

is described as “more accurately delineating the practical scope of the legislation.”

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today will correct this oversight in the current law. This important piece of legislation will amend the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act to include the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. It will amend the definition of a State for the purpose of this Act to include all U.S. territories.

Again, I commend my good friends, the gentleman from North Carolina, as well as my friend from Virginia, for their extensive understanding and knowledge of this issue and the matter now before us. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from American Samoa, the leadership of the Judiciary Committee, and my friend from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for bringing this measure to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. COBLE. In closing, I want to thank Mr. SCOTT as well, and my good friend from American Samoa. ENI, I apologize for my having fractured the pronunciation of your name earlier. But folks, this is a good bill that addresses a formidable threat, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill and support it.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5934.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 14, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, H-232 U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on November 14, 2012, at 10:49 a.m.:

That the Senate agrees to House of Representatives amendment to the bill S. 743.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

EXTENDING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LADDERS TO SUCCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we're back, and America expects that we ought to be going back to work. And we have a heavy load ahead of us. We want to make sure that every American has the opportunity to climb up that economic and social ladder as high as they want to and can go. So we have to make sure that those ladders of opportunity are in place.

We also have to make sure that we are a compassionate Nation, that we're willing to reach out to those in our country who have been harmed by devastating natural disasters. We certainly saw this on the east coast, and I'd like to spend a good portion of this hour talking about how we, as a Nation, can respond to superstorm Sandy and the lessons that we should learn from this disaster.

□ 1320

It's not the first that has occurred in America, and it's certainly not going to be the last. In previous disasters, we learned a few lessons, but it seems as though we have yet to achieve the necessary wisdom from those occurrences to really put in place the policies that can protect Americans.

First, our sense of compassion drives Americans to reach out in many different ways to assist those on the east coast that were so severely harmed by this storm. Our condolences go out to the families of those who were killed in the storm. Our wallets open to the American Red Cross and other organizations that are providing assistance. We should do that and we should do more of that, but as a Congress there are things that we must also do.

Proposals have been made on this floor to reduce the effectiveness and the support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Not a good idea. It's very clear from the disaster on the east coast that a single city or State or even a region is unable to adequately address—whether in the lead-up to a disaster where there is warning or in the immediate aftermath of that—the necessary resources to assist and to recover. As a Nation, we need some mechanism to gather together all of the strength of this incredible country we call America and apply that strength to those who have been so severely harmed by that disaster. That's occurring. FEMA has clearly been significantly improved in the last 4 years and certainly since the tragedies of New Orleans, but there is much more that needs to be done.

As a Congress, as Representatives of the American people—people who may be in any part of this country and who at any moment could be affected by a disaster—we need to make sure that there is a national response capability in place that is ready to act with the sufficient resources. That's not just an organizational and administrative

issue. That is also the necessary funds available. Shortchanging that money that we set aside for those disasters can lead to a period of time in which inaction is inevitable.

So as we go about our budgeting, as we go about our appropriations process, we must make sure that we do not shortchange and that we provide enough money, that we set it aside and have it there, available for immediate response. It's not just the Federal response. It's those private companies and others that will be hired by the Federal Government or the States and cities to provide the necessary services.

There are many other lessons to be learned from superstorm Sandy and from previous disasters. Early warning systems are essential. Yet we have seen proposals here before the Congress, in the budgets and appropriations before the Congress, to diminish the ability of America to see ahead—to be able to predict storms or earthquakes or fires—by diminishing the money available for NASA in their satellite technology and other research capabilities that are out there by which we can learn well ahead of a disaster that it's coming so that we can then warn the citizens and take whatever precautions are necessary and implement whatever defensive systems may be required.

So it's not just the disaster. It's the preparation. It's the early warning—the ability to know what may be coming to harm the citizens of this Nation. As a Congress, we should be cognizant of the role that we play in providing the resources, the direction, and the authorization for those agencies that are able to have the technologies to perceive, to understand what may be coming to the citizens of this Nation and to those around the world.

Secondly, as individuals, it seems to me we ought to be paying attention, and when the authorities say it's time to leave, we really ought to do that. I was the insurance commissioner and Lieutenant Governor in California, and I often found myself in situations where I had responsibilities along these lines. All too often and all too tragically, the citizens who were warned early that they should leave because of a fire danger did not. Tragedy struck and they lost their lives. So we have individual responsibilities as well as community responsibilities.

There is another set of lessons to learn from superstorm Sandy and the drought in the Midwest and from other occurrences in the weather patterns of this Nation, which is that climate change is real. It is real. It is actually happening as we speak. We know that the great ice caps around this world are diminishing. We know that the ocean levels are rising. We know that there is a warming across the entire planet, and we know that this will have profound effects.

It was predicted back in the early nineties when I was working on this issue at the Department of the Interior as Deputy Secretary. We predicted that

there would be superstorms, that there would be droughts in new parts of this Nation, that the ice caps would melt, that there would be significant changes in the agricultural patterns around the world, and that certainly there would be significant changes in the river and stream flows. In my own State of California, we anticipated then—some almost 20 years ago now—in the Sierras, which is our single biggest reservoir, that we would see the snow pack diminish and that we would see there would be changes in the flows of the rivers and, quite likely, greater flooding.

That brings us to the necessity of recognizing this as a Nation and for this Congress to work to address not just the reasons for climate change but, just as important, to prepare for the inevitability of the effects of climate change. A small rise in the sea level will certainly change the impact of major storms on all of our coastlines. The storm surges will be higher, the destruction greater, and therefore the twofold necessity: one, to do everything we possibly can to diminish climate change. That brings us to energy policy, which is not the subject of today's discussion; but it brings us, rather, to the issue of how we are going to effect and prepare for the inevitable changes.

A little over a year ago, the President proposed the American Jobs Act. In that American Jobs Act, there was a substantial increase—in fact, a very significant increase—in the amount of money that this Nation would spend on infrastructure. In addition to what we would normally do, the President proposed an additional \$50 billion of infrastructure investment in the near term, over the next 2 to 3 years. Unfortunately, that proposal was not even brought up in the current Congress. Nonetheless, it is a proposal that we as Members of this House should give considerable thought to. I look now to the east coast and the west coast and to my own district in California, which is the Sacramento Valley, and I'm looking at the President's proposal of some \$50 billion, and saying: What if? What if we would actually undertake a major infrastructure action in the United States? What if we were to really prepare ourselves for the inevitable climate change? What would it mean to Americans?

Certainly, right off, it would mean jobs. It would mean that we would be able to employ, perhaps, 2 million people immediately in building that infrastructure. It also means something beyond that. It could mean we would increase the deficit; or if we were wise, it could mean that we would not increase the deficit at all and that we would simply make some shifts in certain tax breaks that are now given to various parts of our economy—for example, to the oil and gas industry—and shift those tax breaks around so that we would fund infrastructure projects. In fact, that's what the President proposed to do.

□ 1330

Before I go further into how we might use the effort to build infrastructure, I want to say that that infrastructure program is going to be absolutely essential to rebuild an extraordinarily important part of this Nation; that is, the east coast.

New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and some parts of Pennsylvania were devastated. There is going to be a multibillion-dollar rebuilding program necessary just to go back to where those parts of this country were before the storm hit. Much more will be needed to protect those parts of this country from future storms that are certain to occur.

I'll let it go at that. I see my colleague from New York City has arrived here. I'd like her to pick this issue up and talk about the devastation that occurred in her communities, and then we can come back to the infrastructure.

Thank you for joining us, NYDIA. I suppose the proper introduction would be NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, if Hurricane Sandy taught us anything, it is the importance of infrastructure to New York City and our Nation.

Right now, New Yorkers are struggling with day-to-day challenges, many of them without power. In certain parts of the metropolitan area, gasoline shortages continue presenting enormous difficulties. But even as New Yorkers work to rebuild and recover for the short term, we cannot ignore long-term problems.

In many ways, the city of New York took a number of prudent steps that reduced damage and sped up recovery time. However, it is painfully clear that more must be done in the future to ensure our Nation's infrastructure can withstand assaults from Mother Nature.

As Governor Cuomo said, "We have a new reality, and old infrastructures and old systems." We can start by protecting low-lying areas near the ocean, like Brooklyn and Manhattan in my district, with seawalls, bulkheads, and floodgates. In other areas, soft infrastructure investments such as sand dunes and embankments can minimize flooding. Our electrical system needs to be hardened and protected. Other energy sources must also be safeguarded. Ensuring refineries and petroleum supplies do not fall victims to floods can prevent future fuel shortages.

Just as with ensuring automobiles have fuel after disasters, other vital transportation arteries must be protected. Raising entryways to New York's subways could minimize flood damage to our subway system, ensuring our city gets back on its feet faster after the next storm.

Constructing a storm surge barrier and implementing infrastructure changes like this, as you said, will not be cheap. It has been estimated costs

could run as high as \$20 billion just for New York City. But let's remember, in this one storm alone, New York City suffered \$26 billion in economic damage and losses—and lives that were lost.

Sadly, the question is not if there will be future storms, but when. By investing in our infrastructure now, we can prevent future economic damage, to say nothing of protecting our citizens from danger.

Not only will these investments protect our city from disaster down the road, but they can provide a much-needed employment boost. New Yorkers are ready to go to work. Not only strengthening our city for the long haul, making this investment now can create good-paying jobs in the short term and reduce damage from future disasters over the long term.

In New York, we're ready to go to work, investing not only in New York's infrastructure but also in our entire Nation's.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank you very much. Maybe we can engage in a little colloquy here, and we can talk about this in a little more detail.

The storm surge that came into New York was anticipated, but the New York/New Jersey region were not prepared with the necessary infrastructure to protect the communities from that surge. And if I understood you correctly, you're suggesting that the cities or the region needs to put in place those infrastructures to protect it. The subways have to be secured from the inflow of water, and the seawalls and certain other things need to be put in place. Did you estimate a cost of some \$20 billion?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. For New York City?

Mr. GARAMENDI. For New York City. Not including New Jersey?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Correct. Just for New York City.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I will share with you my experience in my part of California, which is the Sacramento Valley, the city of Sacramento and the surrounding area.

We have significant flood potential. In fact, the northern part of Sacramento is considered to be the most flood prone or dangerous city in America after New Orleans. That creates a need in my own region for some of those same protective measures. We call them levees, not seawalls, but rather levees. They have to be improved. We anticipate the cost in Natomas, which is part of Sacramento, to be well over \$1.4 billion. Another city I represent, Marysville, needs some \$20 million to protect that city, and then Yuba City next to it. The entire region that I represent has similar needs. I shouldn't use the word "similar," because we're not on the ocean. But we have needs for flood protection just like New York City and New Jersey.

We can do this. We're a very strong and powerful Nation, and you couldn't be more correct by saying that if we do

it, we protect ourselves, we reduce the potential damage, and we also put people to work.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. That's correct.

In the long haul, not only do we protect our citizens, but the economy will not suffer.

Look at New York. It came to a standstill. Our transportation infrastructure was totally paralyzed. Transportation in terms of bringing gasoline into New York, we couldn't do it.

This is the right thing to do in order for our Nation to protect its citizens, but also it could improve the economic conditions of our entire Nation by creating many high-paying jobs at this time when the economy continues to struggle.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I know that you're deeply involved in small business. You're the ranking member of the Small Business Committee here in the House of Representatives. I would expect that there would be a significant opportunity for small businesses in this also.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Definitely.

When it comes to transportation and infrastructure, a lot of the businesses are small businesses, and they are the backbone of our economy. They will be the ones creating the jobs that are so much needed in our local communities.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I noticed that we've now been joined by another representative from an area that was significantly damaged, Mr. PALLONE from New Jersey.

Perhaps you would like to share with us your thoughts and your experience. I did see you on CNN one night as you were working with your constituents trying to meet the disaster in your area.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank my colleague from California for having this Special Order and talking about the hurricane damage and what needs to be done in the future.

I have to say that the damage to my district was catastrophic. We had many towns where initially at least it looked like the majority of the homes and businesses were wiped out.

When we go back and look again, some of them can be saved. But we're talking about thousands of people who lost their homes and many others who lost their businesses.

It really created a humanitarian crisis in that first week or so because we were trying to get FEMA in with the disaster recovery centers and with the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Over the first week, the main concern was just humanitarian, trying to find shelter for people, trying to make sure they had food and water and clothes.

I have to say the response was overwhelming. So many of the towns in my district—basically, it was a voluntary effort because in the first few days, it was pretty much the people locally that were doing all those things.

□ 1340

Towns had shelters set up. People were bringing in food, making hot

meals. I never saw such an outpouring of support, if you will. And it continues. This weekend, by this last weekend, there were disaster recovery centers set up by FEMA in many of the towns, particularly those that were hardest hit. And I have to say that locally FEMA did a very good job. The people who came out and set up the disaster recovery centers or helped with the humanitarian needs, they really were excellent.

But I wanted to talk a little bit today, if I could, not that the humanitarian concerns have disappeared, because they haven't, I don't want to suggest that, but I wanted to talk a little bit about long-term needs, if I could, and take just a little bit of your time.

We met with the FEMA director this morning, and I talked essentially about four needs that we really need to address. One was what I call temporary housing. In other words, I want people to get out of the shelters and either be able to go back to their homes or some kind of temporary housing that would last them for a year or 18 months. We set up, and I think it should open by this weekend at Fort Monmouth, which is one of the military bases that was closed under BRAC, but we have identified at least 600 units I believe now where we can put people temporarily who lost their homes and can't go back to their home. But I talked to the FEMA director today about trying to get trailers in. And he said that was going to happen, but it hasn't happened yet, because many of the people right now are still living in a house that has no power and is not functional. But because it is not terribly cold, or hasn't been, they are able to stay there. Once it gets cold, they won't be able to and will have to go back to a shelter. And we want people to get out of these shelters.

So I'm hoping that not only will we have some housing at Fort Monmouth, but we can also supplement that and get some trailers in from FEMA that could actually be put in place on people's own property so they don't have to go to Fort Monmouth or elsewhere over the next year or 18 months. This is sort of the second stage, out of the shelter and into some temporary housing for a year or 18 months, and then back to your own house once it is repaired or rebuilt.

The second thing is that, and I think you were getting at it before, we have a lot of the beach replenishment and the dunes and the seawalls that were being used as protection. Some of my towns are actually below sea level, and if it wasn't for the seawall or the dunes or the beach replenishment, artificial beach replenishments that have been put in place, the loss would have been even worse. And now those are gone. Not completely, but in a town like Keansburg, New Jersey, the dune is gone. And in many towns along the Atlantic coast, the slope of the beach has gone down 6 or 7 feet, and so they don't have any protection anymore. Seawalls have been broken up.

I asked the Corps and FEMA today, the FEMA director, to give the Corps the go-ahead to do emergency work. Right now in Keansburg, for example, if you have another storm, not even a hurricane, since the dune is not there, the water will come right in, and you'll have the same problem again. So we got a positive response on that, but we need to find out when that is going to happen, when it's going to begin.

The third thing is the match. I have a lot of very small towns. Some of my towns have 1,000 people, 2,000 people. When you talk about long-term work on infrastructure, municipal or State infrastructure, there is a 25 percent match. We are trying to get that reduced or eliminated because the towns cannot afford that.

The last thing, many people have asked, and I'm sure we're going to have a debate, I have no doubt that these more severe and frequent storms are a consequence of global climate change. I have been around 60 years, and I've never seen a storm like this. Nobody has. They say it is the 500-year storm. I'm afraid, my colleagues, that the 500-year storm is now the 10-year storm. And the nor'easter that we would get every 20 years is going to happen every year. I hope not, but it certainly seems that way.

So we have to look at in some cases buy-outs. In other words, people have said, look, we can't do this every 2 or 3 years, so can we have the government buy our home. Well, there is no home, but what's left of it rather than rebuild—and in many areas if the homes could be lifted and put on a platform or piling, then maybe they could stay because the water would rush underneath. I also brought this up with the FEMA director, and he said there are programs at the Federal level that would accomplish that.

So we are now looking, and I'm not taking away from the humanitarian problem that still exists, it definitely does, but we have to look at some of these issues in terms of housing, rebuilding, and changes in the way we build over the long term.

I know that all of you and all of our colleagues, hopefully on a bipartisan basis, will be supportive of trying to get funding for all of these things. The FEMA director said for emergency purposes there is adequate funding at least until the spring. But when we talk about some of these long-term things, undoubtedly there will have to be some kind of an appropriation that we're going to have to pass here; and I hope and I pray that we're all going to work together to accomplish that.

Thank you for the time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much, Mr. PALLONE.

There is no part of this Nation that is immune from a natural disaster. The disasters will be different: tornadoes, superstorms, hurricanes, droughts, floods, and fires. The west coast, we talk earthquakes. You could talk

earthquakes on the east coast, and certainly the new Madrid fault in the central Missouri area ought to keep everybody a little bit nervous. So wherever it is around this Nation, the disasters could occur, and the response which you described is critically important, that is, the forewarning and then the response when the disaster actually hits.

But the preparation to put in place the infrastructure to best protect those critical parts of the communities, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ talked about the refineries which were badly damaged by the storm. There are certain things that can be done to protect them; and in doing so, you protect your power supplies, the grid systems, seawalls and the like. All of these things are critically important.

I remember last year I was on this floor with my colleague from the New York area who was deeply concerned about another storm that came through. Was it Irene, I believe, that came through the northeast and created significant damage. Mr. PAUL TONKO, you spoke with great skill and compassion about your citizens, their lessons learned, and things to share with us today.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Mr. GARAMENDI, for leading us in this very important hour of discussion.

As I listened to Representative PALONE speak about the disaster in his district and across the map of New Jersey and now into New York City and Long Island and great portions of New York State, it was shades of the not-so-distant past that came to mind. And we're still doing recovery from the storm of August, the flooding of Irene and Lee in August of 2011, which impacted my district severely. There were human lives that were lost, property that was damaged, homes that were swept away into the river. Everything for which people had ever worked taken from them. Drastic situations. So as we do our work here in Washington, we need to make certain that on this House floor there is advocacy for the response to these given situations.

Already the price tag is coming forth from the leadership back home. Governor Cuomo, for instance, suggesting the price, the impact has now steadily risen. At first snapshot, you cannot begin to comprehend all of the damage and all of the aspects and dynamics of recovery that will be required. And now we are looking at something like \$30 billion that impacts a State in a very severe way, disrupts service and electric power that is disrupted, commerce that's frozen in place, human misery that's incalculable where lives have been impacted forever by the forces of Sandy.

So, you know, this is a revisitation, so to speak, as we are still recovering. It was a fight on this floor to make certain that disaster aid moneys were brought into play so we could respond with compassion and dignity and integrity to these given situations.

□ 1350

So the lessons here are to go forward as we deal with this given fiscal issue at hand, to go forth with the priorities that are the most urgent and important and meaningful in putting back the fabric of these communities.

There is a need to work closely with an outlay of resources to FEMA, making certain that disaster aid is at the level that will be required here, working with other agencies that are as significant in the equation—the Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration—working with HUD, making certain that all of these various elements are addressed in our sense of advocacy here.

The human misery, again, is impacting. It is a situation that now brings to mind the fact that in upstate New York, and even in metro New York City and the Long Island area and in New Jersey, these are atypical situations for hurricanes to travel that far north. To have something in upstate New York do the sort of hurricane damage that we witnessed last year is not typical.

So the nomenclature of a “100-year storm” is just ludicrous. It doesn't speak to what's really happening. We've had several storms in a 20-year period that were dubbed 100-year storms. So right there, the logic and, again, the nomenclature is misrepresenting the facts at hand. We are getting more and more repeats here of situations from disasters driven by mother nature. And as Representative PALONE made mention, a 500-year storm is what they were dubbing the case to be in the 21st Congressional District that I now represent in the State of New York.

So there is a need here for us to be cognizant of those responses to disaster situations but also to look at the bigger, bigger public policy issue—that of the environment and that of climate change and global warming. We need to be cognizant of our stewardship over our planet. We need to make certain that if these data that are compiled are telling us that there is increased precipitation, for instance, over a given Catskill watershed in the area just south of my district, let's be aware of that. Let's know what's happening here, and let's respond accordingly to sound public policy as it relates to the environment and our stewardship of the environment, and let's be cognizant of the needs in responsiveness measure.

I know that you want to add to this discussion here, so I'll just say this. In a time where government perhaps has been hit hard by critics out there who are suggesting there's no role for the public sector here, we need to reduce government, I can tell you that people were addressing “the war room,” as they designated it, putting together all of the professionals and academics and people who operate these programs and are well trained. Watching that compilation, that collaborative effort of these professionals who are responding

through public sector employment to the needs of these given communities is powerful, and it speaks to what I think the public asks for and deserves—sound, effective government. But this option of “no government,” I know people were reaching out. They wanted that partnership because they were in such immense pain and were at a loss for how and where to move.

So, Representative GARAMENDI, thank you very much for bringing the focus to what should be our staunch advocacy for people in need.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Representative TONKO, once again, it's good to be with you on the floor, sadly reliving what you and I discussed here almost a year ago in response to Hurricane Irene and the devastation that occurred in your community.

It seems to me that there are many, many lessons to learn here, some of which I talked about before you came in. Certainly the ability to know well ahead of time what is coming.

We saw with Hurricane Sandy that NASA was able to anticipate, the Weather Service was able to anticipate the nature of the storm and where it was going. That ability to understand what is happening and what is likely to happen really comes from the support of the Federal Government appropriating money to those agencies and then directing those agencies to provide those services. This is something we need to keep in mind.

As we go through the deficit reductions that we must do, we must begin a prioritization of those things that are critical to the well-being—indeed, the lives—of Americans.

We also know that we are going to have to rebuild. Ms. VELÁZQUEZ was suggesting that it was going to cost some \$20 billion for New York City alone. And Mr. PALONE didn't give us a number, but we can anticipate billions for the New Jersey area. And then the areas in upstate New York and Pennsylvania with lesser numbers, fortunately. But nonetheless, it begins to add up to a huge amount of money. And some of the damage is not well known even today.

I was talking with representatives of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 500 of whom came from northern California to assist in New York, and we were talking about what those men and women were doing. They said, in the subway systems that were flooded, they were flooded with seawater. And the effect of salt on the electrical systems is—it's over. You've got to replace the entire electrical system. But not just to replace it, but to then anticipate that it could happen again, so to upgrade the entire infrastructure, to provide the protection that should it happen, you won't lose the entire subway system as has occurred in New York City.

So we need the infrastructure to be replaced but then also to be significantly enhanced. This is a very, very expensive proposition. It's also a way

in which people could go back to work and we could enhance the employment. We can do this. In fact, indeed, we must do it.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has said clearly that the infrastructure of America—not just New York City and New Jersey, but my own State of California, the flood control systems we have in our State are woefully inadequate, and they address it as a D. Fortunately, not an F. But not an A, not a B, not a C, but a D. So we know that we have extraordinary needs here.

The President, in his American Jobs Act, proposed a \$50 billion addition to what we normally do with our infrastructure, which is a lot, an additional \$50 billion to be spent in 2 to 3 years. That's a critical boost. And I know the cities I represent—the Sacramento area; Natomas area, one of the most dangerous places in America for flooding; Marysville and Yuba City; the delta, where I live—are all subject to flooding. We need to enhance our levees in order to protect ourselves, not from a 100-year, but from a 200-year storm, which is much more likely to occur.

We can pay for these things. This doesn't have to add to the deficit. For every dollar we put into infrastructure, we get \$2-plus back in economic growth. So it's actually an investment, a short-term and long-term investment that will last for years.

There's another thing that we have which is no longer authorized. Part of the Recovery Act, the stimulus bill, was the creation of Build America Bonds. The President proposed that as part of his infrastructure program, the Build America Bonds, which are called BABs—it took me a while to figure that one out. But BABs, Build America Bonds, are partly funded by the Federal Government and partly funded by the local agencies and had an enormous effect on enhancing infrastructure, sanitation systems, water systems in communities.

Let's talk a little bit about these kinds of things, the effect that they may have on your communities in New York, Pennsylvania, and others.

Mr. TONKO. Sure.

Well, absolutely, some of these programs are welcomed news. Two points I would make—and I would just like to go back for a moment to the sense of community that is expressed at times like these tragedies. It's not government as a stand-alone solution—we understand that—but it's an essential part, and we want effective government.

We also have had a private sector response and volunteerism. I mean, the sense of volunteerism, that sense of American spirit comes right into the core of all of this expression. And you begin to understand the greatness of this Nation through some of the darkest hours that we share. So that point has to be made clear.

But to your point about infrastructure improvement, infrastructure bank

bill, the transportation bill that provides for adequate amounts of resources, putting together these bonds that are unique in design so that we can have the resources to make it happen, I absolutely agree.

□ 1400

I contend that as we get impacted by some of the storm and Mother Nature occurrences, we need to make certain we've reached the facts. If data are telling us that we're going to have additional activity, two things need to happen. You need short-term and long-term response. You do not rebuild exactly as if you had. You need to retrofit that to the projected impacts of now a newer, stronger force of Mother Nature.

Secondly, we need that global policy. We need policy that speaks to the environmental outcomes. If we're ignoring that, we're going to see a hasty buildup, I believe, of some of these situations, which is only going to drain our budgets. So, it's time to be academic and to be economically wise and effective here.

I think that's what voters have asked for, that's what the electorate asked for, that's what the people of the country demand and deserve: a sound use of resources. To go forward and build it in a way that provides for a more improved, more effective outcome.

You look at some of this infrastructure, and it reminds you when it's taken away how significant it is to our quality of life and our profitability as a Nation. You know, a grid system that connects power to the sources that require it, a communications network that allows us to dialogue and build our profitability. The infrastructure that moves freight, our roads, bridges, highways. You talk about the damage done by salt-infested waters.

Again, it's incomprehensible about what that score goes to in terms of impact when you think of a subway system, rail system, energy generators, and all of the power supplies within the utility infrastructure and communications. It's just important for us to learn from these effects of the storms.

If we can put together concepts like an infrastructure bank, if we can put together the bond activities that will respond more compassionately and more effectively and more urgently to a given situation, then let's prioritize where we need to prioritize so as to make things happen.

The infrastructure needs—we've talked about them outside the context of the ravages of Mother Nature. Water and sewer systems that just need to be upgraded because of the age of some of these systems and the new technology that has been introduced where we can do it in energy efficiency formats where you save operating costs for local governments.

Now's the time, when you've taken this blow, perhaps we can then retrofit to do state-of-the-art that will mean less costly operating expenses for local

entities and NGOs, nongovernment organizations, that allows for everyone to win and the taxpayer dollar is stretched in positive, favorable terms to be a more effective outcome for everyone in the equation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You've raised some, I think, very, very important points.

These are not partisan issues. This is not Democratic or Republican. Over the years both parties have been champions of infrastructure investment, and both parties have been very clear about the need to respond to the disasters that have occurred.

We need to be ahead of this, and we need to work together. It's our responsibility, 435 of us here in the House of Representatives, as we end this session, we should be willing to step forward in the lame duck session, provide the resources that are needed immediately, if they are not now available, for the rebuilding, for the humanitarian efforts and the recovery that's necessary.

Then, we should, although I don't know that this would happen, we should take that step forward to put in place those programs that will create an infrastructure that will protect Americans from the occurrences that we know have happened and will happen in the future.

You've mentioned one that I think is very important, an infrastructure bank, together with the Build America Bonds, shifting unnecessary tax breaks from one industry back into others so that we can build. As we do this, as we do this rebuilding, as we do these infrastructures, it comes to my mind, something you and I have spent many days talking about here on the floor, is that we make it in America, that we use American-made equipment to build these projects, we use American-made equipment and supplies in the construction activities.

In doing so, we not only put in place the infrastructure, which is an investment for the long term, but we also build and rebuild the American manufacturing sector.

So we can have a win, and a win, and another win. So, we can have a triple win here if we are wise in putting our policies together.

I know that many of our colleagues on the Republican side have taken up these issues. We have time, 2 months now in this session, to deal with this. Obviously, we have the big deficit issue. But we also know that in that deficit issue, we cannot forget the immediate needs of America, and the long-term benefits that come from strategic investments.

I'll wrap with this, and then if you would care to call this a session.

I was flipping through the channels trying to find the latest news on the current scandal in Washington, and I came across, I think it must have been a PBS show on the Brooklyn Bridge. I think it was David McCullough who had written a book on the Brooklyn Bridge. And the 150th anniversary of

the Brooklyn Bridge is this year or maybe next year. It's in this period of time. It's a piece of infrastructure that has served New York City, and in a larger context, the Nation, for 150 years.

So, what we can do now as we rebuild New York, New Jersey, and the other areas, and, please, California also, as we protect ourselves from these natural disasters, we will put in place investments that will serve for multiple generations into the future.

Now, that's a capital investment with an enormous return, as the Brooklyn Bridge was 150 years ago.

So, we have these opportunities, and we ought to take advantage of them, not just for humanitarian reasons, but also for immediate jobs and long-term investments. That's our task. That's what we ought to be about. Not a Democrat, not a Republican idea, but a true American idea that goes way back to the very early ages of our country.

Mr. TONKO, if you'd care to wrap, we'll call this a day.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. Let me do this quickly.

I think we have it within our intellect to create the outcomes that are strong, that will reinforce those in need, and still go forward and address the critical economic times. I can tell you, because the memory is so fresh, people did not want to hear about offsets and Tea Party mentality when they were without last year. They lost everything for which they ever worked. They are endorsing, now, a balanced approach.

Take a scalpel to the situation. Don't wield an axe. Come up with sensitivity, with an effective response using academics. Deal with policy strengths in the long-term picture outcome, and get us our immediate assistance so we can rebuild and do it in cutting-edge fashion so we will have learned from this experience and come out even stronger.

I think in general, in a bigger picture framework, our best days lie ahead if we approach these issues with sound academics and with the skillfulness and the compassion required.

Thank you so much for leading us in this hour of discussion.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. TONKO, and I thank Mr. PALLONE and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

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

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DOLD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, this may be the last time I speak on the House floor. At the end of the year, I'll leave Congress after 23 years in office over a 36-year period. My goals in 1976 were the same as they are today: promote peace and prosperity by a strict adher-

ence to the principles of individual liberty.

It was my opinion that the course that the U.S. embarked on in the latter part of the 20th century would bring us a major financial crisis and engulf us in a foreign policy that would over-extend us and undermine our national security.

To achieve these goals I sought, the government would have had to shrink in size and scope, reduce spending, change the monetary system, and reject the unsustainable cost of policing the world and expanding the American Empire.

The problems seemed to be overwhelming and impossible to solve, yet from my viewpoint, just following the constraints placed on the Federal Government by the Constitution would have been a good place to start.

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Just how much did I accomplish? In many ways, according to conventional wisdom, my off-and-on career in Congress from 1976 to 2012 accomplished very little—no named legislation, no named Federal buildings or highways, thank goodness.

In spite of my efforts, the government has grown exponentially, taxes remain excessive, and the prolific increase of incomprehensible regulations continues. Wars are constant and pursued without congressional declaration, deficits rise to the sky, poverty is rampant, and dependency on the Federal Government is now worse than any time in our history. All this, with minimal concerns for the deficits and unfunded liabilities that common sense tells us cannot go on much longer.

A grand, but never mentioned, bipartisan agreement allows for the well-kept secret that keeps the spending going. One side doesn't give up one penny on military spending, the other side doesn't give up one penny on welfare spending, while both sides support the bailouts and the subsidies for the banking and the corporate elite. And the spending continues as the economy weakens and the downward spiral continues.

As the government continues fiddling around, our liberties and our wealth burn in the flames of a foreign policy that makes us less safe. The major stumbling block to real change in Washington is the total resistance to admitting that the country is broke. This has made compromising just to agree to increased spending inevitable since neither side has any intention on cutting spending.

The country and the Congress will remain divisive since there's no loot left to divvy up. Without this recognition, the spenders in Washington will continue to march toward a fiscal cliff much bigger than the one anticipated this coming January.

I've thought a lot about why those of us who believe in liberty as a solution have done so poorly in convincing others of its benefits. If liberty is what we

claim it is—the principle that protects all personal, social, and economic decisions necessary for maximum prosperity and the best chance for peace—it should be an easy sell. Yet history has shown that the masses have been quite receptive to the promises of authoritarians which are rarely, if ever, fulfilled.

Should we have authoritarianism or liberty? If authoritarianism leads to poverty and war and less freedom for all individuals and is controlled by rich special interests, the people should be begging for liberty. There certainly was a strong enough sentiment for more freedom at the time of our founding that motivated those who were willing to fight in the revolution against the powerful British Government.

During my time in Congress, the appetite for liberty has been quite weak, the understanding of its significance negligible. Yet the good news is that, compared to 1976 when I first came to Congress, the desire for more freedom and less government in 2012 is much greater and growing, especially in grassroots America. Tens of thousands of teenagers and college-age students are, with great enthusiasm, welcoming the message of liberty.

I have a few thoughts as to why the people of a country like ours, once the freest and most prosperous, allowed the conditions to deteriorate to the degree that they have. Freedom, private property, and enforceable voluntary contracts generate wealth. In our early history we were very much aware of this. But in the early part of the 20th century, our politicians promoted the notion that the tax and monetary system had to change if we were to involve ourselves in excessive domestic and military spending. That is why Congress gave us the Federal Reserve and the income tax.

The majority of Americans and many government officials agree that sacrificing some liberty was necessary to carry out what some claim to be "progressive" ideas. Pure democracy became acceptable. They failed to recognize that what they were doing was exactly opposite of what the colonists were seeking when they broke away from the British.

Some complain that my arguments make no sense, since great wealth and the standard of living improved for many Americans over the last hundred years, even with these new policies.

But the damage to the market economy and the currency has been insidious and steady. It took a long time to consume our wealth, destroy the currency, undermine productivity, and get our financial obligations to a point of no return. Confidence sometimes lasts longer than deserved. Most of our wealth today depends on debt.

The wealth that we enjoyed and seemed to be endless allowed concern for the principle of a free society to be neglected. As long as most people believed the material abundance would