

of that mission. Forty-six years ago, if the unthinkable occurred and the astronauts never made it back to Earth, President Nixon had a speech prepared to deliver to the Nation.

If the worst happened, the President would have said:

In ancient days, men looked at stars and saw their heroes in the constellations. In modern times, we do much the same, but our heroes are epic men of flesh and blood.

I was honored to meet the members of the Apollo 11 crew, including Neil Armstrong before he died. Indeed, these men were epic heroes of mine. Many of us grew up in an era where we were proud to be the Nation that sent men to the Moon, and we still are. Nothing can change that fateful decade of discovery coupled with frustration, trial coupled with error, all resulting in that historic world-changing mission.

I want our kids and grandkids to look back and be proud citizens of the Nation that made our Moon hospitable, sent astronauts to Mars, and keeps sending spacecraft past the outer reaches of our solar system. Renewed vigor in our country's space program will ensure we continue to make mankind-sized leaps for years to come.

CLOSURE OF COLOWYO COAL MINE

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

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, mines in Colorado's Third Congressional District provide not only critical jobs, they also provide the reliable, affordable electricity on which countless Americans rely.

The future of one such mine, operated by Colowyo in Moffat County, is now in jeopardy after a Federal judge sided with a radical environmental group notorious for filing lawsuits, at the expense of taxpayers who often end up footing their litigation bill.

I am urging the Department of the Interior to take swift action to prevent the impending closure of the Colowyo mine, and I want to thank Senator CORY GARDNER for his partnership in this effort.

On May 8, 2015, the Federal district court for the district of Colorado issued an order determining that the Office of Surface Mining failed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act in 2007, when it issued a mine plan for approval of the Colowyo coal mine.

The court gave OSM 120 days to be able to prepare a new analysis and issue a new decision. If OSM does not complete the process in 120 days, the court stated that it would vacate the mine plan, effectively shutting down the mine on September 6.

Unfortunately, despite repeated insistence from myself, Senator GARDNER, county officials, and the surrounding local communities, this administration decided against appealing the court's ruling.

We have to ask the question: Does not the executive branch have a duty

to defend its permitting actions? Of course, it does. The Federal Government must vigorously defend the legality of its permitting actions and leave policy debates over the role of coal in the legislative and rulemaking proceedings where those debates belong.

Here is where we stand as the September 6 deadline approaches. The livelihoods of thousands of northwest Coloradans are in peril, as they rely on an administration with a track record of attacks on the mining industry and affordable electricity to do the right thing. Unfortunately, this administration hasn't done much to allay our concerns.

A mine closure would jeopardize 220 direct jobs and millions in economic activity. While 220 jobs may not sound like much, to the town of Craig, population 9,400, that has a significant economic impact on this community.

To properly be able to understand the scale of this potential catastrophe, this is equivalent to the President's hometown of Chicago shedding 63,000 well-paying jobs.

The adverse effects of shutting down this mine go beyond the jobs at the mine that would be lost. Coal produced by this mine, located in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, is used to generate power at Craig Station. The mine is a critical supplier of western Colorado's energy. It provides reliable, affordable electricity in much of the western half of the State.

Last week, I attended a meeting to discuss the future of the Colowyo mine in Glenwood Springs with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell; Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze; and a number of western Colorado community leaders, including Moffat County Commissioner John Kinkaid and Craig Mayor Ray Beck.

While it would have been preferable for the Secretary to make time to be able to meet with the miners in Moffat County who are facing the loss of their livelihood, look them in the eye, and hear their stories, she did meet with this group; and I hope that she received a better understanding of the important impact of the Colowyo mine on the impact of the economy in northwest Colorado.

I was pleased to be able to hear Secretary Jewell assure us before the meeting that the Department of the Interior is on schedule to be able to complete a new environmental assessment by the court's deadline of September 6; and, if for some reason they fail to meet that schedule, they will request an extension.

I hope the Secretary realizes that the decisions made in Washington have lasting impacts on everyday working Americans. Unfortunately, we have seen repeated attempts by this administration to impose drastic and, in some cases, outright unattainable mandates on the existing electricity sources.

Communities such as Craig have expressed concerns that these proposed

regulations will work to the detriment of the local economies by shutting down local power plants, negatively affecting Colorado's mining industry, and needlessly burdening Coloradan families and businesses with higher energy costs; yet here we are on the cusp of leaving over 220 honest, hard-working people without a paycheck.

This battle offers a vivid and all too familiar lesson in how environmental special interests, if not balanced against the practical need for a healthy and growing economy, can wreak havoc in the everyday lives of Coloradans. The careful balance between environmental protection and economic prosperity is regrettably missing from this administration's policies.

The most troubling part of all of this is that the effects of these misguided regulations won't actually result in cleaner air overall, but will jeopardize the reliability of the electrical grid and have a severe economic impact.

The people of Moffat County are the people who are feeling these impacts. The people of Moffat County need to know that they are not alone in this effort. I am committed to doing everything within my power to be able to fight for affordable, reliable, and responsible energy production.

COAL ASH WASTE DISPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House will consider dangerous legislation on coal ash that will put communities and families in New Jersey in danger. We need strong Federal regulation on coal ash waste. Poor management practices in States like Pennsylvania and New York that border New Jersey affect my constituents' lives.

The Delaware River provides drinking water to one-third of New Jersey's municipalities. In 2005, Martins Creek Power Plant in Pennsylvania spilled 100 million gallons of coal ash across 10 acres into the Delaware, contaminating that drinking water with arsenic. Towns surrounding the Delaware, towns that depend on the river for the fishing and recreational activity that drives their economies were devastated.

In New York, the EPA found that coal ash from a power station had contaminated groundwater with iron, selenium, manganese, aluminum, and at least 10 other dangerous chemicals.

H.R. 1734 not only fails to protect communities from toxic pollution, it undermines legitimate efforts to protect our communities.

I urge my colleagues to vote against it. All of our constituents deserve better.

AUDIT THE FED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, few institutions are as powerful and as secretive as the Federal Reserve.

The Federal Reserve's monetary policy impacts the prices every American pays at the grocery store; the ability of businesses to obtain the capital necessary to create new jobs; and the value of investments the average American relies on to provide for their families, educate their children, and enjoy a secure retirement.

Despite the Fed's enormous power, Congress continues to allow the Fed to conduct monetary policy in secret. While the Government Accountability Office is allowed to perform limited audits of the Fed, it is forbidden by law from auditing. In other words, the Congress has forbidden the Government Accountability Office from examining how the Fed conducts monetary policy, its most important function.

Allowing the Fed to conduct monetary policy in secret is a failure of Congress' duty to carry out meaningful oversight of the Federal Reserve. Congress and the people we represent deserve to know the full truth about the Federal Reserve.

□ 1100

This is why one of my first acts upon coming to this House was to cosponsor the Federal Reserve Transparency Act, H.R. 24, introduced by my friend THOMAS MASSIE of Kentucky.

This simple two-page bill authorizes a full audit of the Fed's monetary functions and is popularly known as "Audit the Fed."

The passage of this bill will allow the American people to finally get a better picture of the Fed's operations, including its dealings with large financial institutions and foreign central banks.

Contrary to the claims of the Fed and its supporters, nothing in this bill gives Congress any new authority over the Federal Reserve.

It simply allows Congress to get a retrospective look at how the Fed carries out monetary policy so that Congress and the people can fully understand, evaluate, and oversee the Fed's actions.

Audit the Fed has twice passed the House by overwhelming majorities and is supported by almost 80 percent of the American people. Yet, former Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID blocked the bill from coming to the floor for a vote in the U.S. Senate.

Senator REID's replacement as majority leader, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, is a cosponsor of S. 264, the Senate version of Audit the Fed, which has been introduced by Kentucky Senator RAND PAUL.

It is finally time for a vote in the U.S. Senate as well. The passage of Audit the Fed is more important than ever, given the Federal Reserve's actions since the 2008 financial crisis.

Following the financial meltdown, the Fed commenced an unprecedented

program of trillion-dollar bailouts for Wall Street. The Fed's poor track record over the past decade is not an irregularity.

Since the Fed's creation, the dollar has lost 97 percent of its purchasing power. Allowing the Federal Reserve to continue operating in secrecy may benefit certain well-placed individuals, but it has not benefited my constituents in West Virginia.

It is time to bring transparency to monetary policy. It is time to tear down the Fed's wall of secrecy. It is time to audit the Fed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Thank You, O Lord, our God, for giving us another day.

You are the provident guide of our Nation's history, and we ask You to guide, protect, and strengthen the United States House of Representatives during this first session of the 114th Congress.

Help these duly elected Representatives of the people be about the work of the people. Make this democratic Republic strong, that it may be Your fit instrument to unite the natural and human resources of this Nation, that Your people may live ordered lives under the law and in harmony with others—and so be a beacon of hope for the world.

In You and from You we draw our inspiration and creativity. In You and from You, O Lord, we find lasting peace and universal justice. May all that is done within the people's House this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GUN GRAB THROUGH SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, President Obama is at it again. He is now seeking to deny millions of law-abiding Americans their Second Amendment right to bear arms by going through Social Security.

And why is that? Because he couldn't get gun control through the Congress. The American people wouldn't stand for it.

Mr. Speaker, old age or a disability does not make someone a threat to society. These folks should be able to defend themselves, just like everyone else.

As chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee and a staunch defender of the Second Amendment, I will do everything in my power to stop this gun grab. Yesterday I ordered the Commissioner of Social Security to stand down and abandon any such plan.

Mark my words: Americans' Second Amendment rights must and will be protected.

AUTHORIZATION INCREASE FOR SMALL BUSINESS 7(A) LOAN PROGRAM

(Ms. JUDY CHU of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I am here to ring the alarm bell on the pending expiration of a very important program next week.

It is the Small Business Administration's flagship 7(a) loan program, which