Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS OPPOSING THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED $10 TAX ON EVERY BARREL OF OIL

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 767, I call up the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 112) expressing the sense of Congress opposing the President's proposed $10 tax on every barrel of oil, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 767, the concurrent resolution is considered read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 112

Whereas raising revenue and spending money are powers reserved to Congress by the Constitution;

Whereas according to global economists, the United States oil and gas industry is currently experiencing the worst industry decline since similar commodity price collapses in the 1980s and 1990s forced oil companies to slash payrolls and dividends;

Whereas global oil production exceeds demand by more than one million barrels a day, and Iran has promised to provide an additional 500,000 barrels a day to the world market, now that several sanctions have been lifted after the recent implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action;

Whereas the price of a barrel of oil is currently around $30, less than a third of the $90-plus it was selling for 18 months ago; which would mean the President's proposal would be equivalent to a 33.3 percent tax, making the United States Federal excise tax on oil the highest of any domestic product;

Whereas this tax could translate into as much as an additional 25 cents on a gallon of gas, when the Federal tax on gasoline is currently 18.40 cents per gallon;

Whereas the oil and gas industry accounts for significant employment and is an even more significant driver of investment spending and growth along the supply chain, ranging from aggregates to steelmaking and specialist equipment;

Whereas more than 258,000 people employed in oil and gas extraction and support activities globally, including more than 100,000 across the United States, have lost their jobs since October 2014;

Whereas every lost oil and gas job leads to an additional 3.43 jobs cut in other sectors;

Whereas that means the 114,000 job losses in the oil and gas sector wiped out an additional 391,000 jobs in other sectors last year and sliced economic growth to about 2.1 percent from 2.6 percent;

Whereas more layoffs are virtually certain in the months ahead in oil and gas production, as well as along the supply chain and in petroleum-dependent economies, as the continued price slump filters through to even less drilling activity;

Whereas the number of rigs drilling for oil and gas has fallen from over 1,900 in October 2014, to 744 at the end of November 2015, and just 619 at the end of January 2016, according to oilfield services firm Baker Hughes;

Whereas manufacturers, for example, announced 37,221 layoffs in the past 12 months;

Whereas shipments of steel in the United States—used to make oil and gas pipelines—were down 11.4 percent through the first 11 months of 2015 and the industry announced more than 12,000 layoffs during the past year, according to the American Steel and Iron Institute;

Whereas believing that oil companies will pay the fee with no effect on consumer prices requires also believing that the producers won't pass their increased cost on to refiners, who won't in turn pass their costs on to the public; in other words, requires suspending belief in basic economics;

Whereas this tax could also put American oil companies, at a competitive disadvantage with foreign oil companies, as imported oil may not face the same treatment;

Whereas the domestic midstream and downstream stages of oil and gas production will be at a competitive disadvantage to their global competitors due to a $10 higher cost for every barrel of oil;

Whereas in combination with a stronger dollar, slowing growth in international markets, and an overaccumulation of inventories through much of the economy, the oil slump is creating headwinds for manufacturers, freight firms, and the wider economy; and

Whereas the oil and natural gas industry anchors our economy in terms of jobs, economic activity, and even State and local tax revenue in a challenging price environment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress finds that—

(1) any new tax placed on the struggling oil and gas industry will further prevent growth and development throughout the sector and encourage additional layoffs; and

(2) the effect of a $10 tax on each barrel of oil sold in the United States—

(A) would raise the price of oil, and by extension gasoline; and

(B) would result in a decrease in the consumption of oil.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a new tax should not be placed on oil, and

(2) in considering future policy, Congress should carefully review the detrimental impacts of placing any new taxes on any industry that has seen a slash in jobs, revenue, and production.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H. Con. Res. 112, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Obama administration, in its budget proposal, proposed a $10.25 tax on each barrel of oil. This will severely harm America's already struggling energy industry, but it will have a very detrimental impact throughout the American economy, and that is why I introduced H. Con. Res. 112, sending a very clear message that Congress and the American people refuse to allow this administration to fund an environmental agenda on the backs of working families.

It is pretty simple. At $10.25 per barrel of oil, this increase would not only add significantly to the cost of a gallon of gasoline at the pump, certainly disproportionately hurting fixed-income families, seniors, and so forth, it would also have a detrimental impact on job creation, on wages, and on the Nation's overall economic health.

This also would effectively act as an export tax on oil, just as we opened up the door to export crude oil to allow American producers to have market access worldwide, just like our Iranian opponents worldwide currently have the luxury to do.

Why would we tie up the hands of American energy producers and allow the Iranians and OPEC to dominate world markets? Wrong.

Secondly, at a time when, in Louisiana and Texas and other States on the coast, we understand how important our environment, our economy and energy policies are, we are looking to use revenue sharing to help us rebuild coastline and marsh and replenish our beaches, the administration opposes this. They have listed that in their budget proposal.

This tax is a tax on hardworking American families. It is a tax on American competitiveness; it is a tax on American innovation; it is a tax on our energy security; and it is a tax on the very foundation of our national security.

Now, the oil and gas industry has watched as market conditions have changed because of slow growth globally—low demand and abundant supply thanks to American innovation, largely. We have seen the oil price drop from $115 a barrel in November of 2014 to as low as $27 a barrel in January 2016. Right now, prices are hovering around $48, $49, $50 a barrel. This industry is struggling. This is the industry that took us out of recession with job creation and economic growth.

Now, I know in my home State of Louisiana, just last year, we lost 11,700 jobs alone in Louisiana in the oil and gas sector, 5,500 in my hometown of Lafayette alone. Even worse, globally, over 250,000 people have lost their jobs.

Of course, if you look at what happened in the first quarter of this year, the revised statistics on economic growth, 0.8 percent. How is American business going to create value and jobs with that kind of growth, that kind of private sector growth?

Not only that, just last week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics release showed

38,000 jobs created last month, the worst number since 2010. That is a terrible statistic, with real human dimensions.

This tax will make it worse if it were to go forward. In fact, the Tax Foundation created an economic model to show the impact of a $10.25-per-barrel tax over 10 years; and what this would do, if implemented, an estimated 137,000 Americans in full-time employment in this sector would lose their jobs.

It is important to remember that oil is used for a lot more than just gasoline in our automobiles. The U.S. Energy Information Administration points out that a quarter of a barrel of crude—a quarter of each barrel of crude oil—is used for nonfuel goods such as plastic, asphalt, dyes, lubricants, power plants, home heating, and other nontransportation uses. In fact, products throughout the American economy have, as their base ingredient, these fossil fuel ingredients. This tax, $10.25, will be passed on to those industries and consumers across this country.

The oil and gas industry supports more than 9 million American jobs, and what happens through this industry and within this industry reverberates throughout our entire U.S. economy.

But it is also important to look at what this proposal would do as we view it through a national security lens.

American innovation, the energy renaissance we saw with shale exploration and hydraulic fracturing, horizontal drilling, as well as new deepwater technology and better assessments of our reserves, has given us this tremendous opportunity to change global energy security away from an OPEC- or Russian-driven model, where state-owned enterprises control pricing and control supply, to an American view of energy security, which our allies desperately want. It is a view of energy security with diversity of supply sources, transparent pricing, open markets, a view of energy security globally, uniquely American, that would help economic growth globally and help so many countries that are struggling today, many currently in recession.

But energy security is linked to our national security, and we have an opportunity to create a Western Hemisphere energy trading bloc based on these principles rather than an OPEC or a Russian model. This is an opportunity for America to change not only energy security, but the entire national security environment in a more pro-American way. This tax would really be a stab in the heart of that. It is the wrong thing to do.

And, of course, this tax would increase the cost of domestic production, translating into higher prices for oil and all petroleum products, potentially eroding America's price competitiveness in the global marketplace.

If the purpose of this proposal was to increase revenue, then I would say that the President should be, instead, pursuing sound energy policies consisting of embracing this energy sector, American energy production, one of the clearest examples of American exceptionalism, not an unfettered drastic tax increase.

If you want to build roads, we need economic growth and sensible tax policies that will help us build out our transportation.

According to a report released by the American Petroleum Institute, our energy producers could create 1 million new jobs in just 7 years and increase revenue to Federal and State governments by $800 billion by 2030 if we allow this energy sector to do its work responsibly.

It is time for our Nation to fully embrace the vast opportunities unleashed by this U.S. energy renaissance. Let's embrace this new era of abundance. Let's embrace this new era of energy diplomacy that puts America in a strong position.

It is time for the President to stop his relentless tax and regulatory assault on the oil and gas industry that is only worsening our economic problems. This resolution shows very clearly that Congress stands for job creation over a radical political agenda, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans don't like the President's budget proposal. They have never been able to bring their own to the floor—never.

They talk about economic growth and jobs. This administration has a proud record of creating jobs. They haven't done all we want, but they are successful in important respects.

This administration has had an energy policy that has really been working well, as can be seen by what has happened. There remain problems with it, and we will have some debate about where we go in the future.

The problem is that the Republicans start from a premise that is grievously wrong. They are in denial of climate change, and everything they do relating to energy stems from that. They are out of step with the American people.

A recent Gallup Poll showed this: 64 percent of Americans are worried a great deal or a fair amount about global warming. Fifty-nine percent of Americans say the effects of global warming have already begun. Only 10 percent of Americans say the effects of global warming will never happen—only 10 percent. Sixty-five percent of Americans, according to this Gallup Poll of recent times, say our planet's temperature increases over the last 100 years are primarily caused by human activities rather than natural causes.

□ 1030

But what do we hear from the now-leading Republican?

Well, going back a few years, this is what he had to say: ''The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing noncompetitive.''

That was 4 years ago, more or less.

Now the same person, who is now leading the Republican Party, says this: ''I am not a great believer in man-made climate change.'' ''If you look, they had global cooling in the 1920s, and now they have global warming, although now they don't know if they have global warming.''

So we have today, from the Republican majority, our two sense of Congress resolutions. What is really needed instead is for the Republican Party to come to their senses on climate change, like the vast majority of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), one of our many Members—but this person in particular—who has devoted so much of his deep intelligence and his energy to this issue, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman be allowed to control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan.

There was no objection.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), a very important member of the House Ways and Means Committee and someone who has extensive private sector experience.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank my colleague, Dr. BOUSTANY.

Mr. Speaker, again, before we came on to the floor, we were in the Cloakroom talking about what the debate was going to be. And I thought the debate was going to be about what was actually happening today, and not a scientific debate, not a debate about what people believe or what they don't believe, but on the reality that the President proposed a $10 tax on a barrel of oil. That comes out to 25 cents per gallon at the pump.

Now, what do I mean by that? What I am talking about is, when hard-working American taxpayers go to fill up their car or their truck, it is going to cost them 25 cents more per gallon. It also translates into everything that they put on their backs, that they put in their mouths. Every aspect of life is going to be increased.

Now, keep in mind that, while there may be some kind of science that we want to turn this debate into, here are the facts: middle-income Americans and lower-income Americans have seen a drop in their wages—a significant drop in their wages. Last month, we saw that we have created one job for every 8,000 Americans.

So we talk about today how we need to talk about climate change. No. Here is what we need to talk about: we need to talk about real change in the marketplace. We need to talk about how we are hurting the American economy. We need to talk about how we are eliminating the ability of America to compete in a global economy—an economy that I just don't want to participate in but I think America should dominate.

America is so blessed with so many assets. And while we worry about all the energy above, let's not forget all the energy below. Let's not forget what America's strongest card is to play, and that is energy self-sustainability. We are able to do that.

Why in the world would anybody think that by adding $10 on a barrel of oil, somehow that is going to help the climate worldwide, when we know that we are the only ones proposing this? Other people around the world are looking and saying: I can't agree more with the President's ideas because we compete against the United States, and I would love to be on the shelf with a product that costs more than the one we are putting on the shelf.

So America is hurting America. America's policies are hurting everyday Americans. And if we truly want to make America great again, let's make America great again for every single American. That is not a political aspiration; that is a responsibility in America's House, and that is the House of Representatives.

Our sense that somehow this would be positive is absolutely wrongheaded and wrong thinking. It just doesn't work that way.

Why would we sit here and debate this today? Because we know it is going to hurt every single hard-working American taxpayer. It is going to add to our cost of living. It is going to increase the cost of everything we consume. We are going to do it with the idea that somehow, the rest of the world will follow suit, and we know that they won't.

What they will do is look at us and say: You know what? Let's take advantage of America's wrong-headedness. Let's make sure that we are able to buy up more of the market, the global market, because America continues to hurt itself and hurt its everyday citizens.

My goodness. This is America's House of Representatives. We do not come here representing ourselves—we come here representing 705,687 Americans who live back in our districts. We do not come here just representing Republican policy and Republican agenda. We do not just come here representing Democrat policy and Democrat agenda. We come here representing America. And if we cannot get it through our heads that, at the end of the day, the policy that comes out of this town—a town that is a awash in prosperity, good jobs, great restaurants.

I have never seen a town with more cranes in it. I am talking about industrial cranes. I would love some of my colleagues to walk back home with me and go into the cities, the towns, and the little villages that I represent. And you tell those people: things are really getting good; we are on the right stage; we are on the right trajectory; that we are going to become good again. But the question is: When?

I would just suggest that—and I said this earlier—you cannot continue to put the burden of these policies—well-intended, though they may be—on the backs of hardworking American taxpayers, men and women who get up every day with one resolve and one resolve only, and that is to take care of their families, to build a better community, and to build a better life.

Why in the world do we have to waste time debating something today that could be debated elsewhere? But we come here today with a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President's ideas in his budget are absolutely wrong for every single American.

We can debate these things later. But we have to come to agreement at some point here, that we just don't represent our parties—we represent people. That is far more important than any party that we represent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman.

Look, I have only been here 5 years. But I come out of the private sector. I never, ever thought I would be serving in Congress because I never, ever thought I would have to. I thought people would come here representing me and my family; my community, my State, and my Nation; and that they would do the right thing. And I don't say that they don't think they are doing the right thing. But at the end of the day, the final results don't look very good.

In a Nation that is quickly approaching $20 trillion in debt and burdening every single American taxpayer with more and more cost of being here while not increasing their opportunity, I think we need to take a hard look, take a look in the mirror and understand that it all changes, it all starts with each of us. We can change this. We can make it better. But we can't make it better by putting a heavy burden on our taxpayers. It just doesn't make sense.

As I said earlier, America can dominate a global economy. Just participating isn't enough. I would just suggest that that is all possible in a land that has been so graced by gifts from God that make it possible for us to do that. The only thing that can keep it from happening are policies coming out of Washington, D.C.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I always enjoy sharing the debate with my good friend from Butler, Pennsylvania, who cares passionately about this country. He has some, I think, great ideas. We often find areas that we can agree. I think even the issue that we are debating today could be an area where we could find agreement, because what the President is proposing is not to levy a fee and have the money burned up. The President is proposing a fee to fix America's damaged infrastructure.

I know my friend from Butler cares passionately about the people who he represents. They are paying a tax today for poor infrastructure. The average American pays three times with annual damage to their cars than what this fee would be, if it were translated directly to a gas tax increase.

I note that his State of Pennsylvania actually has imposed an oil franchise fee which is the equivalent of about another 9.5 cent increase. Pennsylvania did that because their infrastructure is damaged.

Well, that is what we should have as part of this discussion today. Again, we have a cartoon proposal that assumes that there is just a barrel fee that is just a burden on the American public and not look at what the fee is for, what benefits would accrue if, again, we had actually had the Ways and Means Committee meet and discuss the legislation that was referred to us. We didn't have a hearing on this.

One of the things I have pleaded with Ways and Means leadership for as long as I have been on the committee: Let's sit down and actually have meaningful discussions with the men and women who manage, design, build, and operate America's infrastructure. If we would have had that debate in this Congress, we could have had arrayed before us the president of the AFL–CIO, the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the president—actually, we did have the president of the American Trucking Association, the one witness the Democrats were allowed, who said: Raise the tax on my people, along with everybody else, to rebuild and renew America.

But we never had a robust, broad debate before our committee. If we did, we would have had the broadest coalition of any major issue that we considered: the people who design roads, the people who come forward with the asphalt, and the people who are the delivery services.

We are paying a tremendous price today because America is falling apart and falling behind. You don't have to go very far to ask people in Louisiana; Portland, Oregon; or Houston, Texas, if we have got a problem. This is an investment that more than pays for itself. Again, this isn't money down some rat hole. This is money that would be invested to rebuild and renew America.

If we would have had a real hearing on this proposal—which we didn't—we could have had the people from Standard & Poor's research come in and review their report. Every $1.2 billion we spend on infrastructure creates $2 billion of economic activity. These are the people who would have family-wage jobs from coast to coast who would help revitalize local economies, while we make our infrastructure safer and more effective.

And it isn't just economic activity. That Standard & Poor's report would have revealed that that $1.2 billion in infrastructure would have reduced the deficit by $200 million, but we didn't have that debate. So we have people coming up here on the floor somehow claiming that the President's responsible proposal to fund infrastructure would be an economic disaster, ignoring the fact that we have an infrastructure crisis in this country right now.

The American Society of Civil Engineers points out that our failure to deal with this is a tax of over $3,000 per family.

If we would be honest, have independent experts, if the committee would do its job, we wouldn't be having bizarre debates like this that suggest that the President's proposal would hurt the economy or would be costly. To the contrary, it would strengthen the economy, put millions of people to work at family-wage jobs, and improve the conditions of families from coast to coast.

We are going to have, I hope, more heard about this in the future. But I hope that we don't have proposals that are rushed to the floor without thoughtful committee action and making strange assertions that simply are not supported by facts.

□ 1045

If we impose the fee that the President is talking about to rebuild and renew America, it will create more economic activity, it will put people to work, and it will give Americans the infrastructure they deserve and enhance our economic security at home and abroad.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to respond to something before I yield to my colleague.

Let me just say that I appreciate the gentleman's passion for transportation infrastructure. I share it. We have had many conversations. But he well knows that the ideal way to solve this is with a specific user fee for that purpose.

This particular tax, $10.25 on a barrel of oil, has such a huge detrimental economic impact across all sectors of our economy. That is not the way to go. That is why I don't think this is something we should entertain as the President has proposed. I think we need thoughtful discussion about this, and that will come in due time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and someone I have great respect for.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding, and I appreciate him bringing this up.

Mr. Speaker, I really regret the fact that this has devolved into a big partisan debate or a big partisan discussion.

Everyone in this Chamber supports the concept of infrastructure investment. That is not what this is about. That is not what this is about. All of us support infrastructure investment, and all of us agree that we have underfunded infrastructure, that we need more investment in infrastructure.

In my home State, in Baton Rouge, in the capital region, we have the worst traffic in the Nation for a midsize city. Our people sit in traffic an average of 47 hours above the national average at home. It is ridiculous.

Here is what is going on right now. Here is what is going on. The gas tax was set up to be a user fee. It was set up to be a user fee that the more you drove, the more you used the roads, the more you paid for it. That is the way that this is supposed to work.

What has happened is that the President has come out and offered a proposal that disconnects the user fee. We support a user fee model. We support lock-boxing the dollars and making sure that they are dedicated to infrastructure as opposed to what has happened, for example, another issue that the sponsor of this legislation has worked on—the harbor maintenance trust fund—where billions of dollars have been charged on the auspices of one thing and diverted to something else. We support infrastructure investment.

Now, what is going on right now is we are seeing this continuation of policies out of this administration that is contrary to American interests, and I want to explain that.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Oregon State probably—and I haven't verified this—but probably depended upon the State of Louisiana, one of the top producers of oil and gas in this country, to power their cars, to power their vehicles, and to power their airplanes that they fly back and forth from Washington, D.C., to the West Coast. We provide that. But at home, in our State of Louisiana, we have lost one-third of our oil and gas jobs. We are killing this industry because of overregulation.

Something that just shocks me is, last year, we listened to the Secretary of State, John Kerry, stand up and say: We need to allow Iran to export their oil so their economy can recover. Our Secretary of State said that. Yet, at the same time, at home, in Louisiana, we were prohibited from exporting our oil.

Why in the world would we treat Iran better than Louisiana, better than Texas, better than Oklahoma, and all of these energy-producing States across the United States?

So do you know what we did? After opposition from the White House, we finally lifted the 40-year-old oil export ban. So what happens? Within a month and a half, we get a proposal from the President to put a $10.25-a-barrel tax on American oil.

What does that do? If we try and take our oil out to global markets, we are immediately met with a premium of 30 to 40 percent over global prices. It further kills our industry. It further kills our domestic production that we have lost one-third of the jobs on. And I know everybody wants to see us fly solar airplanes. It is not happening right now. We need to continue to rely on these fuels moving forward.

This should not be a partisan debate. We support infrastructure investment. It needs to continue to be a user fee. We should not divorce it from a user fee, and we should not do it in a way that is going to kill our energy industry in the United States to further increase our reliance upon foreign energy sources.

It is a flawed policy. This is consistent with what we saw last year when the President of the United States was standing up and saying, ''Give us free trade authority. We need the ability to engage in free trade because we can outcompete other countries,'' and, at the exact same time, standing up and overregulating our economy to where we send American workers out there in the workforce trying to compete with these other countries with our arms tied behind our back. These policies aren't consistent, and they are not in the interest of the United States.

I agree with the gentleman from Oregon; we need to work together. We need to work together in a bipartisan manner to come up with a new user fee concept to get us additional dollars for infrastructure.

This was a unilateral proposal. This was not subject to hearings, and it is not appropriate. It is contrary to our economy; it is contrary to American interests; and it is going to increase our trade deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge that we support this legislation and that we move forward in a bipartisan manner to fix the user fee concept to increase the investment in infrastructure to where we can improve our roadways.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend from Louisiana and his assessment. Actually, I agree with him. We should have a different mechanism.

I have had proposals to have different approaches to funding infrastructure. Some of them have been embedded in the more recent transportation reauthorization, but this is something that we never took up in our Ways and Means Committee. I have had legislation there for several Congresses. It is time for people to stop saying that they support infrastructure and then not work with us to figure out ways to fund it going forward.

Mr. Speaker, there is nobody in Congress in my tenure who has done more to think about what we do for America's infrastructure. He has had many innovative proposals to fund infrastructure. He has been a tireless champion of it. He is the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Those watching or listening might be a little confused what this is about. It is about a meaningless piece of paper. It is called House Concurrent Resolution 112. It is expressing the sense of Congress that something that the President proposed is bad and they don't like it.

Well, he proposed it and they are not going to take it up. Why are we wasting time debating something that they are not going to put on the schedule and isn't a reality? I don't know. Because they are trying to fill up time? It is not clear to me.

What they are doing is continuing to avoid the discussion of how we are going to pay for America's infrastructure. Dwight David Eisenhower said, Let's have a user fee, a gas tax. The last time we increased the gas tax federally was 1993—18.4 cents a gallon. That figured out to be about 15 percent of every gallon you bought. I paid $2.50 a gallon in Oregon last weekend. The Federal tax is still 18.4 cents. That is about 7 percent per gallon, and those dollars are worth less.

We are talking about what it is going to do to jobs if we have some sort of tax on oil that we use to pay for infrastructure. Let's talk about the other side where we can create one heck of a lot of jobs. Every penny for a gas tax, every penny, raises about $1.7 billion for the Federal trust fund. $1.7 billion, under the most conservative estimates, most conservative, is more than 25,000 jobs. So one penny, 25,000 jobs. But, no, we can't go there.

I proposed we index the existing gas tax to inflation. No, we can't do that. All right. Didn't want to do that.

I proposed that we tax the fraction of a barrel of oil that goes into taxable transportation uses, not manufacturing, not agriculture, not any of this other stuff that they are talking about. I put that proposal forward 7 years ago. I put it forward to my colleagues and to the White House. Now, the White House has burped out something different here—this more indiscriminate tax—which would go to other uses.

The point is that there are thoughtful ways to approach this and pay for what we need. America is falling apart. 140,000 bridges nationwide—including the highest proportion in the State of Pennsylvania, by the way, which we heard from earlier—are in need of replacement or significant repair. Trucks are detouring around them. People are being detoured around them.

There are potholed roads. Forty percent of the national highway system needs not just to be resurfaced, it needs to be dug up it has failed so badly. People are breaking their rims, blowing out tires, and damaging their cars. It is costing Americans a lot. People are locked in congestion because we are not dealing with the growth in traffic.

And, oh, let's just look out just a little way outside the capital here to the worst example. We are killing people, killing people, on our transit systems unnecessarily because Congress has failed to partner with the cities of America and the rural areas who have transit. We have an $84 billion backlog to bring transit up to a state of good repair, not new transit options to get people out of their cars and help them deal with congestion to get around. $84 billion just so we are not killing people.

And we are talking about, oh, we can't be competitive. Yeah, we are not competitive in the world economy. I go around talking about how we are now degraded. We used to have an infrastructure that was the envy of the world.

And I talked about how we are becoming Third World. My colleague from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) criticized me very, very adamantly about that one day. I said, What do you mean, EARL, you know how bad it is? He said, No, no, that is insulting to Third World countries. They are investing a larger percentage of their gross domestic product in infrastructure than we are here in the United States of America. And that is true. So now I have taken to calling us Fourth World.

We used to be the world's leader in infrastructure, and now we are vaulting over everybody, including places like Zimbabwe, to the back of the pack. Give me a break.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. And where is the discussion? It is no, no, no. No, can't have a barrel tax. No, can't increase the gas tax. No, can't index the gas tax.

Oh, but we want to talk about a user fee. What user fee? Why are we wasting time on this? You are not going to bring it up. You are in charge. You set the agenda. Why are we passing a bill to say we are not going to take something up?

I would be kind of embarrassed if I was in the majority and that is what I was wasting time on while people are trapped in traffic, while people are dying, because we can't maintain our transit systems. People are blowing out tires because we can't repair the roads.

And, oh, we are all for infrastructure until it comes to paying for it. We passed a 5-year bill. We paid for it with phony money. We pretended that when we have private tax collection, that it will make money—private tax collection. Republicans have passed that twice before. It kind of pissed off the American people. And guess what, it lost money each time, and then we put it back in the IRS.

But, no, this time it is going to make money and we are going to use it and pay for infrastructure. Give me a break. And the Federal Reserve makes that money and puts it in a reserve account with a computer. Let's take that money and spend it.

Basically, you are just averting the real problem here, which is we need to have a serious discussion about how we are going to pay to build America's infrastructure and become a world leader again and be the envy of the world again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members of the House to refrain from vulgarity in debate.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER), my friend and colleague from across the Potomac River, who cares a great deal about environmental policy and infrastructure.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution and add my strong opposition to the resolution before, also.

As I read the text of H. Con. Res. 89, whereas by whereas, I found myself in disagreement with virtually every alleged predictive statement. This resolution is framed as long-term economic wisdom, yet exemplifies short-term thinking and economic folly.

A carbon tax should, in fact, increase the cost of fossil fuels, but will also accelerate the rapidly falling cost of all other fuels: solar, wind, geothermal, hydro, and perhaps even nuclear.

A carbon tax absolutely must not fall hardest on the poor, the elderly, and those with fixed incomes. The best of the carbon tax plans, Representative VAN HOLLEN's carbon cap and economic dividend, returns every dollar gathered by a carbon cap to every U.S. citizen with a Social Security number.

This carbon cap is actually progressive, with a net increase in the disposable income for most Americans, and certainly our neediest citizens. This will be a net job creator.

□ 1100

The resolution suggests that jobs and businesses will move overseas and that a carbon tax will restrain economic growth. British Columbia instituted a carbon tax in July 2008, and over the following 5-year period, its GDP growth actually outpaced the rest of non-carbon-priced Canada.

In one ''whereas,'' it states that U.S. energy policy should encourage private sector innovation and development, but nothing would stimulate and sustain such innovation as powerfully as would appropriate carbon pricing. Every manufacturer, perhaps every family, would continue to search out the best ways to minimize the costs of production and to maximize family welfare. We are resilient, creative, and adaptive.

For a long time, conservative and liberal economists have agreed that a carbon tax is the most efficient and effective way to deal with climate change.

Let me quote from a recent letter from four conservative and libertarian leaders to Members of Congress:

The least burdensome, most straightforward, and most market friendly means of addressing climate change is to price the risks imposed by greenhouse gas emissions via a tax. This would harness price signals, rather than regulations, to guide a market response. That is why carbon pricing has the support of free market economists, a majority of the global business community, and a large number of the largest multinational private oil and gas companies in the world.

One of the policy issues that most divides our Congress is the debate on the appropriate level of governmental regulation. But to quote again from the same letter:

An economy-wide carbon tax that replaces existing regulatory interventions could reduce the cost of climate policy and deregulate the economy.

Jerry Taylor of the Niskanen Center wrote a paper called ''The Conservative Case for a Carbon Tax.'' He argues that, if conservative denial of climate science is grounded in ideological aversion to command-and-control regulation, as proposed in the EPA's proposed Clean Power Plan, conservatives should embrace and promote a revenue-neutral carbon tax as a more efficient, less burdensome, free market alternative.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose both resolutions as they are unwise, unnecessary, and of backward thinking.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, as I have no further requests for time, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity for us to visit on this proposal today. I don't agree with the resolution by any stretch of the imagination, but at least it is an opportunity for us to have a little bit of the conversation that we should have been having all along.

I enjoy debating with my good friend from Louisiana. I respect his intellect and his humor, and it is fun to do a little bit of this today. It would have been far better if we would have been able to do so in the context of a full committee hearing where we would have been able to dig deeply into these issues. For example, we could have had the Transportation Construction Coalition.

I include in the RECORD a letter on this resolution, a letter which is dated June 9 of this year.

JUNE 9, 2016.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The House is scheduled to consider later this week a resolution opposing President Obama's proposal for a $10.25 per barrel of oil tax. While H. Con. Res. 112 makes many statements regarding an oil barrel tax, the resolution fails to mention the intent of the President's proposal is to generate resources to stabilize and grow federal surface transportation investment. The resolution also does not remind members that recurring Highway Trust Fund revenue shortfalls caused repeated disruptions to their state's transportation program over the past eight years.

Since 2008, Congress has approved seven pieces of legislation transferring a total $143 billion in borrowed or General Fund revenue into the Highway Trust Fund to prevent cuts in federal highway and transit investment. Over that same period, the trust fund's permanent revenue deficit has led to 14 temporary extensions of the surface transportation programs and one short-term reauthorization bill. Furthermore, upon the expiration of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act at the end of FY 2020, the Congressional Budget Office projects the trust fund's average annual shortfall will grow to $18 billion.

While the sincerity of the Obama Administration's proposal for a Highway Trust Fund solution is dubious given its release three months after the President signed the FAST Act into law, a per barrel oil tax of that magnitude would be a real and permanent solution. And its nexus to highway users as a revenue mechanism is far more honest than the budget gimmicks, deficit spending and burdens placed on non-transportation sectors of the economy that the Congress has deployed since 2008 to keep investment in the surface transportation programs essentially static.

We certainly respect the right of members of Congress to disagree with the President's proposal, but it is incumbent upon anyone who does so to bring forward an alternative way to achieve the same objective. We strongly believe all potential revenue options should be on the table. Preliminarily disparaging one significant solution just makes it more difficult to resolve a problem that has plagued Congress for nearly a decade.

Rather than making rhetorical statements about taxes five months before an election, Congress should be working in a bipartisan manner to ensure that a permanent mechanism to preserve and grow federal highway and public transportation investment is in place well before the U.S. Department of Transportation starts warning states of the next highway program shutdown.

Sincerely,

THE TRANSPORTATION CONSTRUCTION COALITION.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, they point out that the resolution fails to mention that the intent of the President's proposal is to generate resources to stabilize and grow Federal surface transportation investment. The resolution does not remind Members that the recurring Highway Trust Fund revenue shortfalls caused repeated disruptions to their States' transportation programs over the past eight years.

We have had to have 14 temporary extensions of the Surface Transportation Act, and the only way we got the FAST Act passed, as my friend Congressman DEFAZIO pointed out, was with a series of budget gimmicks, not real solutions. At the end of 2020, when that legislation expires, we are going to face a $20 billion annual deficit.

The per barrel oil tax of this magnitude, according to the Transportation Construction Coalition, would be a real and a permanent solution. We wouldn't be chasing our tails all the time. And its nexus to highway users as a revenue mechanism is far more honest than the budget gimmicks, deficit spending, and burdens placed on non-transportation sectors of the economy that Congress has deployed since 2008 to keep investment, essentially, static.

They state that they believe all potential revenue options should be on the table, that it is incumbent upon anybody who wants to disagree with the President to bring forward an alternative way to meet the same objective, which, sadly, has not happened. We haven't even been able to discuss it in the Ways and Means Committee.

They write:

Preliminarily disparaging one significant solution just makes it more difficult to resolve a problem that has plagued Congress for more than a decade.

Rather than making rhetorical statements about taxes 5 months before an election, Congress should be working in a bipartisan manner to ensure that a permanent mechanism to preserve and grow Federal highway and public transportation investment is in place well before the Department of Transportation starts warning States about the next program shutdown.

I seldom read statements from other groups on the floor, but I couldn't have said it better myself.

That is what we should be doing rather than this exercise today, which completely misses the point. This oil barrel fee may not be perfect, but it would go a long way toward solving the problem. It will put millions of Americans to work at family-wage jobs. It will create more economic activity than the cost of the program. For every $1.2 billion that it generates, it will generate $2 billion of economic activity, and it will reduce the deficit $200 million. If we had actually had the committee do a deep dive and spend a week in working on it, this would have been on the table, and I think we would have found wide areas of agreement.

Rather than engaging in this exercise regarding H. Con. Res. 112, I would like to think of what Ronald Reagan did in 1982. The economy was pretty rocky in 1982. There were some contentious politics in Congress. Ronald Reagan, in his Thanksgiving Day speech on November 29, 1982, called on Congress to come back from their Thanksgiving recess and work together to more than double the Federal gas tax, because in one of the best speeches, frankly, I have ever heard anybody give, he pointed out the little cost to the American consumer would be more than offset by damage, for example, for a couple pair of shock absorbers.

Congress reacted to President Reagan's call for a gas tax increase on a bipartisan basis. It more than doubled it. It added hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it improved the quality of life for Americans. It did so in keeping the bipartisan tradition surrounding infrastructure. Rather than this partisan partial debate, we ought to go back to the basics, follow Ronald Reagan's example, and have a spirited, comprehensive approach to solving the problem rather than tilting at straw men.

I strongly urge the rejection of the resolution, but, more important, the rejection of this approach to continue to stick our heads in the sand and avoid our responsibility to fund American infrastructure and to rebuild and renew this great country.

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I appreciate the gentleman's passion and intellect, and we have had many conversations. We do agree that we have to fix our deplorable infrastructure, and he and I have worked on some of these things together; but I have to say this: When I was in medical school—and I am a heart surgeon and I have had years of medical training—one of the things we learned a long time ago in medicine was to avoid iatrogenic treatment, which is a fancy, Greek-derived word which means to avoid a treatment that makes the problem worse. That is what this $10.25 tax would do on a barrel of oil.

I have often referred to that plaque above the Speaker's desk. It is a quote from Daniel Webster. The very first line of that reads: ''Let us develop the resources of our land.'' I think it goes beyond simple concepts of highway transportation. It is all the resources of our land.

We should be embracing the energy revolution that has been unleashed by American innovation, not taxing it into oblivion, not overregulating it into oblivion. This has offered tremendous hope not only for Americans, but for the world over, to offer a new view of energy security, taking us away from the Iranian approach or the OPEC approach or a Russian view by which they hoard resources and use this for their own political purposes. America can reshape it by embracing this energy revolution, and we can grow the economy, create jobs, improve wages, and have the revenues to take care of our infrastructure.

As the gentleman well knows, Ronald Reagan believed that a user fee was important, a specific user fee. I think he and I would both agree that a specific user fee is important for infrastructure. This is not a user fee. This is a detrimental tax on American competitiveness, on American jobs, on American wages, on American energy security, and it hits at the very foundation of our national security. It is the wrong way to go. It is an iatrogenic solution, a harmful solution. It is not pro-growth. We are not proud of the economic performance we have seen in recent months: 0.8 percent economic growth in the first quarter, only 38,000 non-farm jobs created last month, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor. That is deplorable.

America must lead, and America can lead by embracing the energy revolution. Let's look at all of the impacts it will have across our entire economy, and then we can fashion specific solutions for transportation and infrastructure and for the other things we need to do.

This is why I stand here. That is why I oppose this tax. That is why I think this debate was important, and that is why I think it is very important to go on record as opposing this very detrimental tax.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in opposition to H. Con. Res. 112, expressing the sense of Congress opposing the President's proposed $10 tax on every barrel of oil.

During my time in Congress, I have represented all five major refineries and countless energy production firms in East Harris County.

I know the importance of the domestically produced and refined oil to the U.S. economy.

I also know the importance of a well-funded transportation system. Houston is growing rapidly and our transportation system needs to expand with our population.

I stand in opposition to today's Sense of Congress because of this knowledge and experience.

But to clarify, we shouldn't make things tougher on American companies and domestically-produced crude.

I do not support a $10 dollar tax on our natural resources.

I do not support a $10 dollar tax on wildcatters in West Texas, North Dakota or any other areas in the U.S. that supply crude to the Texas Gulf Coast.

It is these companies that are responsible for the energy renaissance in the U.S.

These entrepreneurs lowered our gas prices, reduced our foreign dependence and made the U.S. the largest producer of oil in the world.

I do support a $10 dollar tax on imported oil from foreign sources.

Imported oil from countries that may or may not be our friends does not benefit our national security or domestic economy.

We should sharpen our competitive edge and expand our 21st century transportation system by taxing imported oil.

I stand with our domestic companies, we should continue to produce and refine U.S. crude for the benefit of U.S. consumers and workers.

But I stand in opposition of this overly expansive Sense of Congress and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, putting a regressive tax on hardworking Americans is not the way to strengthen the economy, balance the budget, or create jobs.

The President's proposed $10.25 per barrel tax on crude oil is an administrative grab to increase spending and tax a targeted industry.

Thousands of jobs have been lost in these uncertain times for the oil and gas industry and impacted communities.

Now is not the time to make matters worse for an important economic engine and slow an already weak economic recovery.

The Obama Administration knows this tax would be passed down to American families.

The non-partisan Congressional Research Service reported that this tax could increase the price of a gallon of gasoline by 25 cents—which is a 10 percent hike on today's prices.

That would increase the cost of a wide range of goods for all consumers.

The resolution before us takes a strong stand and makes perfectly clear that Congress will not allow the President's harmful tax to go forward.

It also pushes for a tough review of the effects of ill-conceived tax proposals that target specific industries, as the President's tax does.

We must ensure that tax policy decisions are made in a reasoned way that protects working families—rather than harms them in a single-minded hunt for revenue.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting House Concurrent Resolution 112 and voting for its passage.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives will consider H. Con. Res. 112—Expressing the sense of Congress opposing the President's proposed $10 tax on every barrel of oil. This unserious, nonbinding resolution is simply nothing more than a cynical Republican political messaging bill. Indeed, the resolution purposely fails to include that the proposal was a serious attempt by the President to finance the critical infrastructure needs our country most certainly requires. The energy industry is critical to the global economy. Unfortunately, the manner in which the majority has decided to have this discussion leaves little room for thought or earnest debate. For these reasons, I will vote Present, and will encourage my colleagues to continue to work in earnest to find a long-term, sustainable solution to move forward with putting Americans to work in building out our transportation needs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 767, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the concurrent resolution.

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the further consideration of H.R. 5325 and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 771 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 5325.

Will the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) kindly take the chair.

□ 1114

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole