

There was no objection.

STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 30 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, February is Career and Technical Education Month. I join the Nation in commending all the educators who play a vital role in preparing America's students for prosperity in the 21st century economy. However, there is often a disconnect between the curriculum taught at schools and the skills required for in-demand jobs.

There are currently 9 million unfilled jobs in the United States, and job creators are struggling to find qualified workers. Career and technical education programs offer a practical solution to bridge this skills gap. These programs offer students hands-on experience and skills that will allow them to excel in the workforce. By equipping students with the competencies they need to be successful on the job, career and technical education programs give participants an invaluable head start.

Building a strong, skilled workforce is a national priority. Now is the time to strengthen career and technical education.

Mr. Speaker, last week, the Committee on Education and the Workforce advanced the College Cost Reduction Act, CCRA, a landmark bill that would lower the cost of postsecondary education and provide much-needed relief for countless students and families.

For too long, colleges have been given free rein to charge exorbitant tuition for degrees without a worthwhile economic benefit. This legislation would ensure that that is no longer the case.

Don't take my word for it. Preston Cooper from the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, FREOPP, states: "The College Cost Reduction Act would hold colleges and universities financially responsible for unpaid Federal student loans while delivering direct aid to institutions with low prices and strong student outcomes." Cooper notes the key provisions of the bill would save billions while lowering tuition costs. Those include loan repayment assistance.

The bill pares down the confusing array of Federal student loan repayment plans to two: a standard mortgage-style plan and an income-driven repayment plan.

Student loan risk sharing: Colleges, rather than students, are responsible for the cost of repayment assistance. Schools would be required to compensate the government for a portion of the forgiven unpaid interest associated with their former students.

Performance bonus: Schools may be eligible for new direct payments from the Federal Government known as

Promise grants. These payments are determined by a formula that rewards colleges for low-income student enrollment, high graduation rates, low tuition prices, and strong graduate earnings outcomes.

Loan limits: The bill caps aggregate student loan limits at \$50,000 for undergraduate students, \$100,000 for graduate students, and \$150,000 for students in graduate professional programs.

□ 2130

Maximum price guarantee: Colleagues must guarantee that the net tuition that students pay in their first year will not increase in subsequent years, for as long as the student is enrolled at the institution.

College is an investment for families, and they should know that graduates are receiving a financial return.

As such, the centerpiece of this legislation builds off of the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act and measures the return on investment of college programs by comparing the ratio of the total price students were charged relative to the value-added earnings graduates receive from their degree.

Not only does this metric provide a sector-neutral way to assess whether students are better or worse off for enrolling in a given program but provides a measure to which institutions can be held financially responsible or financially rewarded for the outcomes of their students.

This means that, among other actions, institutions can reduce or eliminate the risk-sharing penalties by lowering their price, and in doing so, can become eligible for additional performance-based funding, like PROMISE grants that require that, at a minimum, the total price paid by students is at least equal to the value-added earnings of graduates.

For example, Preston Cooper's analysis of the CCRA highlights several institutions who are promoting economic mobility and would benefit substantially under this legislation—the State Technical College of Missouri, which could receive millions in flexible performance-based PROMISE funding.

In fact, Cooper's analysis finds that almost 90 percent of community colleges would financially benefit under the bill after accounting for risk sharing and PROMISE grants.

Most importantly, the bill benefits students by ensuring that as a condition of receiving PROMISE grants, institutions would provide students an up-front, guaranteed price for their entire degree program.

This means that for up to a maximum of 6 years, colleges would lock in students' tuition, making it far easier to budget needed resources, and also to weigh the cost of postsecondary education against perceived future benefits, such as their value-added earnings.

Policy experts across postsecondary education agree that the CCRA will help lower college costs. Here is what others are saying about it:

Andrew Gillen of the Texas Public Policy Foundation:

"Much is in the College Cost Reduction Act, but the most important changes revolve around transparency, financial aid reforms, deregulation, and accountability. . . .

"Overall, the College Cost Reduction Act would be a dramatic improvement for higher education."

Michael Brickman of the American Enterprise Institute:

"The College Cost Reduction Act provides the first substantive and comprehensive proposal in years to reform the way colleges and universities are funded and held accountable. There's a lot to like."

Finally, Beth Akers of the American Enterprise Institute:

"The College Cost Reduction Act represents the largest serious and comprehensive higher education reform package in decades and, in theory, has plenty of bipartisan appeal."

Everyone can agree that college is too expensive and a temporary Band-Aid like one-time loan bailouts simply won't cut it.

The College Cost Reduction Act is a promise from this Congress to the next generation of students that we are pursuing lasting solutions to the value problem in postsecondary education. It is also a promise to taxpayers that they will no longer be forced to pay for someone else's debt.

You don't have to take our word for it, though. Go listen to and read the mounds of evidence in support of the CCRA. I am proud of the work of the committee to advance this bill, and I look forward to a robust debate upon it reaching the House floor.

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

KLAMATH RIVER DAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) until 10 p.m.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about an extremely important project, really a tragedy, that is happening in the very northern part of my district.

This evening, I am joined by my colleague, CLIFF BENTZ, to discuss the Klamath River and the hydroelectric dams that have been around for at least 60 to 100 years providing low-cost, reliable hydroelectric power for many, many residents and up to 70,000 homes.

Now we see the initiation of the destruction of these dams due to filling out the dreams, or what have you, of a handful of environmental groups that have enlisted efforts up there to destroy these dams, ostensibly, to establish a fish population of what is known to be a very warm lake with a lot of FOS feed in it on a very warm river.

Indeed, some of the things that happened to make this system up there work was over 100 years ago an original

reef up in the area there was blown up, and a pathway was carved so that water that would never have gone down the river now it does go down the river.

So there are a lot of facts that we can point out that show this system has actually benefited the river, as well as agriculture and hydroelectric power in the area.

Now there is this major push in this country and in my home State of California to electrify just about everything: Electric vehicles, electric stoves, electric appliances, electric yard equipment, leaf blowers, lawn mowers, everything. They think we are going to electrify all of that at the same time that we are destroying the ability to generate electricity and to deliver it, especially in my home State with these dams being removed, as well as precariously the nuclear power plant, Diablo Canyon. They gave it just a 5-year extension recently; that is 9 percent.

So there is a lot of hypocrisy, talking out of both sides of their mouths, really on the issue.

Mr. Speaker, the area that Mr. BENTZ and I represent will be deeply affected negatively by these removals.

My side of the California-Oregon line has three of the dams, and Mr. BENTZ represents the area that has the one largest dam, the JC Boyle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ) to talk about some of the effects he is seeing in his district, as well as what that means for agriculture and other things.

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAMALFA for allowing me time to address this important issue.

The destruction of the Klamath Dam is a classic case of misdiagnosing the problem and then applying the wrong remedy.

Destroying the dams on the Klamath will not save the salmon. Returning more river habitat to its natural state will not save the salmon. Stealing all the water from farmers and ranchers and putting it in streams will not save the salmon.

Why not?

Because the main problem facing salmon is not the dams. The main problems facing the salmon are the conditions salmon face in the ocean.

There may be, someday, a modest benefit to these fish after the dams have been removed, and when millions upon millions of tax dollars are spent on habitat recovery, but these misplaced efforts will not bring fish runs back.

Whatever the modest improvement might be, it will not be worth the loss of the clean electrical power that has been created by these dams. Certainly, the few additional fish that return will not justify increased flows of water taken from farmers.

Why?

Because, again, habitat is not the issue.

There are hundreds of miles of unused habitat, and the volume of water

is not the issue. For the past 20 years, the water flows, using water taken from farmers, exceeded what would have been available in the Klamath River under natural conditions. Despite this additional water, these fish have not recovered.

Again, the problems facing the fish that need to be solved are those found in the ocean. If further evidence of this is needed, look at what has happened on the Elwha River in Washington State. Two dams were removed over 10 years ago, and there has still been no increase in fish.

Who is it really that bears the brunt of the damage occurring as a result of the destruction of these four dams? Who is it that actually suffers?

First and foremost, the fish. They are the real losers in this entirely misdirected exercise. The National Marine Fisheries Service is being derelict in its duty to study and then protect salmon against the challenges they face in the sea.

Secondly, the farmers of the Klamath Basin. These people are truly bearing the costs of shutting down and now removing these dams. First came the loss of the low-cost electrical power generated by the four dams that made possible movement of massive volumes of irrigation and bird refuge water across the Klamath Basin.

Then came the taking of farmers' water to flush fish down the river to the sea, and now the stealing of even more of the farmers' water to clean up, by flushing to the ocean, a huge portion of the 20 million cubic yards of silt and mud left from destruction of the dams.

It is the total loss of the value of the farmers' land, much of it being farmed by third- and fourth-generation family members, that is the real and unforgivable travesty.

This inequitable and unjust consequence of the imposition of the ESA, the Endangered Species Act, must be and will be addressed in the Subcommittee on Natural Resources.

□ 2140

The third problem we face is the millions of costs in dollars by the electrical ratepayers of Oregon and California and the Nation. Remember, the dams are private property. There is a tax adjustment somewhere on the books of PacifiCorp that I am guessing is in the numerous millions.

Finally, the millions upon millions of wildfowl that once used the Klamath refuges as an important part of the Pacific flyway can't. We will not have the thousands of acres of water that once upon a time supplied these birds with clean water delivered by dam-driven electrical pumps.

There are many more victims of removal, but time does not permit further discussion. Sadly, the one predictable thing that is going to emerge from this billion-dollar exercise in self-destruction will be the ultimate conclusion that the salmon's most chal-

lenging existential issues are ocean trawler and predation based.

These obvious and inconvenient facts will not be accepted until every drop of water has been wrung out of every farm and ranch in the Klamath, taking with it the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers and cities in the upper reaches of that basin.

The spotted owl debacle was the last time this many thousands of people and businesses were sacrificed up on the altar of flawed science. The last time the ESA ruined this many people's lives, it was loggers and their communities. This time it is the ranchers and farmers, who, according to courts, bureaucrats, and environmentalists, are expendable. I assure you they are not.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BENTZ for his time and leadership on his side of the lineup there. Indeed, it is good to work together and spotlight and fight the fight on this.

Indeed, it will not help the people in the area who have largely not been listened to. When seminars are held up there, they are excluded unless they are shown to be willing to go along with this, which is tragic and unjust.

Pictured here is one of the still existing dams. One is gone. This is one of the remaining Copco dams, as well as the Boyle up north of it a little more and then the Iron Gate farther south.

You can already see what they call dewatering, where they have drained the lake behind that. You can see—it may be hard on this camera here—this black plume of muck and crud that are on either side of the dam as the lake was drained. Eighty or 100 years' worth of silt have built up, and so now you see that building up all through the system of the Klamath River, the area they claim to be saving and making as a salmon habitat.

This is not an impressionist painting here. This is actually is a blown-up photograph of how the river looks presently. It is this black, rolling—basically black water. I am not talking about the Doobie Brothers song either. It is not that positive. This is a very ugly situation, full of sediment, full of algae and other things that have been sitting at the bottom of the lake for a long time.

Wherever this makes its way down to the plume—which is at least 130 miles now; 130 miles of the Klamath River looks like this. What it has done to the wildlife in the area, the fish or the wildlife that would come down to the water and drink from it—the fish kills on this are just appalling. Again, what we are talking about is the whole effort to ostensibly save fish and create a habitat for them.

You can see here in this photo; this is the main stem of the river. This is a tributary filling in here. This water is still off-color a little bit because it is wintertime flows, but you can see that greenish, bluish color there. This is the brown and black stuff that is coming

down the main stem where they have done the work already. It is appalling. It is unbelievable.

Yet, what do we hear from the authorities on this, from Fish and Game and the KRC, as it is known, the shell corporation that was created in order to take the liability from that? At least the FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, ruled that the shell corporation did not have the financial wherewithal to endure what was going to be the full aspect of the possible cost of this.

\$450 million was put together more or less to do all this work; \$250 million from the taxpayers of California as part of the so-called water bond, and \$200 million from the ratepayers of PacifiCorp, mostly in Oregon, have kicked in extra money in their monthly bill to pay for this.

They are expecting cost overruns on something of this magnitude. The States of California and Oregon had to come in basically with a line of credit backing this up, so the taxpayers are going to be on the hook for even more as more and more of the disaster is unleashed upon the whole Klamath system here.

Here is the tragedy right here. As I was starting to mention, the entities involved, Fish and Game, the KRC, on one hand they are saying this loss of wildlife—right here in this photograph are three deer that went out there to drink and got caught in the muck and have basically died this miserable death because they couldn't extract themselves from that. A couple of them, Fish and Game came out and finally just shot them, because they didn't have the facilities to go out and rescue these animals. This is the cost here. This is the cost.

Now, they are claiming on one hand, well, this is unforeseen. How can it be unforeseen if you have a plan here? You say you have a plan. Well, everybody starts out with a plan, right? This isn't going according to plan.

Then, on the other hand, the same groups will tell you it was foreseen that a lot of the yellow perch and other things would be casualties in this, will be collateral damage. Indeed, they tell us they have a plan, but if you are a farmer in the area and you accidentally trap one of these threatened or endangered fish that happens to get into your stream, even though you have fish screens and this and that, in order to go out and water your crops, they come down on you like you are a felon. You lose one fish, and everybody loses their minds over that, but this is an acceptable damage here. This is acceptable to them because the agenda really is about the removal of the dams. It isn't so much about the fish, because you are going to find in the long term, this is not going to work out.

This tragedy you are seeing, this is really, really hurting obviously the wildlife but also really the mental effects to the people who live there, to

see and hear these deer bawling out there just outside their homes they have on the Copco Lake area and such.

Here we have some more of the collateral damage. You can see scattered through here some of the dead fish along the shore there. This stuff is so nasty that they can't breathe very long in that. As soon as that plume hits them, as soon as it hits the whole 200 miles of this river, all the way out to the ocean, to the mouth of the Klamath, it is all going to be a killing habitat for them.

How long will it take for all this silt to—the folks involved estimate 6 to 7 million cubic yards. I think the number is going to be more like 20 million cubic yards. When you look at some of the photos there, there is still a lot of residual silt and stuff built up on the banks that has not been swept out of that initial volley when they blast the holes in the bottom of the dam where they had the original drains in construction.

There is much more silt to still affect the system. Guess what, these folks are running on guesses. A lot of this has been based on somebody's term paper a long time ago. When we have had these discussions with folks, they just gloss over the silt. Is it really about saving fish, or is it about collecting four of these trophies, as they brag on and on about this being the largest dam removal project in the history of the country?

They have more on the list. They have more targets. It is dominoes. The extremists in this environmental movement want to continue to topple dams. My colleagues up in Washington are seeing this discussion happening right now with the Snake River. As Mr. BENTZ mentioned, Elwha has already been done, yet they are not seeing the recovered population of fish. Right now we are wiping out the population of fish in there. How long will it take for all of that silt to transition out 200 miles worth of river? How many years?

The lifecycle of the salmon is about 3 years. Will they be able to hold off for 3 years out in the ocean, or will they come back up and try to spawn? Once the entire lifecycle is wiped out, then you don't have that fish anymore.

The flaw in the thinking is indeed this is more about politics. It is political science, not actual science. These folks are hell-bent on removing a lot of infrastructure in this country in Oregon and California because they see this as a sign of progress.

We need to build more water storage in California. We need to have more projects that store the massive amounts of water that right now are escaping to the Pacific Ocean in our so-called atmospheric rivers that are occurring.

□ 2150

Now we are rating them on a number system like we do hurricanes on a 1 through 5 AR. What used to be for a big storm or tropical, pineapple express,

now they have a scientific name in order to scare the public with it.

Yes, the conditions are serious. We have high winds right now, and a lot of water, but it is also partly a manipulation by government in order to exercise more control over the water supply and the infrastructure and keep people in just a little bit more fear.

Again, more of the fish they purport to be saving, preserving, and trying to build a population of is for how many years going to be damaged and destroyed by the destruction of just one dam so far?

One of the four is the only one that has been completely destroyed. Others, again, they have started draining from the bottom there, and that is where all this material is coming from.

It is, indeed, unscientific and much more about power and politics.

Over here a little farther away from me, Mr. Speaker, you see many dead fish laying on the shoreline here all through here. There are probably 40 in this picture if it is discernible enough on the camera there.

This is the same all the way up and down; so far about 130 miles of river.

Are we really doing any good here?

Politically, I guess we are, but as far as being real on helping species, I hope this is a case study because there are very few silver linings that we can find coming out of this. The loss of the hydroelectric power, the loss of the locals there, I have hardly even touched on the infrastructure damage locally there because with the drainage just so far in these lakes, people are losing their groundwater wells that have been supported by this water supply. We have wells drying up.

We have our roads all along the edge are having sloughing now. Mr. Speaker, you can see a big crack like an earthquake hit it and split it down the middle. That is sloughing off down there.

The KRC, as well as FERC, are over-seeing them supposedly, and they are supposed to be mitigating this. So far, the mitigation fund has disappeared. It is gone. It is not that they spent the money, we can't find the money. We can't find anyone there to talk to. There is no 1-800 number for people to talk about these damages.

As far as people's homes, one lady we are talking to, her home up on the hillside used to overlook beautiful Copco Lake but is now overlooking the mud flats there. It is subject to slippage as well. There are folks with big mortgages there, they still have payments. Also, they still have to pay their taxes, and they are not going to be able to recoup the cost of any of this because now property values have been basically destroyed with the dams.

What are they supposed to do?

KRC and FERC are not coming back in and, indeed, they are reneging on some of the things that were agreed to with FERC as part of this plan. Indeed, it is not a plan. It is political science forced upon these folks. It feels like the people of Siskiyou County and that

region up there, every time there is some great idea in Sacramento on species or on conservation, they are being subject to it.

I say great idea facetiously because these are folks who have been up there, in some cases, six and seven generations producing for all of us. They are producing the food on your table and are helping to be part of the process of producing electricity to keep your lights on. All they want to do is do it honorably and do it well. These aren't drug dealers. These aren't people doing bad things. These are people trying to produce things that Americans need. They are made to feel like criminals, they are made to feel like subjects, and they are made to feel like constant victims because of some idea coming out of an urban area and coming out of somebody wanting to say: Oh, let's conserve wolves now. Let's introduce wolves to the area and we can wipe out the cattle growers that way.

It is not a success so far. They say: Well, that is still to come. It will be better later.

How many years is this going to take?

How many fish generations are going to be wiped out to do this?

As Mr. BENTZ was saying: At what cost?

Because this is still not an ideal river. This river was actually modified to make the flows happen down the river where it used to go to a different zone where there had been a refuge. It was an amazing area for ducks and other wildlife, the Lost River.

So we have lost a lot with this. People actually can do good things, and there is a balance before government steps in at the behest of environmentalists and environmental groups that are manipulating some of our folks in the Tribal community up there to be part of this.

So here, symbolically, this single dead fish, the thing that supposedly we are trying to save, is being wiped out.

A \$450 million initial price tag, the loss of electric power, the loss of the people locally of their water supply, their roads, their infrastructure as the people destroying the dams are driving hell-bent all over this place with equipment much heavier than the roads can handle, and there is no plan.

KRC is reneging on what they told the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission they would do. So we need to hold their feet to the fire on that.

However, in that the three dams are still existing there, I have this crazy idea: Why don't we just leave them alone?

We have seen just a microcosm, just a taste, of how bad it is going to be for the habitat and the destruction that they are causing by the destruction of the dams.

We are at a point right now that the environmental groups have a choke hold on Sacramento, much of Washington, D.C., the court system with liberal judges who have been appointed

who don't listen to anybody and don't listen to science, instead they listen to a handful of folks and don't look at the balance of what it means to the entire community up there and other places around the country.

I only hope that maybe the Supreme Court rulings on some other decisions will help put balance back into the argument on how extreme either the Clean Water Act has been abused, the Endangered Species Act, and other codes and other things that have really not been codified by Congress but given broad powers to these agencies to do as they see fit. What is called the Chevron decision, the Supreme Court will be looking at pretty soon in order to re-evaluate just because a Federal agency rules it a certain way doesn't mean they are necessarily infallible. These are human beings too with biases.

The way we see so many things politicized these days, how are we to trust them even more, especially when just common sense and science is showing that this ain't working?

It certainly doesn't work for people. It certainly doesn't work for those who are providing.

Where is the mitigation fund to help the folks?

FERC needs to be helping answer that question. KRC is the shell corporation that was created out of thin air so the utility could leave town and not have the liability. Instead, the liability created was put into a shell corporation, and once that money runs out, the \$450 million is taken from taxpayers via the bond and ratepayers from PacifiCorp, and it will run out. They wasted the first \$40 or \$50 million just talking about and planning for it.

Where does it go from there?

People of the State of California and Oregon will have to follow up with the disaster that will undoubtedly be seen after this with more money out of their pockets for something that at the end of the day was created by their actions.

When this system was put in with the Klamath project which was dedicated to returning World War I veterans to foster agriculture in an area, and, indeed, it was amazing agriculture as long as it lasted, the water flows that come down the Klamath wouldn't even be possible without some of that work that was done. A lot of that water would be lost to basins where, again, it was good for other wildlife, but that water wouldn't be regulatable or getting down the river so you would have the luxury of year-round water flow to meet these demands of flush flows for fish during certain times of the year or for rituals further down the river. We don't have the luxury for that.

So the Klamath Lake is tied into that, the Klamath project is tied into that, and the benefit of having hydroelectric power, which is the greenest, cleanest, and most available baseload power we could get, and we are seeing that slowly being destroyed right now. They want to have it done before the end of the year probably because

maybe there will be a change this coming election, and maybe there will be something to stall some of this destruction and nonsense.

If they complete it here, they will keep looking at other places. They will keep looking at the Snake River up there in Washington, another dam over in Mendocino County there which many people rely on in order to supply water to agricultural crops and give flexibility to the system there. They are not going to stop here. They are not going to stop here.

So the timeline, again, they hope to have it accomplished by September, but they are going to run into some problems with that as well with the destruction just on logistics.

We are basing this, again, on unproven science. Salmon populations in other places where dams have been destroyed have not rebounded like they would.

So what is the bang for the buck on this?

As Mr. BENTZ was talking about, how much is happening down river out in the ocean to affect these fish populations that has nothing to do with what a farmer might be doing who might accidentally get a fish?

They have spent plenty of money and made a lot of effort to put fish screens on their intakes or destroying these dams. We are not getting the bang for the buck. People have a part of this too. People are part of the ecology. Hydroelectric power is a beautiful thing. This discussion isn't over by any stretch because they are going to be hell-bent on keeping on doing this and destroying the livelihoods, the economy, and the good that has been up in this area along the Klamath dam.

Now, instead, as I have shown you tonight, Mr. Speaker, is the destruction and the pollution that has come from unleashing this.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we will be back, and I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at noon.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-3031. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, Chief Counsel's Office, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Bank Community Development Investments [Docket ID: OCC-2023-0005] (RIN: 1557-AF19) received February 1, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.