

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, the House of Representatives is prepared to pass the President's energy tax. It is also known as the American Clean Energy and Security Act. The act, therefore, is known as ACES—American Clean Energy and Security Act. ACES is the right thing to call this particular bill because it gambles—it gambles—with the future of the American people. In blackjack, the dealer might have an ace that is showing, but one card in the dealer's hand is always hidden. In this case, the hidden card is the card that shows the real cost of this bill to the American taxpayer. What the taxpayer doesn't know is that the game is rigged. The taxpayer is going to lose. No matter how many times the majority adds to this hand another giveaway to special interests, another tax break to offset the monumental cost of this bill, the end will be just the same: The taxpayer goes bust and Washington will win the game.

ACES is the product of a supermajority that the Democrats have in the House of Representatives. Given the rules and given the procedures of the House, reasonable amendments are going to be defeated or even blocked from ever being considered. The final product will not be a real starting point to begin this debate on climate change.

ACES is going to have a devastating effect on our economy, and we will see there will be no environmental benefit from doing this bill—none. That is not just my belief or my assessment alone, it is also the belief of others.

Martin Feldstein, noted Harvard economist, in a recent Washington Post article stated:

ACES will have a trivially small effect on global warming while imposing substantial costs on all American households.

Let me repeat that: a trivially small effect, while imposing substantial costs. How big are the costs? Well, he cites the Congressional Budget Office, which estimated that the resulting increases in consumer prices needed to achieve just a 15-percent reduction in carbon dioxide—slightly less than the target of this bill—would raise the cost of living \$1,600 a year, every year, for every family in America. That is a \$1,600 tax on every American family every year.

The Heritage Foundation predicts that the ACES approach could cost the economy \$9.6 trillion and more than 1 million lost jobs into the future. And these are just the raw numbers. The real potential for economic pain goes much further.

David Sokol, chairman of MidAmerican Energy, points out that ACES—this bill—could be a bonanza. And for whom will it be a bonanza? For more Wall Street corruption and more Wall Street greed because ACES is going to deal in investment banks, it is going to deal in hedge funds and other speculators who want to speculate in

the cap-and-trade market. David Sokol points out:

If you liked what credit default swaps did to our economy, you're going to love cap and trade.

Coincidentally, the House bill actually allows for credit default swaps.

He is not alone in his assessment. British scientist James Lovelock, who is a noted chemist and environmentalist, stated in January that:

Carbon trading, with its huge government subsidies, is just what the finance industry wanted. It'll make a lot of money for a lot of people and postpone the moment of reckoning.

So he is saying it will make a lot of money for a lot of people in the financial industry.

Carbon markets can also cause huge fluctuations. We can look to Europe as an example and what we saw happen there. In February of this year, the Financial Times wrote an article entitled "Fall in CO₂ Price a Risk to Green Investment." It seems that the price of carbon in the European Union had fallen so low that it no longer provided an incentive to lower the use of carbon.

So those are things happening not just for this country but around the world.

Another problem is the huge economic gamble ACES makes by bypassing cheaper, low-carbon fuels by heavily relying on unreliable expensive energy. This ACES legislation mandates that by 2020 the electric utilities meet 20 percent of their electricity demand through renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. This is the wrong approach. We need an all-of-the-above energy strategy to address our Nation's energy needs. We need to make America's energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising energy prices for American families. That is how you create and that is how you then sustain economic development. So I would say, let's develop all of our energy sources—wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, clean coal, nuclear, natural gas—all of the energy sources. Our Nation is so blessed with abundant energy resources. They are right here for us to use in a clean and environmentally friendly way. Coal is cheap and abundant in America. It is what is keeping our energy affordable today. Uranium is abundant in America too. Let's develop this proven zero-carbon resource. And, yes, let's develop all of the renewable energies—the wind, the solar, the hydropower. We need it all.

Lisa Jackson, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, recently took a trip to Wyoming, and this is what she said while she was in my home State of Wyoming:

As a home of wind, coal, and natural gas, Wyoming is at the heart of America's energy future.

That is because Wyoming has it all. It has the coal, it has the wind, it has the natural resources of natural gas and oil and uranium for nuclear power. It has it all, and we need it all.

The bottom line is that the Democrats' cap-and-tax bill costs jobs and it

raises energy prices. I don't understand why we can't make America's energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising energy prices on American families. The administration wants to take a different approach. Why are the American people being given this stacked deck, where all of the options hurt the economy, raise energy prices, and cost jobs? The President says we need green jobs. I agree. We also need red, white, and blue jobs—American energy, American energy sources.

The reality is, this partisan energy tax bill passing in the House is a bad bet for all of us. We shouldn't double down with any more taxpayer money to bail out the climate through an energy tax.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I understand we are in morning business, and I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for about 12 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPERFUND IN KANSAS

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I rise today to discuss an issue that is one of these "believe it or not" issues of waste and abuse concerning billions of tax dollars and stimulus funding. I have some good news and then I have some bad news to report.

First the good news. In the last 24 hours, we have been able to reverse a policy that would have used stimulus money to pave the same road twice within a matter of months. I said yesterday that did not pass the Kansas commonsense test or, for that matter, any State's commonsense test, and would be a huge abuse of taxpayer dollars. We have reversed this plan, this silly plan, in a bipartisan way.

I wish to personally thank Vice President BIDEN, the man charged with overseeing all of the stimulus spending, for taking action to correct this abuse after I contacted him. I really thank the Vice President because the White House moved and the Vice President moved in an expeditious fashion, and I, quite frankly, didn't expect they could move that fast, but they got the job done.

The Vice President will be in Kansas today, and I asked him to review this rather ridiculous example of wasteful spending occurring in Cherokee County, KS, just a short 2-hour drive south on U.S. Highway 96 from where the Vice President will be. You see, a section of old Highway 96 would have been

resurfaced with stimulus funds. Then portions of an EPA Superfund site would have been cleaned up with stimulus funds, and the heavy equipment used for the cleanup would have damaged the newly resurfaced highway, so they would have to go back in and do the highway again. Once this cleanup was complete, additional stimulus funds would have gone to repair the road damage caused by the heavy trucks. Taxpayers would have paid almost \$1 million to fix this road twice.

Fortunately, in working with the Vice President, we now have media reports that the Superfund cleanup will occur prior to any roadwork. That is the good news. Again, I credit the Vice President and his staff and his team.

Now for the bad news. While this spending issue has been fixed, there is a much larger spending issue affecting dozens of Kansas families in Cherokee County, KS, and that is still a major problem. I am going to urge the Vice President to again provide leadership. He is the self-proclaimed new sheriff in town. I am an honorary sheriff of Dodge City, KS, my hometown. So from one sheriff to another, I would simply say to the Vice President: Sheriff, I will ride shotgun or you can ride shotgun. We have the problem only half solved.

You see, in April, EPA Region 7 issued a press release saying Cherokee County would receive up to \$25 million from the stimulus. According to the press release:

By starting or speeding up cleanup at Superfund sites, the [stimulus] funding is also increasing the speed with which these sites are returned to productive use. When a Superfund site is redeveloped, it can offer significant economic benefits to local communities, including future job creation.

Unfortunately, for fewer than 100 residents living in the city of Treece, the stimulus funding for this project is literally going down a sinking hole. The city of Treece, KS, sits on the Kansas-Oklahoma border. This small, rural community was once a world leader in lead and zinc mining, mining that lasted for nearly 100 years. As the mining companies shut down in the 1970s, the groundwater began to rise and the pillars that supported the soil above the mine shafts began to collapse and you had a giant sinkhole. Shortly thereafter—in 1983, to be exact—the EPA placed over 500 square miles in southeast Kansas, northeast Oklahoma, and southwest Missouri on the National Priorities List of the Superfund list, including the city of Treece. In total, Cherokee County, KS, where Treece is located, has 115 square miles in the Superfund Program.

Last summer, during a listening tour of this part of Kansas, I saw firsthand how 100 men and women and children are living in absolute blight. They live day by day not knowing when—and I mean when, not if—their homes will collapse into the earth below into a giant sinkhole. They remain there despite the loss of businesses and infra-

structure because their homes have no market value and they cannot sell them to fund a new home or even rent one.

As parts of Cherokee County have been on the Superfund list for the last 26 years, the EPA has removed and replaced contaminated topsoil. According to their stimulus press release, the EPA will continue to remove lead-contaminated residential soil at more than 380 acres in Baxter Springs and Treece. That probably sounds like an admirable thing to do, but as the ground below it caves in, the exposed soil that has not been cleaned up will rise, so essentially this is a never-ending process. You are cleaning up topsoil on a single home, and after the sinkhole sinks, obviously the topsoil is going to be contaminated with the contaminated soil underneath the new topsoil. If you get all that, I think you got the problem. This is a never-ending process.

I have worked very long and hard with other members of the Kansas delegation to determine how best to address this situation. The only satisfactory answer anyone has been able to give me is to relocate the town to protect the residents from a complete cave-in. The Federal Government needs to buy out the land from the remaining homes and business owners and then prohibit any future construction on the property affected by the contamination. This is exactly what we did with Pitcher, OK, on the other side of the State line, just a few years ago. Most estimates indicate we could relocate the entire town with \$3 million in Federal funding and \$500,000 in State funding—funding the State of Kansas has already set aside. During the previous Congress, I introduced legislation to address the Federal portion of this funding.

Fast forward to today, with an economy experiencing a lot of turbulence and a so-called stimulus bill that everyone in this body heard was an absolute necessity and not only a job maintainer but a job creator. So I asked the EPA to use \$3 million of already allocated stimulus funding to relocate the community—\$3 million. I was told no.

Instead of solving this problem and relocating the families of Treece to a safe facility, the EPA, with the assistance of the stimulus package, continues to spend even more money, \$25 million—eight times the amount needed to relocate the community, the 100 people who live in blight and fear that their homes will sink into a sinkhole—to put new soil—this is what they are currently going to do—onto contaminated soil, which is then going to collapse and recontaminate all the soil. This doesn't make sense.

I have had an ongoing dialog with EPA, and they have told me:

The wastes are causing great environmental harm to southeast Kansas—

We, of course, knew that—as evidenced by the documented impacts to birds, fish, mussels, macro-invertebrates, and horses. There is also evidence of harm to

humans as it is related to elevated blood lead levels.

The letter went on to say:

EPA Region 7 believes the situation at the adjacent Region 6 Tar Creek Superfund site in Oklahoma materially differs from the Cherokee County Superfund site, and that is what drives different decisions for the Tar Creek Site.

I am going to refer to a couple of charts here.

This is a picture of Treece, KS, located right here. You can see all of these white objects here. Basically, that is the chat material that has come out of many mines over 100 years.

Here is Treece, KS, and here is Pitcher, OK. Here is a giant chat pile in between. I have been there. You see many little ponds and winding roads, and I advise you not to go fishing in any of those ponds. You might catch a three-eyed fish. At any rate, it is all contaminated, all a sinkhole, whether it is from Treece, KS, in Region 7 with the EPA or whether it is Pitcher, OK, in Region 6 in Dallas. I don't know what the difference is. If this is contaminated, and it is, and this is contaminated and looks the same, and it is, what the heck is the difference?

Let me show another angle so you can appreciate what I am talking about. This is what the people of Treece see every day as the Sun rises and sets. This is a giant chat mountain—all of this contaminated soil. This side of the chat mountain is Treece, the other side is Oklahoma—the same situation, same problem, same contaminated soil, same sinkhole, and the same thing on the other side, except EPA 7 in Kansas City can't get it through their heads that this is identical to the same problem over here.

Instead of spending \$25 million to clean up and put topsoil on contaminated soil that will sink, why can't we spend \$3 million to save the community of Treece and relocate these people? Basically, EPA Region 7 does not have a factual basis, according to them, "that would allow the use of regular or [stimulus] funds for a residential buy-out at the Treece subsite." Why? We were going to spend money for a road to be built twice. We are spending \$25 million to put topsoil on a sinkhole. Why can't we put \$3 million to relocate this town?

Here is my question. EPA acknowledged there is evidence of harm to humans. They listed a whole series of other animals and wildlife, and so on and so forth, that they are worried about. I understand that. But why not provide assistance to relocate fewer than 100 people from harm's way?

Furthermore, EPA told me that "a 10-year timeframe is estimated for complete waste remediation." Due to the continual mine collapses, I wonder if the environmental cleanup will ever be completed.

I think it is in the best interests of all taxpayers to quit throwing money down sinkholes and provide an opportunity for 100 folks who have no other

options to move, as their homes are worth nothing. We do not need to spend, again, \$25 million on a problem that will not be solved—topsoil on top of the sinkhole. We need to take care of these people and spend \$3 million to let them get on with their lives. While American taxpayers are spending untold millions to prevent mortgage collapses, I can see no better use for the stimulus plan than to get the residents of Treece into safe homes.

I said once before, I am an honorary sheriff of Dodge City. I have a badge. You can go to Dodge City and you can meet the marshal, you can see Miss Kitty. You can go down to the Long Branch. We are used to taking care of problems ourselves. Kansas has appropriated \$500,000 to do this. All we are asking for is \$3 million, not the \$25 million that I don't think is going to ever really result in any long-term cleanup.

You have to be there to realize just how bad this is, the pools of water and all. People will tell you: Senator, we are going to take you around this way. Don't walk this way.

So I would just ask Sheriff Joe, who is the self-declared sheriff on stimulus money, help me out here. Ride side-saddle or you can drive the stage. Help me get \$3 million. You have already stopped the ridiculous situation of building the road twice after we had destroyed it with stimulus money. That is the good news. But the rest of the story is that the citizens of Treece need to be relocated. We can do this for \$3 million.

This remains an awful way to treat any community. I think it is not a wise use of taxpayer money. It does not pass the Kansas commonsense smell test.

I yield the floor.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the urgent need for health care reform. The people of Colorado, and the American people, have waited for too long for Washington to act.

We should begin with a basic principle: if you have coverage and you like it, you can keep it. We will not take that choice away from you.

But even as we keep what works, we must confront the challenges of soaring health care costs and the lack of access to affordable, quality health care. The status quo is unacceptable. Every day, families in Colorado and across America face rising premiums. Their plans offer fewer benefits. They are denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

And until we fix the health care system, we will not be able to fix the fiscal mess in which we find ourselves.

Since 1970, the share of health care as a part of the GDP has gone from 7 percent to 17 percent. The United States spends over \$2 trillion in health care costs, including over \$400 billion on Medicare. President Obama has said the biggest threat to our nation's bal-

ance sheet is the skyrocketing cost of health care. He is right.

In Colorado, we have not waited on Washington. We have made real progress in showing how you can provide high quality health care at a lower cost. Last week, the New Yorker magazine published an article titled "The Cost Conundrum" that highlights the important work that has been done in Mesa County, CO. Over 30 years ago this community serving 120,000 people came together, doctors, nurses, and the nonprofit health insurance company. They agreed upon a system that paid doctors and nurses for seeing patients and producing better quality care. They realized that problems and costs go down when care is more patient-focused.

In Mesa County, the city of Grand Junction implemented an integrated health care system that provides follow-up care with patients. This follow-up care has helped lower hospital readmissions rates in Grand Junction to just 3 percent. Compare that to the 20 percent rate nationwide, and it is clear that our rural community on the Western Slope of Colorado is onto something groundbreaking.

High readmission rates are a large problem for our seniors. Nearly one in five Medicare patients who leave a hospital will be readmitted within the following month, and more than three-quarters of these readmissions are preventable. Rehospitalization costs Medicare over \$17 billion annually.

It is painful for patients and families to be caught up in these cycles of treatment. All too often, care is fragmented; you go from the doctor, to the hospital, to a nursing home, back to the hospital and then back to the doctor again. Patients are given medication instructions as they are leaving the hospital, many times after coming off of strong medications. They do not know whom to call, and they are not sure what to ask their primary care doctor.

The solution, both our Denver and Mesa County health communities have found, is to provide patients leaving the hospital with a "coach." This coach is a trained health professional connecting home and the hospital. This coach teaches patients how to manage their health on their own.

Our Denver health community created a model based on this idea called the Care Transitions Intervention. Their work is the basis for the Medicare Care Transitions Act of 2009, a bill I introduced to implement this model on the national level. This legislation recognizes that patient care should not begin in a doctor's office and end at the hospital doors. Investing in coaching and transitional care now can head off huge costs down the road. It has the advantage of being both preventive and responsive.

Take 67-year-old Bill Schoens, from Littleton, CO, who recently suffered a heart attack. Before he was released from the hospital, registered nurse

Becky Cline was assigned as his Transitions Coach. She made sure that he understood the medications that his doctors prescribed and everything else he needed to do to get healthy. Bill even pointed out, "When you are in the emergency room, you are all drugged up and can barely remember what to do. Confusion starts to set in."

Becky went through each step Bill needed to follow when he left the hospital. Becky evaluated Bill's ability to follow doctor's orders in his environment and helped him maintain his own Personal Health Record. With her help, when Bill visited the doctor, he did not have to remember everything that happened since he left the hospital; it was all in the book.

Bill said, "When people are in front of their doctor, their blood pressure goes sky high and they forget what they need to ask." He said he found the help and guidance he received from his Transitions Coach "invaluable and life-saving."

We need patient-centered coordinated care, care that views nurses, doctors and family members not as isolated caregivers, but as partners on a team whose ultimate goal is to make sure patients get the guidance and care they need. Hospitals are not the problem, primary care physicians are not the problem, and nurses are not the problem. Our fragmented delivery system of care is the problem.

This bill also makes sure that we are teaching patients to manage their own conditions at home.

Sixty-nine-year-old Frank Yanni of Denver, CO, had surgery for a staph infection of the spinal cord. After leaving the hospital, he noticed that the pain he was experiencing weeks after surgery was getting worse. Having been "coached," he identified the problem and knew to insist on visiting his doctor immediately. A hospital test showed that Mr. Yanni required a second surgery. His coach said that, "Had he let that go for even another week, he could have ended up in the ICU, septic and horribly sick."

Our Colorado transition of care model, reflected in our legislation, gives health care systems the choice of whether to create this program. But it allows existing patient-centered transitional care programs like the one in Mesa County, CO, to continue on.

We want communities and providers to think and work together to reduce readmission rates, reduce costs and provide better coordinated care to our patients. Other systems should look at Colorado and the systems in 24 States that have already begun to follow this model.

As we begin to emerge from the economic downturn, we must call upon existing health care professionals from all walks of life—nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, long-term care, and community health workers—to serve as transitional coaches.

Colorado nurses like Becky Cline have found that focusing on transitional care has leveraged their skills,