PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, days after hundreds of thousands of women marched in my hometown of Portland, Oregon and cities across the world, Congressional Republicans once again are seeking to limit women's access to safe reproductive health care. H.R. 7 is a sweeping ban on abortion coverage and another callous attempt to insert Congress into the most personal of conversations between a woman and her physician, and had I been present, I would have voted ''no'' on final passage of H.R. 7 (Roll Call No. 65).

This legislation comes on the same week we mark the 44th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade and the same week Donald Trump reinstated the global gag rule, or 'Mexico City policy,' which bans all foreign non-profits that receive U.S. aid from offering abortion-related services. H.R. 7 and the Mexico City policy are flawed and ineffective policies that will harm health and economic security of women around the world.

I have repeatedly voted against attempts to limit a woman's right to a safe and legal abortion. Once again, these actions by Congressional Republicans and the Trump-Pence Administration make it clear that the GOP does not care about the rights and autonomy of women anywhere, not just in the United States.

As we clearly saw this past weekend, Republicans have no mandate to take away women's basic rights. Women everywhere will continue to fight these harmful policies, and I will continue to be one of their strongest allies in this fight.

Had I been present for the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question, Roll Call Vote No. 62 I would have voted ''no.''

Had I been present, I would have voted ''no'' on H. Res. 55 (Roll Call Vote No. 63).

Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye'' on the Democratic Motion to Recommit (Roll Call Vote No. 64).

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS ACT

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Pacific Northwest Earthquake Preparedness Act, a comprehensive bill to address the earthquake risk facing the Pacific Northwest.

The Pacific Northwest is at extraordinary risk of a magnitude 9.0 earthquake on the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) followed by a tsunami. The question is no longer if, but when, this event will occur.

The CSZ stretches from northern California up into British Columbia. Historically, the Cascadia Subduction Zone slips every 300 years or so causing major earthquakes. The last quake was in 1700 and evidence suggests it was a magnitude 8.7 to a 9.2. Thursday is the 317th anniversary of the last major Cascadia earthquake.

Experts agree that Oregon is due for another major earthquake. Some forecasts suggest there is a ten percent chance of a magnitude 8 to 9 quake on the CSZ in the next thirty years, while others predict a thirty-five to forty percent chance of a major quake on the south end of the CSZ in the next fifty years.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone is a minor image of the subduction zone off the coast of Japan that caused the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and triggered the devastating tsunami in 2011. That event caused an estimated $300 billion in damages and killed over 15,000 people.

We can expect similar, if not more, damage in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The United States Geological Service estimates that over 22,000 people live in Oregon's tsunami inundation zone and even more enter the zone daily for employment purposes. The State of Oregon predicts thousands of deaths and injuries plus approximately $32 billion in infrastructure and economic damages in Oregon alone. Hundreds of thousands of survivors will be displaced, some possibly for years.

The next big Cascadia quake will likely cause massive damage. Critical lifelines, such as power, natural gas, and petroleum lines, roads and bridges, water and sewer systems, buildings, and communication systems over large parts of California, Oregon and Washington will likely be damaged, complicating response and recovery efforts. It may take years to fully restore utility services. State and local economies will be decimated.

It is important to note that this is not just a Pacific Northwest issue, this is a National issue. Yes the impact of an earthquake and tsunami in the CSZ will be felt the most in Oregon and Washington, but there will be Nation-wide effects. Seismic shaking is expected to be felt as far as Sacramento, California. Most infrastructure in the United States as a whole has not been constructed to withstand seismic shaking of the magnitude that scientists predict has a high likelihood of occurring.

The national economy will be impacted by this event. Fortune 500 companies, such as Microsoft, Amazon, and Nike, are headquartered in Oregon and Washington. International ports used to export U.S. goods and to import foreign goods could be closed for months or longer. In fact, the ports of Portland, Oregon, and Seattle and Tacoma, Washington accounted for a combined 75 million tons of goods in 2012. Major highways and other thoroughfares used for interstate commerce will be damaged and rendered unusable.

This a not a question of if an earthquake will happen, only a matter of when. We need to start taking this threat seriously and begin to prepare for the event. There is a saying that ''earthquakes don't kill people, buildings do.'' This means we need to start investing in the Nation's infrastructure to ensure it can withstand seismic activity and minimize potential damage and economic disruption.

My bill proposes to address the earthquake risk in several ways. First, the bill proposes to save lives, reduce injuries, and minimize infrastructure damage by requiring FEMA to prepare a plan to fund the purchase and installation of an earthquake early warning system for the Cascadia Subduction Zone. It also clarifies that FEMA may use hazard mitigation funds to improve the earthquake early warning system.

An early warning system can send alerts to trigger automatic shutdowns of trains, manufacturing lines, and close bridges. An earthquake early warning system worked during the 2011 Japan earthquake and it can work here.

An earthquake early warning system is only the first step though. The bill also directs the President to establish an Earthquake and Tsunami Task Force to develop a comprehensive strategy and recommendations on how the Nation should prepare and plan for, mitigate against, respond to, recover from, and more successfully adapt to an earthquake and tsunami in the CSZ. This will ensure that Federal, State, local, and tribal governments as well as individuals begin preparing now for a smarter response and recovery.

If we want to save lives and mitigate the damage, we cannot afford to wait. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill and taking the threat of a catastrophic earthquake seriously.