentage of electricity generation—less than 1 percent.

Imagine if we could make a concerted effort for renewable energy. We could greatly expand those gains and create hundreds of thousands of American clean energy jobs.

Madam Speaker, the business community understands the importance of energy reform. Companies like eBay, Nike, Starbucks, Levi Strauss, the Gap, Symantec, and Sun Microsystems have formed the Business for Climate and Innovative Energy Policy Coalition to advocate for these clean energy jobs and for this bill. These businesses support reducing greenhouse gas pollution, establishing a renewable energy standard, and investing in job creation. They know that if we do nothing, the costs associated with continued global warming will reach \$271 billion by 2025.

America has always been the land of innovation. However, as we recently have seen in the automotive industry, we cannot rest on past laurels. There are costs to doing nothing.

I commend my colleagues in the House for the support of the bill. Together, we have made a statement that will address rising energy costs; we will wean America off its dangerous dependence on foreign oil; and we will work to avoid the catastrophic costs of global warming; and create American jobs. I hope the Senate will act swiftly.

□ 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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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RACKS UP RECORD-BREAKING \$1 TRILLION DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DeGETTE). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. My colleague from Virginia promises jobs from the cap-and-tax bill. If you believe that, then you probably believe the Democrats when they promised that the stimulus bill would provide jobs.

The Obama administration and congressional Democrats promised that their trillion-dollar stimulus would create jobs immediately and unemployment would not rise above 8 percent. But since the stimulus bill passed, 1.96 million Americans have lost their jobs. I suspect that we'll do a lot worse than that under their cap-and-tax bill.

Let me fill you in on some of the economic statistics that we have right now. At the beginning of July, our national debt clocked in at \$11.5 trillion. If you don't have a calculator in hand, that's \$37,609.23 for every man, woman, and child in America.

But the real news is not simply that the national debt is more than \$11.5 trillion. The real news is the Treasury Department announced yesterday that for the first time the Federal budget deficit has topped \$1 trillion. The first time in our history.

To clarify, the deficit is different than the debt in the sense that the deficit generally refers to the amount of overspending in a given year. That means so far in fiscal year 2009, the Federal Government has spent \$1 trillion more than it has collected in taxes.

Rather than trim our budget and make do with less, like the rest of America, Congress has decided to up the ante and will not just maintain current government spending levels, but will significantly increase spending in the coming year.

This kind of runaway spending is part of why we're hearing reports that our \$1 trillion deficit is just the beginning of the story. In fact, some experts are predicting that the deficit could reach \$2 trillion this fall.

What do these record deficits mean for Americans? Massive deficits can only continue for so long. I think we've all heard stories of how crushing debt has forced some businesses or families into bankruptcy. At some point, the pile of cards is coming down, either as the interest rates on the debt spirals up higher, or as those who lend to America run out of cash to loan or simply out of patience for Uncle Sam's spendthrift ways. The American people are hurting. Millions are out of work, and hundreds of thousands lose their jobs each month.

The government spent \$18 billion in June just to pay the interest on the national debt, which works out to \$600 million a day in interest payments. Eventually, American families are going to have to foot this bill.

American people know we cannot borrow and spend our way back to a growing economy. As a record-breaking \$1 trillion deficit causes the national debt to increase at an historic pace, Congress will either have to slash spending in unprecedented ways or raise taxes. And judging by how the current Democrat majority in Congress has proceeded thus far, I'm very skeptical about any meaningful spending cuts. You can probably guess what that means. Let's just say that the tax hike forecast doesn't look good for the American people.

Democrats are on the side of more government and more taxes. Republicans are on the side of the American people.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. One issue that is too often out of sight and out of mind is the quality and the condition of our drinking water and wastewater pipes under the ground.

Just 6 months ago, we all watched in shock as rescue workers airlifted people from vehicles caught in a massive rush of water caused by a water main rupture on River Road just outside of Washington, D.C., because of the failure of a single, corroded pipe installed over 40 years ago. In fact, 72,000 miles of sewer main and water pipe are over 80 years of age.

This morning, there was a water main break that closed 23rd Street at I, near the George Washington Hospital.

The EPA estimates that American communities suffered more than 240,000 water main breaks last year. Combined with overflowing combined sewer systems causing contamination, property damage, disruption in water supply and, often, massive traffic jams.

The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates an average of 6 billion gallons of water is lost every day through leakage—enough to fill over 9,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The Engineers have given our Nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure a D-minus grade in their most recent report—sadly, a grade that was not improved over the report from 5 years ago.

The House of Representatives recognized the need to upgrade water infrastructure earlier this year, passing H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act, which would update and reauthorize Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds. But they simply don't have enough money.

The EPA's most recent estimate is there is an over \$500 billion gap between current investment and projected needs over the next 20 years. Surface and air transportation infrastructure, while facing their own challenges, at least have a dedicated source of funding. Water does not.

In the spring of 2005, the famous Republican pollster, Frank Luntz, released a poll that showed Americans would support a sustainable, dedicated source of water funding for infrastructure.

□ 1045

He found the public sees clean water as an even higher priority than investments made in transportation and airways—71 percent prioritized water above other infrastructure. It is time to stop talking about it and do something: creating a dedicated firewall trust fund for water infrastructure.

This afternoon, I will introduce legislation to create this trust fund financed by a number of funding mechanisms that are simple, equitable and adequate for \$10 billion a year. The Water Protection and Reinvestment Act will establish a trust fund to finance clean water and drinking water infrastructure. Most of the money will go through the State revolving funds for sewage and drinking water improvements.

The financing mechanisms in the Water Protection and Reinvestment Act will include a fee based on water-based beverages, products that are disposed of in wastewater, pharmaceutical products, and corporate profits. These fees would be assessed at the manufacturer level so they will be easy to administer and will have a minimal impact on the consumer. They will be at a level that is so low that it would not place the entire burden on any one industry or group of consumers. With a mix of funding, everyone will contribute to a solution from which everyone will benefit from.

I am pleased that the legislation already has a diverse support of stakeholders from the Associated General Contractors, American Rivers, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and Rural Community Assistance Partnership, and a wide range of bipartisan original cosponsors, including Congressmen NORM DICKS, STEVE LATOURETTE, MICHAEL SIMPSON, and THOMAS PETRI, representing a base of support from thoughtful, bipartisan legislators.

While the funding question is always complicated, the public is with us. In January of this year, pollster Frank Luntz released a new poll—and remember, he is the famous Republican pollster—finding that a nearly unanimous 94 percent of Americans are concerned about the state of our Nation's infrastructure. He found that this concern cuts across all regions of the country: urban, rural, suburban. He found that 84 percent of the public wants the Federal Government to spend more money to improve infrastructure, and that 81 percent of Americans are personally prepared to pay 1 percent more in taxes for the cause.

The need is clear. The public is supportive. My hope is that my colleagues will join me in a solution that will