

(b) REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT.—In developing the strategy required under subsection (a), the President shall consult with—

- (1) the appropriate congressional committees;
- (2) relevant Executive branch agencies and officials;
- (3) partner country governments; and
- (4) local and international nongovernmental organizations, including faith-based organizations and organizations representing students, teachers, and parents, and other development partners engaged in basic education assistance programs in developing countries.

(c) PUBLIC COMMENT.—The President shall provide an opportunity for public comment on the strategy required under subsection (a).

(d) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under subsection (a)—

(1) shall be developed and implemented consistent with the principles set forth in section 105(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as added by section 3; and

(2) shall seek—

(A) to prioritize assistance provided under this subsection to countries that are partners of the United States and whose populations are most in need of improved basic education, as determined by indicators such as literacy and numeracy rates;

(B) to build the capacity of relevant actors in partner countries, including in government and in civil society, to develop and implement national education plans that measurably improve basic education;

(C) to identify and replicate successful interventions that improve access to and quality of basic education in conflict settings and in partner countries;

(D) to project general levels of resources needed to achieve stated program objectives;

(E) to develop means to track implementation in partner countries and ensure that such countries are expending appropriate domestic resources and instituting any relevant legal, regulatory, or institutional reforms needed to achieve stated program objectives;

(F) to leverage United States capabilities, including through technical assistance, training, and research; and

(G) to improve coordination and reduce duplication among relevant Executive branch agencies and officials, other donors, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and governments in partner countries.

SEC. 5. IMPROVING COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) SENIOR COORDINATOR OF UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.—There is established within the United States Agency for International Development a Senior Coordinator of United States International Basic Education Assistance (referred to in this section as the “Senior Coordinator”). The Senior Coordinator shall be appointed by the President, shall be a current USAID employee serving in a career or noncareer position in the Senior Executive Service or at the level of a Deputy Assistant Administrator or higher, and shall serve concurrently as the Senior Coordinator.

(b) DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Senior Coordinator shall have primary responsibility for the oversight and coordination of all resources and activities of the United States Government relating to the promotion of international basic education programs and activities.

(2) SPECIFIC DUTIES.—The Senior Coordinator shall—

(A) facilitate program and policy coordination of international basic education pro-

grams and activities among relevant Executive branch agencies and officials, partner governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations;

(B) develop and revise the strategy required under section 4;

(C) monitor, evaluate, and report on activities undertaken pursuant to the strategy required under section 4; and

(D) establish due diligence criteria for all recipients of funds provided by the United States to carry out activities under this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(c) OFFSET.—In order to eliminate duplication of effort and activities and to offset any costs incurred by the United States Agency for International Development in appointing the Senior Coordinator under subsection (a), the President shall, after consulting with appropriate congressional committees, eliminate a position within the United States Agency for International Development (unless otherwise authorized or required by law) that the President determines to be necessary to fully offset such costs and eliminate duplication.

SEC. 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS.

The President shall seek to ensure that programs carried out under the strategy required under section 4 shall—

(1) apply rigorous monitoring and evaluation methodologies to determine if programs and activities provided under this subsection accomplish measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce;

(2) include methodological guidance in the implementation plan and support systemic data collection using internationally comparable indicators, norms, and methodologies, to the extent practicable and appropriate;

(3) disaggregate all data collected and reported by age, gender, marital status, disability, and location, to the extent practicable and appropriate;

(4) include funding for both short- and long-term monitoring and evaluation to enable assessment of the sustainability and scalability of assistance programs; and

(5) support the increased use and public availability of education data for improved decision making, program effectiveness, and monitoring of global progress.

SEC. 7. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING TO CONGRESS.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the end of each fiscal year during which the strategy developed pursuant to section 4(a) is carried out, the President shall—

(1) submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that describes the implementation of such strategy; and

(2) make the report described in paragraph (1) available to the public.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of the efforts made by relevant Executive branch agencies and officials to implement the strategy developed pursuant to section 4, with a particular focus on the activities carried out under the strategy;

(2) a description of the extent to which each partner country selected to receive assistance for basic education meets the priority criteria specified in section 105(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act, as added by section 3; and

(3) a description of the progress achieved over the reporting period toward meeting the goals, objectives, benchmarks, and time-

frames specified in the strategy developed pursuant to section 4 at the program level, as developed pursuant to monitoring and evaluation specified in section 6, with particular emphasis on whether there are demonstrable student improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce.

(5) In division B, under the heading “DISASTER RELIEF FUND”, strike the first “Provided further” and insert “Provided”.

(6) In section 101(c)(1) of division C, strike “under section 101(a)” and insert “under section 101(b)(1)”.

(7) Strike the final section 4 and all that follows through the end.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. GOODLATTE, from the Committee on Judiciary, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-300) on the resolution (H. Res. 446) of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the removal of former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 504 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. 3354.

Will the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS) kindly take the chair.

□ 1059

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3354) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, with Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

□ 1100

AMENDMENT NO. 69 OFFERED BY MR. KNIGHT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 69 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. KNIGHT. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to administer Bureau of Land Management contracts number CA 20139 and CA 22901.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. KNIGHT. Madam Chair, I plan to withdraw my amendment, but before I do, Madam Chair, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) to engage in a brief colloquy.

Mr. CALVERT. I would be happy to engage the gentleman in a colloquy.

Mr. KNIGHT. Madam Chair, I appreciate the strong support from a number of my colleagues in regards to an issue that is vitally important to California's 25th Congressional District.

Citizens of Santa Clarita, California, have fought for over two decades against a sand and gravel mine in their city, which is known for its ideal filming and tourism location just outside the city. Santa Clarita is known as Hollywood North. It is the third most populous city in Los Angeles County and proudly preserves 9,000 acres of open space for its residents and filming.

A sand and gravel mine at this particular location would have extreme negative impacts on local community life and its economy. The already congested highways in the area would see additional transport trucks 24 hours a day, and local industries would see downturns from dust and air pollution.

I thank Chairman CALVERT for his support and look forward to working toward a permanent solution to this long overdue local issue.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague from California for his comments. This body is made better with his presence.

I appreciate the gentleman's hard work on the situation in Santa Clarita and the need to come to a resolution in a timely manner. After working with him on this issue, I have no doubt that it can be solved with his help. I pledge to assist him in finding a resolution that all parties can support.

Mr. KNIGHT. I appreciate that very much.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time, and I withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is withdrawn.

The Chair understands amendment No. 71 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 72 OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF MISSOURI

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 72 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used to pay legal fees pursuant to a settlement in any case in which the Federal Government is a party that arises under—

(1) the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.);

(2) the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.); or

(3) the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment.

In recent years, we have seen a sharp increase in a practice called sue and settle. This happens when a Federal agency accepts a lawsuit from an outside advocacy organization and then, rather than defend itself, proceeds to settle that lawsuit in a closed-door agreement, with the end result being new and more costly regulations. If that isn't bad enough, taxpayers are responsible for footing the legal bill for the attorneys of the radical organizations who filed the suit.

My amendment is simple. It prevents American taxpayer dollars from being used to pay the legal fees of outside advocacy groups for settlements under the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Litigants can still sue, but they will no longer be financially rewarded by the taxpayers for their efforts. This practice is an abuse of our regulatory process and must be stopped.

Nowhere are these settlements more costly in their outcomes than in the environmental regulatory context. According to the Chamber of Commerce, between January of 2013 and January of 2017, the EPA chose not to defend itself in 77 of these lawsuits with outside environmental advocacy groups. Overall, during the 8 years of the prior administration, the EPA entered into 137 of these settlements. The result of these lawsuits is hundreds of new regulations and tens of millions—even billions—of dollars in compliance costs.

Further, as part of the agreements, agencies are often required to reprioritize their agendas, allocating limited resources to the priorities of these interest groups rather than priorities designated by Congress or ones that have received public and stakeholder input.

The American people are tired of our unaccountable Federal Government, and we have the opportunity to do something about it. This is a simple and necessary step to rein in overregulation and bring transparency back to the regulatory process.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, the gentleman's agreement is an extraneous amendment that puts the same parameters on attorneys' fees under the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act that are already in place for attorneys' fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act. In other words, the attorneys' fees are already set for this. The Equal Access to Justice Act caps the hourly rate and requires that the parties be the prevailing party—so the fees are capped.

Maybe the gentleman is not aware that the Equal Access to Justice Act, as I said, caps the hourly rate for attorneys' fees unless the court—this is up to the court—unless the court determines an increase in the cost of living—a special factor, such as limited availability for a qualified attorney for the proceedings involved—justifies a higher fee. So the court would look at this very, very carefully, take everything into account, and then only when the court would see a need to make sure that we have paid an attorney fairly for their time.

So the gentleman's amendment is already codified and is not needed.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

Suing the government and settling has been a lucrative business which is supported by taxpayer dollars. The Endangered Species Act, for example, has become wrapped around the axle of the judicial system by excessive litigation.

Until then, I keep pushing on behalf of the States and the taxpayers.

Madam Chair, I urge an "aye" vote on the amendment.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Chair, the sue-and-settle practice cuts stakeholders and the public out of the regulatory process. It undermines the Article I authority we hold here in Congress.

By restricting the payment of legal fees, we protect taxpayer dollars, reduce Federal spending, take away the incentive of these environmental advocacy groups to sue the Federal Government, and protect public input in the rulemaking process.

Madam Chair, I urge a "yes" vote on my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, once again, I rise to object to this.

The Equal Access to Justice Act already caps the hourly rate—it already

caps it—and requires that the parties be paid a prevailing wage.

Madam Chair, I believe we do not need this redundant provision to a bill that is already overburdened with harmful legislative riders.

Madam Chair, I encourage my colleagues to reject the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 73 OFFERED BY MR. MULLIN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 73 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce the final rule entitled "Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources" published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register on June 3, 2016 (81 Fed. Reg. 35824).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, this amendment would prohibit funds from enforcing the Obama administration's EPA methane rule.

This rule is currently facing litigation and uncertainty, and Congress must act to block this job-killing regulation estimated to cost the U.S. economy \$530 million annually.

Methane emissions from oil and natural gas have significantly declined in recent decades without multiple, overlapping Federal regulations, and this is no exception.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, the gentleman's amendment would block the EPA from regulating methane emissions from sources in the oil and gas sector.

Late last night, we had a discussion about whether or not methane from flare-ups should be captured and saved as energy and used as energy. Although this amendment is different, I think it begs the question as to why we aren't making sure that we are capturing every ounce of energy that is produced in this country and reusing it.

But back to the gentleman's amendment today.

Methane, I want to point out, is a primary component of natural gas. It is a potent greenhouse gas, with global warming potential more than 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

In 2013, nearly one-third of methane emissions in the United States came from oil and gas production, producing transmission and distribution. There is no doubt at all that methane contributes to the increased levels of greenhouse gas concentrations, which contribute to the long-lasting changes in our climate, such as rising global temperatures, sea level change, in weather and precipitation patterns, and changes in the ecosystem's habits and species diversity.

But more important, I think public health is at risk, including more heat waves and drought. That means worsening smog, increasing intensity of extreme weather like we are seeing again this weekend, increasing the range of ticks and mosquitos, which can spread disease, such as Lyme, West Nile virus, and Zika.

Madam Chair, I would just ask the majority to stop this assault on the environment and let us work together not only to capture all the energy possible, but work together to reduce the climate change that our planet and the United States, this weekend, is experiencing.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR), my colleague.

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Chair, I rise in support of this amendment.

My colleague, Mr. MULLIN, is absolutely correct. When former President Obama directed the EPA, BLM, and other agencies to target industries for greenhouse gas emissions, they went directly for oil and natural gas first. But this EPA rule targeting methane is completely unnecessary.

Though methane is a byproduct of oil and natural gas production, it is also a valuable product in and of itself, and that is something that oil and gas companies routinely capture and sell rather than emit. Even EPA estimates show that methane emissions have decreased, while the production of natural gas and oil increased over the same period.

The free market has provided an incentive to reduce methane release on its own. There is no further need for EPA to impose costly bureaucratic hurdles on these sensitive industries.

And make no mistake: This rule imposes a steep burden. It is estimated to cost our economy \$530 million annually.

Natural gas and oil production will continue to be pillars of an energy-friendly American economy. But instead of reducing barriers to growth, as President Trump has requested, this rule cripples our industries by duplicating what a combination of market forces and existing regulations have already produced.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, this amendment doesn't make sense from an economic perspective or a health perspective. It would block implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's commonsense standards for sources of emissions of methane in the oil and gas industry.

□ 1115

And while we invest in renewable energy, at the same time, we know that we can't wait to transition entirely to renewable energy before we address other side effects of the extraction process, like methane. Pound for pound, methane pollution from oil and gas wells is 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide and is responsible for a quarter of human-made climate change.

This EPA rule, frankly, is just a starting point. It is a long overdue standard for the oil and gas industry to reduce methane pollution. Frankly, I wish these rules went further, but these stricter standards are a good start; they are necessary. Scientists have published data that shows that methane released during extraction is an incredibly large contributor to the climate threat.

I think it is really critical not to prevent the EPA from moving forward and fulfilling the mission that Congress gave them to protect our air, water, and planet, and that is what this amendment would do, which is why I oppose it.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding.

Madam Chair, this is an ideologically driven solution in search of a problem. The U.S. oil and gas system represents only 3½ percent of overall domestic greenhouse gas emissions. You ask yourself: If that is the case, if over 96 percent of the problem is elsewhere, why wouldn't we focus on that? It is ideological, that is why.

The temperature impact of this emissions reduction is miniscule, at a mere .0047 degrees Celsius by the year 2100, and, of course, that is a model and that is predicted. No one really knows for sure. But we can know this for sure: it is miniscule.

EPA's own research shows that combined oil and gas methane emissions have fallen 19 percent since 1990. During the same period, natural gas production has risen 52 percent and oil production has increased 28 percent.

The cost of this unnecessary regulation will be \$530 million per year by 2025, again, to get .0047 degrees Celsius by the year 2100. 322,000 Pennsylvanians' jobs are supported by the oil and gas industry, and we can't afford it.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote for the Mullin amendment.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time until closing.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), my chairman.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

EPA has been directed by the President to take a second look at the methane rule promulgated by the Obama administration. In conjunction with a review, EPA has attempted to provide the regulated community with some certainty by postponing some of the implementation dates; however, the courts have blocked that from happening.

In light of these challenges, the time may be right for a temporary pause on the enforcement of those requirements, so I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time until closing.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, once again, I would like to point out that the rule will prevent the waste of an estimated 65 billion cubic feet of natural gas a year and save the taxpayers \$330 million annually, and that is energy that could be put to work here in the United States.

The public health risks, including more heat waves and drought, as I talked about, the climate change, the health and welfare of our current and future generations must be taken into account. We must take action; we must do something about this.

This is a step backwards to adopt this amendment, so I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment and to work to protect our planet.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN).

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 74 OFFERED BY MR. MULLIN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 74 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to prepare, propose, or promulgate any regulation or guidance that references or relies on the analysis contained in—

(1) "Technical Support Document: Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866", published by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, United States Government, in February 2010;

(2) "Technical Support Document: Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866", published by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, United States Government, in May 2013 and revised in November 2013;

(3) "Revised Draft Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Effects of Climate Change in NEPA Reviews", published by the Council on Environmental Quality on December 24, 2014 (79 Fed. Reg. 77802);

(4) "Technical Support Document: Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866", published by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Carbon, United States Government, in July 2015;

(5) "Addendum to the Technical Support Document on Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866: Application of the Methodology to Estimate the Social Cost of Methane and the Social Cost of Nitrous Oxide", published by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases, United States Government, in August 2016; or

(6) "Technical Support Document: Technical Update of the Social Cost of Carbon for Regulatory Impact Analysis Under Executive Order 12866", published by the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases, United States Government, in August 2016.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, my amendment would prohibit the implementation of the Obama administration's social cost of carbon, SCC, rule.

Congress and the American people have repeatedly rejected cap-and-trade proposals. The Obama administration continuously used social cost of carbon models, which can easily be manipulated, in order to attempt to justify new job-killing regulations.

The House has made a clear, strong record of opposition to the social cost of carbon, voting at least 11 times to block, defund, or oppose the proposal.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, this amendment is a harmful rider. It has no place on an appropriation bill. This is a big policy discussion that we are

talking about that impacts every man, woman, and child here in the United States, and, I might add, I believe, around the world, the amendment that would prohibit the EPA from considering the social cost of carbon as part of its rulemaking.

The social cost of carbon is an estimate of economic damages associated with small increases of carbon dioxide in emissions in a given year, and it does represent the best scientific information available for incorporating the impacts of carbon pollution into regulatory analysis.

Weakening or eliminating the use of the social cost of carbon as a tool for Federal agencies would ignore the sobering costs of health, environment, and economic impacts of extreme weather, rising temperatures, intensifying smog, and other impacts.

Madam Chair, last night we had many amendments reducing the ability of the EPA to take into account the public health. I believe we have a responsibility to make sure that we are not only the watchdogs and stewards for making sure that our public lands are used in appropriate and effective ways, but we also have a responsibility to use science to make sure that we are doing our due diligence to protect the health of the American people.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time until closing.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Chair, I rise in support of this amendment.

The Trump administration has done a good deed for the economy and for the American workers in issuing an executive order declawing the Obama administration's social cost of carbon guidance, but that is not enough. A future administration may not have as much sense to take on carbon tax policies. What is more, agencies continue to work on researching social cost on the taxpayer dime.

This is also a separation of powers issue. Congress is charged with setting tax policy, and by failing to put the nail in the coffin of this tax in disguise, we abdicate our duty. Congress and the American people have repeatedly rejected cap-and-trade proposals; now the Trump administration has as well. Social cost, however, remains on the books; therefore, Congress must act.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time until closing.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), my chairman.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the gentleman's amendment.

Because the administration has already withdrawn the referenced social cost of carbon guidance in the March energy independence executive order, this is an amendment we can support. I support the amendment.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I would urge a "yes" vote on this amendment.

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, once again, I know that the gentleman who brought the amendment would like to have an active debate and like to see some movement on this issue, but by doing it on an appropriations rule this way, where we don't have a full transparent discussion, we don't have the scientific community coming in, the health community, and the industry that he would like to see testify, we find ourselves doing these stopgap riders on appropriations bills that only work for the year of the appropriation. It is a way in which we are not using our power as legislators effectively to have change. So these riders are best done in the policy committee, not on the appropriations bill.

In closing, I would like to just clearly say that I support science and I believe we should not abandon science while trying to tackle climate change, and, therefore, I strongly oppose the gentleman's amendment and would encourage a "no" vote.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN).

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 75 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 75 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to close or consolidate any regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, before I begin my comments on this amendment, I want to thank the chairman for including my other amendment regarding volunteer and State wildfire assistance en bloc earlier today.

While a great deal of attention is being paid to Hurricane Harvey and Irma, the West is also being ravaged by wildfires, costing hundreds of millions of dollars and lives.

My amendment with Representatives RENACCI and KING that passed makes

sure that States and local governments will have a little bit more resources with their volunteer fire departments to fight those fires, and I appreciate that.

Madam Chair, this amendment that is at the desk would address the really unsound plan by the EPA to close down their regional field offices. My amendment would prevent this plan from occurring by preventing funds from going to the closure of regional Environmental Protection Agency offices.

We already know that the new EPA leadership has its priorities backwards, focused on how they can help fossil fuels and coal and oil rather than the congressionally mandated responsibility of keeping our air and water clean and helping to keep people healthy.

So earlier this year, when the President's budget included closing ten regional Environmental Protection Agency offices and reports began to surface in April that Secretary Pruitt was looking to close the Region 5 office, which covers the upper Midwest, I was disappointed, hence, this action that I am taking here today with this amendment.

The reports we have heard are surrounding Region 5, but we have no idea which regions they are targeting. In my home State of Colorado, the Region 8 headquarters serves six States and 27 sovereign Tribal nations. Our headquarters in Denver are essential to protecting health and safeguarding the national environment in the American West.

It is very important to fight against this reckless EPA plan to close down regional offices that keep our air clean. And now more than ever, with tropical storms and flooded chemical plants and oil spills around Houston, we all know how essential EPA presence in the field is. The EPA field offices are often the first responders at the scenes of environmental disasters. Regional field offices are uniquely well versed in particular characteristics in our very diverse geographic Nation.

It is very important for Congress to send an unambiguous message that we want to safeguard the lives and welfare of our American citizens, acknowledge and address the very real threat of climate change.

Madam Chair, I ask my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, as I noted in our full committee markup in July, there are no regional closures proposed in this legislation; therefore, it is an unnecessary amendment. This topic was discussed at our EPA hearing in June. Administrator Pruitt called rumors about regional closures "pure legend."

Further, it costs money to close regional offices and move staff, and funding has not been requested to do so.

□ 1130

In addition, the closure of regional offices is something the administration would need to propose and go through the deliberative process here in Congress. It would require a multiyear effort.

As a wise man within the administration once said, "we can close any lab or Federal building that is not located in Washington, D.C., or in a congressional district."

As the fiscal year 2018 process has already demonstrated, while the President may propose changes, Congress has the final say in funding decisions.

In addition, this amendment would have unintended consequences as agencies review their footprints and propose ways to reduce their rent, security, utility costs, and operate more efficiently. All executive branch agencies are required to submit plans to the President on ways to operate more efficiently. We need to see these plans before jumping to any conclusions. So I would urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this amendment.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Well, if there is no plans to close offices and it would cost more to close them, I would just hope that the Chair would accept this amendment, which merely confirms what he just indicated.

Madam Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for offering this amendment. I offered a similar amendment, which was not made in order but would have had the same effect.

Much discussion has resolved around EPA Region 5, which is the region that I represent, and the important office that has, as part of its responsibility, protection of the Great Lakes, which is one of the most unique ecosystems on the planet, and it is one that deserves and needs full-time protection.

I listened carefully to the chairman's comments, and I agree with them. I think, as my friend from Colorado stated, if there is no question as to whether there is a plan to close these offices, I can tell you that the people that I represent would benefit from the assurance that the body that is responsible for making these decisions has made a clear statement that it is on record that these offices will remain open.

Certainly, administratively, they can do all the consideration they need to do to think about how they want to save money. But it is up to Congress to decide these questions, and Congress should be clear.

And when it comes to the Great Lakes, with all the other cuts that the President has proposed, namely the elimination of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, we need this reassurance.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I would say to my friend that we are

making a statement. There is no money to close offices in this budget, so I would urge a "no" vote.

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I would like to inquire as to how much time remains.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Colorado has 1¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I yield to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. McCOLLUM).

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I also rise in support of this amendment. It is nice to be able to support something today. And I really would caution that, although they didn't talk about closing regional offices, Madam Chair, they did talk about moving and rearranging. Congress needs to be involved. I have a Superfund site being cleaned up right now by EPA Region 5.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, again, the chairman has given his assurances that there is no plans to close offices, that it would cost more to close offices; therefore, since there is no additional money for office closure in this bill, it is not happening.

I don't see why we don't just confirm that same intent that he conveyed by putting this funding amendment restriction in place that would prevent offices from being closed. If they are saying they are not going to close, and if we are saying they are not going to close, well, let's just put that in words so it means something. That is all this amendment does.

Obviously, if the President or the executive want to propose consolidation or closures, they can come back and seek funding for that. The Chair is right. We have the final word.

If we include this language in the bill, our final word will be that you can't close EPA offices without a change in funding and coming back to Congress. So it is completely consistent with what the Chair indicated. I think it is a very important statement for us to make as a united Congress.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 76 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 76 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title) insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 102(a)(1) of Public Law 94-579 (43 U.S.C. 1701(a)(1)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This amendment is very simple. It offers Members of this body a very clear choice about whether or not we want to keep our public lands in the hands of those who rightfully own them, the American public; or if we want to sell off our public lands to the highest bidder.

This amendment would prohibit the Federal use of funds to pursue any additional extralegal ways to turn our Federal lands over to private owners. For example, it would prohibit commissions. It would prohibit groups that would find backdoor ways to do that, or any other means.

My amendment simply ensures that none of the funds through this bill can be used in violation of the law that already exists. I would hope that can be accepted by the Republicans. It is important to note that this amendment would not do anything to undermine the current authority for congressional- and administration-driven land exchanges that many of us have worked on.

In the district I am honored to represent, over 60 percent of the land is public land. These public lands are beautiful and majestic, just as they are across the entire country. They are a critical part of our American heritage; our Western heritage; in my State, our Colorado heritage; and they serve so many incredible purposes.

First of all, public lands are good for our mind and soul. A U.S. Army Iraq war veteran who lives in Colorado recently said: "I fought to protect all that makes our Nation great, and that includes the public lands that belong to every American."

Second, these lands are good for our bodies by protecting water quality and public health. People hike and fish and enjoy outdoor recreation time. The public lands are the ecosystems that house headwaters of our river systems that we rely on for our drinking water and that help keep our air clean through the plants that they water.

Not only are our lands good for the soul and health, they are also the key economic driver in my district and my State. Across the country, over \$600 billion is generated through outdoor recreation on our public lands, and visiting public lands support over 6 million jobs.

I represent Rocky Mountain National Park, which has over 3 million visitors

a year. The entire economy of towns, like Estes Park, rely on our public lands. From small businesses to ski resorts, from gas stations to diners, our economy thrives in districts like mine because of our public lands.

A recent poll across six Western States shows that 96 percent of Americans support public lands. Let's vote on this and make sure that 96 percent in Congress agrees with 96 percent of the American public.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CALVERT. While I agree with the gentleman that current law regarding public lands must be followed, there is nothing in this bill that contradicts that. As such, there is no purpose relevant to this bill for this amendment. I encourage my colleagues to oppose the gentleman's amendment.

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

Mr. POLIS. Well, look, the only argument the chairman has made against this one, like the last one, is that it is not going to happen anyway. So why not give the American people the assurance? Because, frankly, it could happen anyway.

There is a real threat. There are Members of this body and there are members of the President's administration that are seeking to sell off our public lands, which would devastate our local economy, undermine wildlife and the ecosystems that we support, and remove a critical iconic part of our Western heritage.

Selling these public lands to private owners would lead to a loss of access to our most majestic, treasured spaces, a critical part of our quality of life not just for Coloradans, but for the millions of people from across the country that visit our wild areas.

Time after time we see real attempts that are made here to transfer our most precious public lands to private ownership or sell them at wholesale.

With this amendment, we offer a clear choice. Let's confirm what the chairman said: that this won't happen. Let's support the protection of our public lands as all of our constituents do.

I think it is clear to make sure that Members are on the record. Do we support keeping our public lands public? Or do we support the corporatization of something that is, in many ways, the iconic essence of our identity as a people and as a country, our public lands?

Madam Chair, I ask for my colleagues' support on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 77 OFFERED BY MR. NORMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 77 printed in House Report 115-297.

Mr. NORMAN. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of division A (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. The total amount of appropriations made available by title II of this Act is hereby reduced by \$1,869,087,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 504, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. NORMAN. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, I rise today to seek support for amendment 77 to H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act, which is supported by the Taxpayers Protection Alliance and key voted by the National Taxpayers Union, Club for Growth, Heritage Action for America, and FreedomWorks.

Mick Mulvaney, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, has been guided by the idea that every dollar spent by the Federal Government must be scrutinized. I took this principle to heart as I examined the President's budget request, which stated: "Everyone believes in and supports safe food supplies and clean air and water. But the agencies of the Federal Government have gone way beyond what was intended by the Congress."

Madam Chair, while traveling around my district this August, I heard the same sentiment put more plainly: "Washington is off the rails."

As our national debt grows in excess of \$20 trillion, each of my 15 grandchildren is being saddled with a \$61,000 share of the debt. Now, Madam Chair, my 16th grandchild is on the way. I would really like to start tackling Washington's spending problems now before grandchild 16 joins us in early December.

I am encouraged by the leadership of President Trump's administration with its budget request, but I strongly believe Congress must do its part to stop this debt from crushing our Nation. That is why I have submitted an amendment that would reduce EPA appropriations by \$1.869 billion to the administration's requested level of \$5.655 billion.

In his testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt emphasized the

need for the EPA to get back to the basics of statutory authority of ensuring access to clean water, clean air, and land.

Madam Chair, the amount of overreach and wasteful spending the EPA is responsible for is endless. Allow me to share with you a few recent examples.

For overreach: first, look to Sackett v. EPA, where the EPA imposed \$75,000 cost per day on a couple for placing gravel on dry land to build a home within the existing subdivision.

And then there is Andy Johnson, the Wyoming rancher who was facing \$20 million in fines for his stock pond, which the EPA alleged violated the Clean Water Act. This is despite the fact that stock ponds were exempt from Federal law, and that he had obtained the necessary permits. It took Mr. Johnson 5 months in court to reach a winning settlement which freed him from any obligation to pay the EPA.

The waters of the United States rule, which I am happy to see this administration working to roll back, embodied the overreach perfectly, as the Obama EPA pushed the limits of its power under the Clean Water Act to even regulate some ponds and manmade ditches.

Now, for wasteful spending: there is an Environmental Justice Program, a program that is supposed to support business development in disadvantaged communities, which funded an effort to increase knowledge of environmentally-friendly nail salon practices in California nail salons.

□ 1145

The estimated price tag was \$73 million over the course of 2016-2025.

There was an EPA environmental education program which funded "educational projects" that have included learning how to build rain gardens, the significance of urban forests, poster contests on sun protection, asthma awareness and radon and schoolyard habitat restoration.

There was even \$300,000 in grant money going to fund the Chesapeake Bay Journal, an environmental newspaper in Maryland.

Madam Chair, these are just a handful of recent instances of the EPA's bureaucratic waste at the expense of the American taxpayer.

The Presidential budget request for the EPA provides the roadmap for trimming the Agency back to focus on its core mission. Funding for the Agency is focused on infrastructure, elimination of duplicative programs and programs that extend past the EPA's statutory authority, and ensuring that funds are not lost to bureaucratic waste.

Madam Chair, Congress has an incredible opportunity to practice what we preach in tackling an out-of-control Federal Government.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I would like to remind the gentleman, with this bill, we have cut EPA almost 30 percent since 2010.

While we have expressed a number of frustrations with EPA's overreach over the last few years, and even here today, I cannot support an amendment with cuts of this magnitude which put important programs at risk. An across-the-board cut of this magnitude would reduce priorities like the geographic programs, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, and others, State recovering loan funds, the 28 national estuary programs, several State grants like radon, lead, and beach protection, just to name a few.

These are programs proposed for elimination in the President's budget that Members on both sides of the aisle requested funding in this bill. In fact, I had 5,200 requests.

The amendment would also significantly reduce funding for the Superfund program. The proposed budget would propose to reduce the program by 31 percent, which would impact new cleanups and slow ongoing cleanups.

The President's budget also proposed to reduce the State categorical grants by 44 percent and cut the Diesel Emission Reduction Grants by 83 percent, which are essential to air quality in my home State of California.

States need resources to best serve our constituents back home; therefore, I think this amendment just goes too far. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment, and I rise to support the chairman of the subcommittee.

Colleagues on both sides of the aisle clearly rejected President Trump's budget.

Hurricanes Harvey and, now, Irma have highlighted the need for a strong EPA to ensure Americans have clean air, clean water, and help to prevent exposures to toxic chemicals. They are doing that right now on the ground. They are leaving from other places around this country. They are leaving their homes, and they are going there to be first responders when it comes to toxic cleanup.

As has been pointed out, the EPA was cut coming into this floor action by \$240 million, and it was cut another 17 percent last night. In fact, since 2010, the EPA has already been reduced by \$2.2 billion and has 2,000 fewer staff.

The EPA never knows when it is going to be called on. Madam Chair, just a couple weeks ago we got a call about a businessowner who abandoned a plating company, left chemical barrels literally disintegrating before the eyes of the St. Paul Fire Department. The EPA was there to help.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CALVERT. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. The EPA was there to work with the city when the fire department found out what a danger it was. When the county wasn't able to handle such an extreme toxic cleanup, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was able to call on EPA Region 5. They knew the people. They had worked together on other projects, and they gave comfort and aid to homeowners that this toxic waste site that people didn't even know existed from as close as you and I are to each other, sir, was in their backyard.

The EPA does a lot of work. We are asking them to do it on a shorter budget. This would make it impossible for them to do their work at all.

Madam Chair, I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his support of the EPA, although sometimes we disagree at what level.

Mr. CALVERT. It is interesting that we are having a disagreement on how much we should cut the EPA. It is not the argument that we are cutting the EPA. Obviously, that is a fact. We have cut the EPA with this upcoming budget by 37 percent over the last few years.

I know that the Administrator is doing a lot to create efficiencies with the EPA and to operate that absolutely more effectively for our health and for the benefit of the United States.

Madam Chair, with that, I believe this amendment just simply goes too far. I oppose this amendment and would urge my colleagues to vote "no," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. NORMAN. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from South Carolina will be postponed.

The Chair understands that amendment Nos. 78 and 80 will not be offered.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMUCKER) having assumed the chair, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3354), making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECOGNIZING THE SUCCESS OF THE FOOD INSECURITY NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the success of the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program, otherwise known as FINI, in providing low-income Americans the opportunity to put healthier food on the table for their families.

As a joint program between the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, FINI provides funding to improve the nutrition in SNAP households.

Last month, Secretary Perdue announced nearly \$17 million in grants to help SNAP participants purchase healthier food options for their families. This funding would not have been possible without FINI, which was authorized by the 2014 farm bill.

As chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, creating opportunity for low-income families to afford nutritious food options is incredibly important to me, and we want to ensure the program is viable for generations. Last year alone, SNAP helped at least 44 million families put nutritious food on their tables. That allowed 19 million children to lead healthier lifestyles.

The FINI program is successful, and we see the success through the good it does for the health of American families.

NEIL NORMAN RECEIVES NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AWARD

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent, Neil Norman of Richland, Washington, for receiving the National Society of Professional Engineers Award in honor of his extraordinary contributions to the engineering profession.

Mr. Norman is one of only 65 engineers to receive this award since 1949, and his substantial career demonstrates that he has earned this achievement. He has worked on several state-of-the-art projects since he began his work in 1952, including the plant design and construction for the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository. In central Washington, he designed the Fast Flux Test Facility, which is the Hanford nuclear site's former research reactor.

Neil has received several local, State, and national awards over the years. In retirement, he continues to serve his community. He gives lectures to engineering students in colleges across the State of Washington to promote profes-

sionalism, ethics, public health, and safety. His outstanding career is one to be admired.

Please join me in congratulating Neil Norman for his contributions to the engineering profession and to our community.

AMERICANS HELPING AMERICANS IN TIME OF DISASTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time. I want to talk about what has been occurring in southeast Texas for the last several weeks.

I represent part of the Houston area, north Houston and into other areas of Harris County. Houston is one of many cities in Harris County, Texas. Of course I am going to talk about Hurricane Harvey.

On August 26, Texans across the State braced themselves for Hurricane Harvey. It was a quick hurricane in that it developed very quickly in the Gulf of Mexico, and it hit southeast Texas near Corpus Christi and Rockport, and it did considerable damage in Rockport. I understand from Congressman FARENTHOLD, who represents the area, that the entire small town was just obliterated by Hurricane Harvey. That is right on the coast of Texas.

Hurricane Harvey made its way up the coast toward Houston, riding the coast and the Gulf of Mexico. When it got to Houston, Texas, it slowed down to some extent, and for 5 days it rained. It rained all day and all night, and the floodwaters rose in the Houston, Harris County area.

All told, we got about 50 inches of rain in those 5 days. Seventy percent of Harris County had floodwaters at the highest time that the flood occurred—70 percent of the Houston, Harris County area.

□ 1200

Mr. Speaker, I grew up in Houston, I remember the hurricanes that came through Houston when I was a kid. Hurricane Carla in 1961—or 1962—we thought that was the biggest thing that ever happened to Houston. But there were others since then.

More recently, we had Tropical Storms Allison and Alicia; and then the Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Humberto, Gustav, Ike. And then we had three holiday floodings in the Houston area on Memorial Day, Labor Day, and tax day—IRS day; and now Hurricane Harvey more recently.

Hurricane Harvey, all of the experts say this is the worst natural disaster that has ever hit the Houston area; some say in North America. But the bayous in Texas, the way the drainage—if I can use that phrase—in the Houston area works: Houston is about 50 miles from the Gulf Coast. It is flat. Some areas are just right at sea level.