

these fires is unprecedented. Just as we have come together to fight these fires, we must come together to bring real relief to families again who have lost everything.

In our country's history, the Federal Government has never placed restrictions and conditions on emergency disaster aid to our people.

STRENGTHENING AND PROMOTING INNOVATION IN THE NATION'S CYBERSECURITY—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 119-13)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LUTTRELL) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that takes additional steps to deal with the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13694 of April 1, 2015 (Blocking the Property of Certain Persons Engaging in Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities), as amended by Executive Order 13757 of December 28, 2016 (Taking Additional Steps to Address the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities), and further amended by Executive Order 13984 of January 19, 2021 (Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities).

Significant malicious cyber-enabled activities continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. To address this continuing national emergency and protect against the growing and evolving threat of malicious cyber-enabled activities against the United States and United States allies and partners, including the increasing threats by foreign actors of unauthorized access to critical infrastructure, ransomware, and cyber-enabled intrusions and sanctions evasion, section 9 of the Executive Order I have issued updates the criteria to be used by the Secretary of the Treasury in designating a person for sanctions for engaging in specified malicious cyber-enabled activities and related conduct.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 16, 2025.

ADDRESSING CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we see it every year, especially in the West. When fire season hits, it can be very devastating. Some years were better than others. In the northern part of the State that I represent and some of my colleagues in surrounding States, we got hit pretty hard in the forested areas, some of the grassland areas, et cetera.

As you know right now, southern California, the Los Angeles area, is taking it really badly with the annual Santa Ana winds. It is an extraordinary amount of wind and strength of the winds, driving the fire to a point that hasn't been seen in at least 60 years in that area. It is devastating towns and causing unmeasurable damage so far.

The fires are still raging. It is by the grace of God that maybe the wind will stop. Maybe it will shift somewhat and give the firefighters a better chance to get ahead of it. We know they are valiantly fighting. As it is right now firefighters are coming from all over the State and neighboring States as well, to weigh in on that with the aircraft, the equipment, and the firefighters on the ground to make the stand.

It is going to be extremely difficult until the winds die down. We pray for rain to help them out as well. It is not unfamiliar for me in my northern California district with several large fires in the last 6 years. We have had the Paradise, California, fire known as the Camp fire, which burned many acres. Importantly, 90 percent of the town was burned down, and 85 people lost their lives with that.

Other towns in my own district were consumed as well in later fires in Greenville and Canyon Dam. In a little town called Doyle, it blew right through part of that. It happens year after year.

It really boils down to: What are we doing for preparedness? What are we doing to treat the lands and have the conditions that we need to be more successful? You are not going to prevent fire completely. You are going to have it. When one occurs, you need to be able to have a fighting chance, and our firefighters have the ability to do that.

□ 1145

Mr. Speaker, joining me today during this Special Order is my colleague from

Oregon (Mr. BENTZ). We share that Oregon-California border, and we frequently encounter many of the same issues on fire, on forestry, on water and water issues.

Mr. Speaker, to tell his story about what has been going on in Oregon, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ).

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for allowing me to join this Special Order today and discuss this horrid and tragic situation in Southern California, truly a national emergency.

Note that I call this a national emergency. Why? Because soon Congress will be sending hundreds of billions of dollars to California to help clean up this mess and rebuild.

The most basic level of common sense demands that we not send billions upon billions to California without first looking carefully at the causes of this catastrophe, and when they are identified, making sure these causes will be addressed and resolved.

The sad benefit that will come from understanding the cause of these southern California fires and also of understanding why California's fire protection systems failed isn't limited to California. Every State is facing hotter and dryer conditions. Every State must do a far better job adapting to these conditions. We need to look at what causes these horrific fires, what they did wrong or what we do wrong in trying to put them out, and then apply those lessons accordingly.

You might ask why these questions were not asked and answered in any of the other fires that we have been suffering that were referred to by Congressman LAMALFA a few minutes ago. We have certainly had enough up in Oregon and northern California, but people in positions of authority perhaps haven't been listening. Perhaps it is because those affected didn't have the political clout or perhaps the actions that needed to be taken such as cleaning up our forests are viewed as politically incorrect.

There is little doubt that this time around those who have been hurt in southern California are politically powerful, and they can do something about this, and we want them to. That means doing something about adapting to warmer, hotter, and dryer.

There is a separation, I guess, in how we approach our response to changing climate. One approach is to invest billions, as California has done, in mitigation, that is reducing CO₂, and the other is to recognize it is going to stay this way for a very long time.

It was said by members of the climate commission at Oregon State University that if we stopped all CO₂ production today, our climate would not improve for between 30 and 40 years. During this period of time, we are going to see a repeat of what we are seeing in southern California unless we do something about it.

What is that something?

Well, the first thing to do is recognize that the money you put into mitigation is not going to be available for

adaptation. When I say, “adaptation,” I mean protecting people from the kinds of events we are now seeing occur in southern California. We absolutely have to do this. Wishing this away or blaming it on climate change and shrugging ones’ shoulders that this isn’t happening will not work.

California is raising literally billions, billions, of dollars through clean fuel standards, cap-and-trade devices, and other things, but they are not investing it in protecting their people. They are not. I would hope that those who are watching Congressman LAMALFA and me today would reach out to their Congress folks and say we want you to do something. We want you to not just come in and help repair and clean up, which we will do, but, also, we want you to try to stop the damage that is being done to our forests. We actually want you to do something.

There will be an opportunity, I think perhaps as early as next week, to vote on BRUCE WESTERMAN’S Fix Our Forests Act. It would go a long way to making our forests look like this. Why wouldn’t we be doing this? What is happening now is certain folks are filing lawsuits to stop us from going into the woods and cleaning them up so that they are not destroyed by wildfire. We can do the same thing in places like southern California by working on water delivery systems and by working on storing more water and having better abilities to put out fires once they start.

Even though this was a, I hope, rare event with these cataclysmically driven winds, this will happen again. This happened in Oregon over and over, it has happened in northern California over and over, and it is time for us to do something about it.

The people who are listening today can do something about it. They can get on the phone and call. They can call their Congressman or -woman and say that we need your help.

I thank Congressman LAMALFA again for taking the time today to bring this issue to the attention of the American people. I think it is incumbent upon the American people to step up, call their Congressman and let’s do something about it.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BENTZ’ perspective on that as a neighbor, and our constituents year after year suffer some of these same issues. You were showing that poster of our forested areas in the north and in the forests in the west you have the opportunity to manage those lands to be much more fire resilient.

Again, you are not going to completely prevent fire, but you can have fire where it can be a lot more manageable or simpler to put out when it is not raging so much.

You have here an example, on the right of this, of an unmanaged forest. You see how crowded, how dense that is? That means you have more trees, dense trees, and the trees are competing with the limited water supply.

They are then weaker; they are more prone to have insects come and drill and kill the trees and just make it a tinderbox.

Over here, this is managed land. If you look at old photographs from before we started putting all the fires out Smokey Bear style 100 years ago, forested lands were a lot more—had a lot more open space in it, meadow areas, and a lot more gaps between the trees because there was more of a natural effect of natural fire going through and taking out a lot of the lower brush, the pine needles and all that, and the big trees with their thicker bark stand and go on.

You had lots of fire back then too, before man intervening, but there was a balance of nature of that. We started with the Smokey Bear program and put out all fires, which is good, but we stopped doing the management in between that nature would do, thinning forests, removing brush because up until the first few decades of the Smokey Bear program and putting out the fires program we were still managing the forests. We were utilizing those wood products. What nature might have burned out we were taking out, and that is where our wood and paper products were coming from.

In about the 1970s when the Endangered Species Act’s efforts were kicking in more so then it got a lot harder to get timber permits. It got more difficult to do anything in the forests especially on Federal lands where environmental organizations were trying to basically shut them down and add more and more monuments, for example, or wilderness areas that are basically no-touch zones.

Here is another example of a forested area. This part on the right is an area that had burned out a long time ago on public land. Over here, the fire affected this private land as the government’s fire basically spreads into everybody’s land. What you see there is that the private parties got back to cleaning up their land and planting it back. You see those trees that are, oh, maybe 15 years old, I will guess, they are coming back. That forest is coming back.

The Federal land that is not being managed is still the same as it was. You see dead snags. You see brush coming in. You see this is going to be a fire zone when all the brush burns the next time there is a fire in that area.

Why is it our friends, our colleagues in southern California have to be subjected to this because they also have management needs in their adjacent areas, part of the moonscape you see in southern California right here. Some of their challenges include—they are not so forested in the areas closest to the cities. They have more of this. They have more of the hilly areas with a lot of brush on it like that. They need fuels reduction projects too in the more arid southern California. Their forests are a little further east, a little higher up. They have attempted fuels reduction projects, but the environ-

mental movement sometimes shuts them down.

Let me tell you about those a little bit. There is one that was under way along the Angeles Crest Highway corridor, one that was completed and did 1,800 acres. It took 2 years of analysis to approve the decision to complete that where a simple environmental review would have been done sooner and only affected a small amount of acreage.

A very noble project that would have helped would have been near the Eaton fire in southern California, which would have been initiated in August 2020. If you look at that project, it was clear—it isn’t clear if it was actually approved or implemented because the effect was that there is very little brush clearing that got done there.

When you boil that down to what does that actually mean, it is that if you don’t clear the brush, if you are held up due to environmental regulations and delayed permit periods, then you are going to be fire prone. The Santa Ana winds are going to come each year no matter what. In this case, they burned through that brush and came right up to the edge of town. We have seen that in Altadena where in one case here we have what is known as San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, and the Eaton fire has burned through that. This monument was recently expanded even more so. What happens with a national monument? As I mentioned a moment ago, it becomes almost hands off, don’t touch, don’t manage. No equipment can go out there and do fuel removals and very little other can happen in national monument or wilderness areas.

In the designation, it did acknowledge the risk of wildfire and the need to manage it. But what happens? Lawsuits, litigation, and the hands-off approach happens; as a result, the fire that started in that area is what fed into and consumed part of Altadena in southern California.

Now we will talk about the Pacific Palisades, which is the first one greatly affected as you have seen burning much of that community down.

They had a safety project there that maybe in and of itself would not have been the complete be-all and end-all for helping them. You still need the brush lands work to be done so that fire can’t come rushing through in areas so rapidly. In the Pacific Palisades, they had a pole line that they were going to upgrade from wooden poles to steel poles and also upgrade the equipment, harden the lines so they are much less susceptible to fire or high winds. In which case, a lot of those winds in my area of northern California if you got a wind warning, then they shut down the power, a Public Safety Power Shutoff. It is like a Third World country. We have to shut off the power because the wind blows. It is a preemptive effort so that branches and things don’t blow into the power lines and cause fire like we have seen happen at least a couple

times on big fires in northern California and other areas. When we prevent this work, we put ourselves at greater risk.

In Pacific Palisades they had a pole line they wanted to change out, as I said, with the harder system lines and steel poles, and they were prevented from doing so.

Let's see the plant one here. As the work was being done, somebody came along and claimed that they had an endangered species here. This is a variety of vetch, milk vetch, and they claim it is unique only to that area. It was somewhere around the area where they were changing the poles, and they made them stop the project and put back whatever vetch they may have been disturbing there in the process. That is the one unique to that area supposedly.

Here is when it grows all over the place in northern California either wild or as a crop. People use it for a cover crop to put nitrogen back in the soil. It is really hard to tell the difference, but it is something the environmental movement uses the slightest difference to make that something, oh, my gosh, we have to stop this because it is an endangered species. That is pretty dubious.

I can relate also a recent story when they are talking water storage and water projects, the Tellico Dam, which you may have heard of in the late 1960s, early 1970s that they were putting in place in Tennessee, part of the Tennessee Valley Authority, that it was going to provide massive benefits to the people of the area with hydroelectric power, stored water for water use, flood control, recreation, all the good things.

□ 1200

Somebody from a university was out there poking around, and they thought they found an endangered species that they dubbed the snail darter. For several years, it was the battle over the snail darter. Nobody could really prove anything.

Because the project was so important, after other efforts were exhausted, a bill was run through Congress in 1979 to make it where the Tellico Dam could be built. There was still ongoing litigation after that, but it got to operate.

Finally, what we have learned many years later is that the TVA was operating pretty well and that the biologists at that time somehow had information to remove the snail darter from endangered to threatened status in 1984. In 2022, it was removed from the endangered species list.

Here is the kicker. Just this month, a study revealed that the snail darter was not a distinct species. It wasn't a distinct species.

Look at these two different forms of the same plants. In this case, it is a weed because it is not helping anything. It is a crop in some areas with the vetch.

The snail darter was not a distinct species but actually an eastern population of what is known as the star-gazing darter.

This really raises concerns about how genuine the efforts of the environmental left are, to make claims about species identification being so narrowly specific to a particular area.

This is what we and the folks in the Pacific Palisades get to suffer with on at least having that pole line able to be helpful and not furthering the fire with a hardened, newer pole line.

So many things are California problems, we hear time and time again. We have to ask what is going on with the leadership in our State.

I am sorry this has to be a problem for the other 49 States. What we do sometimes has to flow over to others and costs taxpayers of the rest of the country on these issues.

We hear a lot of talk here about conditions being placed on the aid for southern California. There are not conditions for what is happening right now. The firefighters are being sent. Every effort is being made to put the needs of getting the fire out and helping the people who are in immediate need to have the shelter and other things they need in order to get through this timeline.

I guess what we are talking about, and what Mr. BENTZ, our Speaker, and others are talking about, is: What is the accountability, further down the line, on the many billions they are going to be seeking in order to rebuild?

It isn't unheard of to have conditions on other situations in the rebuilding phase. This is the emergency phase. Nobody questions immediate help for the emergency phase, and that is what is disingenuous about this argument that is going on. Nothing is being held back from getting through the emergency timeline here. We are going to get the fire out, and we are going to get the people who are displaced in at least a fairly comfortable situation until the slog that goes through rebuilding happens.

We have lived it right up in Paradise, California. We are grateful for much great help up there, but in Paradise, conditions had to be put on rebuilding homes out of resilient materials. The power lines are being undergrounded up there. There are trees that are being removed. The dead trees and damaged trees are being removed. The landscape will be different so that Paradise does not have the same issue in 40 years. We will have resilient homes that will stand up to fire. We will have the things in place that are going to make it resilient.

I think it is pretty fair to ask, if billions are going to be sent to anybody after a hurricane or after a flood, what are you doing in the flood zone about making sure you have strong levees or maybe not actually building in a particular floodplain that is highly vulnerable, and in these other zones?

It is reasonable to ask these questions. We are talking about 50 States' taxpayer dollars here.

"Oh, you are so insensitive to talk about costs and money," and this and that. No. We are getting through the emergency. We are helping people, and there will be help after, but it isn't unreasonable to say: What does it take to put things back in a way that is going to be stronger and more resilient going forward, especially when we are talking about many, many billions?

As I have said, they have done that in the other areas where I have been affected or my people have been affected. It is not unreasonable to say you need to have harder and more resilient areas that are going to be fire resistant. In this case, in southern California, we want them to have these things.

Let's talk about the water supply for a moment. We found out that, as we have heard time and again, the hydrants ran out of water. There are several pieces to that story. There are some realities, too, such as how much you can push through the fire hydrants for a fire that size. Yes, that is a reality. What happened?

Let's back up from that a little bit. They did have a 117-million-gallon reservoir that was empty. The Santa Ynez Reservoir had been emptied for the purpose of repairs. I guess that is okay. We need to repair things, but what is the timeline for that?

They emptied that 117-million-gallon reservoir last February. My understanding of it is that they waited a couple of months to start to put out a bid for the repairs that were needed on the cover of the reservoir. They don't want foreign things to get in there because it is a drinking water supply, as well. Then, they didn't really let out the contract, it is my understanding, until November.

They lost 9 months fooling around in order to do something that is so critically important. Water supply in southern California is a pretty big deal, and it took that long.

I am not sure that any repairs have even been started yet, from the photographs and such. Maybe they are doing some preliminaries. They say it is supposed to be ready by February, so we will see.

They had to draw on three 1-million-gallon water tanks to try to keep the Pacific Palisades hydrant system going. If you had the ability to have that 117-million-gallon source ready, that would have lasted a heck of a lot longer than the few hours the hydrant system did, just based on the 3 million gallons in the tanks there.

We want to talk water supply in California anyway. Gavin Newsom, the Governor, is not helping much. Indeed, his legions of regulators are stopping the water that needs to be stored in California and moved from the places where it is plentiful to the places where it is needed more so, such as the aqueduct system and storing water in the San Luis Reservoir.

There are two sets of pumps, a Federal set of pumps and a State set of pumps. The one the State of California governs is running 15 percent of capacity or so right now. Why isn't that running at full blast, topping off San Luis Reservoir, which the San Joaquin Valley and southern California can draw upon?

We have hundreds of thousands of acres of crops that have been idled because there is not enough water. We have enough water. Even in more drought-like years, the amount of water that runs out to the ocean is incredible. It would blow your mind what we are not taking advantage of.

This is a poster I had. It is a little bit older here, but it illustrates the basic issue that is more or less true every year. The amount of water that flows into the delta right here—this is the middle of the timeline—is about 7 million acre-feet.

Lake Oroville and Lake Shasta combined, when they are full, hold 8 million acre-feet, and the amount here in this illustration shows about 6 million of it went flowing out to the Pacific Ocean.

People ought to be angry over this, that we are not capturing more of that water and topping off here in the delta. The San Luis Reservoir would be just down from the delta a little bit.

Two years ago, remember, we had an amazing amount of rain in California in the Sierras, and we were able to top up everything. Tulare Lake was re-created once again. It is an area in the San Joaquin Valley that, in the past, had been kind of a lake. Because of farming and such, they have been able to recapture that, some of the richest land making some of the best crops in the world come from out there. That is how much water, rain, and snow we had, and it topped off just about all the dams and lakes everywhere.

Then, we had a similar amount in 2023, yet the San Luis Reservoir did not get filled for the 2023–2024 season. It got barely over halfway full because they couldn't run the pumps. Why? It was because of a fish situation they had in the delta. The crazy thing is that the fish that they are trying to save actually had come in in a heavier population than normal, so in the process of pumping moving water, they trapped a little higher number of fish than normal, too, because there were more fish to begin with. So with that, they said you have already exceeded the quota of fish you can take for this year.

They ratcheted the pumps down, and they weren't able to top off the San Luis Reservoir or deliver water to the San Joaquin Valley or to the aqueduct that would have helped maybe top off some more of the reservoirs in southern California.

Santa Ynez Reservoir is one we have heard about, and I have spoken about it a little bit. This is the picture of that. This is more or less full. Over here is what it looks like empty. It kind of reminds you of a stadium or a

racetrack or something. When they have the ability through the aqueduct to bring that water from somewhere else and fill that up, the poster I just showed you, Mr. Speaker, the amount of water flowing out to the Pacific would fill that in a matter of minutes if you somehow harnessed all that and dropped it in there. It would have to come down through aqueducts and other means, or they even have wells, as I understand, that can fill that if they don't have the upper lakes above that the ability to fill that.

What it boils down to is that our leaders in California, starting with the Governor, have not been pushing in the direction that would give us the water supply we need that would help everybody and help with the crops.

Instead, as I mentioned, it comes down to fish in the delta. It comes down to the delta smelt, which so many of you have probably heard of around the country.

Why do you even know about that, Mr. Speaker? It is because, time and time again, we talk about the water woes of California.

So many people in this country enjoy the crops that are grown in California. You can see here, Mr. Speaker, walnuts, for example, just about 100 percent of what Americans consume is grown in California, and almonds, tomatoes, mandarins at about 96 percent, and avocados. We are heavy in avocados, and probably in this area, we are talking not far from the fires. Grapes, wine grapes, so much of it comes from our home State. Americans enjoy these products, like olive oil and table olives.

If it is not grown in these areas, then where do you want it to be grown? Where do you want it to come from?

A mismanaged water supply means it doesn't happen in California, which means 90-something percent or above of all those crops coming from there will have to come from a foreign country, if at all.

That means people's choices have changed. It means their diets have changed. That is why California's water is important to everybody. That is why the management of it is important. That is why the management of these forested lands and grasslands are important. It is because these have an effect, too. They have an effect on air quality.

When we had a huge fire in my district known as the Dixie fire a couple of years ago, it ended up being a 1-million-acre forest fire and consumed a couple of towns, which I mentioned to you, Mr. Speaker.

That smoke plume was big enough and dense enough that it was actually able to rise up, come all across the country, and affect the East Coast. People in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York were actually told not to go outside or do exercises on those days for health reasons.

Mr. Speaker, remember the fires from Canada about 1 year ago? They affected people in the same way. The Ca-

nadian ones were not that far from here. This one came all the way from California.

Our water supply would help L.A. and others to be able to have a better chance of fighting fires by keeping all their reservoirs full.

Governor Newsom wanted to claim that all the reservoirs were full. They sure aren't all full up north, are they? That is where the water comes from, by and large.

This effect we are talking about is important to all Americans, especially if you want to keep the food products that you are used to coming and if you want to have the air quality not affect the East Coast from giant fires. It is also just the idea of why we would have our fellow Americans suffering from this needlessly because of a lack of leadership that is coming, in this case, from Sacramento, as they kowtow much more to the environmental groups to keep their records at 100 percent rather than doing forest management and brush management, which I showed you here, and kowtowing to where they found a variety of vetch that is indistinguishable from the vetch that grows everywhere else.

I face that in my home county, too. They are looking for things in order to stop people from being able to build homes on the foothills. They look for the species of the day to do that.

It is basically trying to distinguish different subspecies that they are so infinitesimally able to distinguish that it really turns into a game. We saw that with the snail darter, and we are finding it out with more and more things.

□ 1215

A fuels reduction project would be tremendously helpful. We need much more green light. We need the Forest Service, which manages or has under its purview 193 million acres nationwide.

When they came up with the plan about 3 or 4 years ago that said we want to manage 20 million acres over 10 years, that is 2 million acres a year, and 2 million is about 1 percent of their 193 million. That means it would take 100 years to get over all the lands.

Well, the trees grow a lot faster than a 100-year cycle, especially the small trees and the understory I was talking about that creates the fire-prone areas. A dense forest is one that is going to be a tinderbox, and we see it and experience it all the time.

It takes leadership on that, and it takes having the public understand. When we talk about forest management, people are scared to death by a handful of environmental groups: You guys are going to clear cut everything from here to Oregon or wherever.

That is not the case. This isn't the 1880s, the bad days, when they kind of came and plundered the West, seeking wealth, and all that.

We have rules. We have regulations. We have smart people that manage these and want to take care of their assets. These are family operations in

many cases. They go on generation after generation. Yet, they are having that taken away—farming, ranching, timbering, mining.

I will talk about mining for a moment.

California is trying to push these mandates instead of focusing on the stuff people need, such as highways that flow and water being stored.

Let's look at the dam there. We have an opportunity when we are talking about water supply here. This is Shasta Dam in my district in northern California. It is a Federal project. I think we have an opportunity in this Trump administration coming up to resume some of the work that President Trump led during his first term to talk about a possible raise of Shasta Dam.

This dam was actually designed to be much taller when it was built back in the late 1930s, and it would be pretty simple to add 18 more feet to that. That is the plan that is being looked at. It is called a quick and dirty 18 feet. There is nothing quick about any of this process.

That would add 630,000 more acre-feet. Can you imagine that?

Mr. Speaker, that Santa Ynez reservoir poster I showed—instead of gallons, you put it in acre-feet—holds about 40 acre-feet, okay? This would add 630,000 more acre-feet to this dam that already holds 4.5 million acre-feet.

This is a key to the State water supply right here, Shasta and then Lake Oroville, right in my backyard at home, which is another 3.5 million acre-feet. We wouldn't have that much if we didn't have the vision to build those in the 1930s and 1960s under Democratic leadership. President Roosevelt and Governor Pat Brown had the vision for it. What is going on now?

Everything is all about going into a shell and living in a cave under some environmental interpretation. Where is the leadership?

We also have the opportunity in the western part of my district to build Sites Reservoir in Colusa County. It would hold about 1.5 million acre-feet. Imagine 1.5 million more acre-feet, plus 600,000 more acre-feet from Lake Shasta, 2.1 million acre-feet of water we are losing and already have available to us. We are just losing it out to the Pacific.

The poster showed how much water is going out to the ocean that isn't being used for human purposes. Do you know what? That water flowing to the delta isn't even helping the delta. The delta smelt is basically extinct, and they do what they call trawls. They look for it. They try and capture and do counts on them.

We have put so much more water through there. Starting in 1992, legislation here caused 800,000 acre-feet to be taken away from farming and ranching at that point and push more through the delta. Those numbers have completely gone up since then. The State water board is contemplating even more being pushed out to the delta, freshwater being turned into saltwater.

Some people say: Well, you can do desal. Desalination? Great. You can. It works in some places, but it is really expensive. It consumes a lot of power. It consumes an amazing amount of power, the electricity to separate the salt from the water. Just a few minutes ago, if you were upstream, you would have captured it while it was still freshwater. You would have it available without that extreme expense.

Well, you can still desal in California anyway. You guys have a lot of money and the know-how.

Well, a group called Poseidon tried for 20 years in southern California, I think in Huntington Beach, one of the beach towns. They fought and fought and fought to work through a process and to get permits. Every time they would get something thrown at them, they would try again and say: Okay, if we mitigate for this and we take care of that, we can move forward with the project. Then they would come up with something else.

After 20 years and many millions of dollars to build that desal plant, ultimately the California Coastal Commission, yet another layer of bureaucracy and people who say "no" to what you might want to do on the coast, ruled against them, and that is it. They are out. There will be no desal plant in southern California.

Somebody please tell me, what is the solution going to be to add more water supply for California? Well, conservation. Conservation is great. Use less when you can. People are using so much less that they don't have yards anymore. They get yelled at if they wash their car. There are golf courses shutting down.

We don't really have to resort to Third World ways of doing that either because we have so much supply that comes, even in the lighter years, from the other areas if we just save it, distribute it, and wisely use it. We can still do the environmental things we need to do.

The delta doesn't need nearly the amount of water flowing through it to flush the salt. They don't want the salt to intrude too far up and get into other areas where people draw water or it might affect fish.

Even the effluent is something we need to work on, too. A lot of the cities around the delta have sewer treatment systems that sometimes don't keep up. They are not treating it down to really clean water and sometimes there is an emergency, it overflows, and it goes untreated straight into the delta. Good water from other areas has to go flush through there and clean that up.

Why? Why do we have to do it this way? Is it to keep some people's environmental scorecard at 100 percent because they don't want more development; they don't want cutting trees; they don't want building water supply; and they don't want us to add lanes to the highway?

Instead, we get things like high-speed rail. They are still pushing high-speed

rail in California, a project that was initially passed narrowly on the ballot to use \$9 billion of taxpayer bond money to help develop what would be a \$33 billion rail project to make a fast train from SF to L.A.

Within a year, they raised that number to \$42 billion. I remember because I was there in the legislature. Then, 2 years after that, they said it is not going to be \$33 billion, and it is not going to be \$42 billion. It is going to be \$98.5 billion. This is 2011 numbers.

The number is now somewhere around \$130 billion. They have spent maybe \$15 billion or \$20 billion or somewhere in there. Now they are seeking more Federal money, about \$6 billion to \$8 billion more Federal, of your 50-State taxpayer money, in this boondoggle.

It was supposed to be completed in 2020. They only have a few bridges built and no track laid. They are building it in the central part of the State from a place called Merced to an almond orchard, somewhere around Bakersfield. I think it is near Wasco or Shafter. Can you imagine the ridership between those two areas? It is ridiculous.

Yet, people say: Well, we should just give a blank check to California. Not when they make decisions like this. We want to ensure that, if California is going to be moving forward on that, that they are going to do much more.

This is a picture of Gavin Newsom at Paradise, where I was with he and President Trump just a few days after the fire in Paradise. Trump warned him then: Look, man, you have to get out and do the management of the forest. You have to get this stuff off the forest floor.

He said raking it. Then they made fun of him for saying raking.

Well, there are actually tools called rakes that they use in forestry to move this material.

Here you have Trump saying: What the heck? Pointing the way here.

You have Newsom, empty-handed, saying: Well, I don't know, man. We have got to try.

It is 6 years later, and he has done very little to help California to be more fire safe. A fire a couple of years after that in a different part of Butte County ended up being called the north complex—because several fires burned together, and they call that a complex.

We had grant money waiting to go to help local folks do a thinning and planning around some of the little communities there and make those areas a little more fire safe and make fire spread slower.

What happened? After 1½ years' worth of fooling around, fighting permits, the fire broke out anyway and burned the whole place down, and the grant money didn't get used. This is what goes on.

Governor Newsom is not doing much to help these water projects move along with any kind of speed. He feigned it a little bit on the Sites one year saying: Well, we are going to

make the lawsuits end—end the lawsuits faster on it.

I guess we should be thankful, but he is not directing this commission, his water boards, to do much to really, really help, whether that is in the north on our water storage or in the south on the infrastructure there.

Actually, he was blaming the locals on the conditions, whether it was Santa Ynez reservoir or the hydrants. He said: Oh, that is a local thing. That is a local thing.

Yet, he wants to come down there and start talking about the vision for a new L.A., L.A. 2.0, or Los Angeles 2028. They are going to have the Olympics there in 2028, I think.

He is already giddy about how they are going to change L.A. into something else. Is this going to become a new planned community of 15-minute cities and people having limitations on how they are going to live there? Is that what you want?

It seems to be where they are going because he is actually giddy about it. You should see the recordings. He was doing a little dance and stuff like, yeah, we have got a new plan for this. We are going to bring everybody.

It is appalling. People are angry. They are angry at this leadership.

How they can have a situation where that Santa Ynez reservoir was empty and the L.A. Fire Department wasn't even aware of that and didn't know they would not have that kind of water supply for a period of time that they maybe would have counted on? The dots aren't connecting here.

Since the State regulates so much of this, then what is the State doing to ensure, since they have a lot of fires in L.A. and have the Santa Anna winds every year, that they are doing everything they can to make sure it is not vulnerable?

Are we doing everything we can to help streamline permits to build up the infrastructure even more? They aren't. They throw more out. They find more species every day, every week, to throw up a roadblock. The leadership there happily seems to acquiesce to that.

When we talk about what we are going to do, there absolutely has to be accountability for it.

I am grateful for the amount of emergency help that has helped so many Californians in fire-prone situations in other areas, and it isn't their fault.

The U.S. Forest Service has a lot to be questioned about on how they manage lands because their Forest Service lands are adjacent to many of these towns. Indeed, the towns grew up as logging towns, and they used to be able to go out to those areas and manage and use those and cut trees for the Nation's wood and paper product supply needs.

That all started shutting down in the 1970s due to the spotted owl and whatever other species du jour they can come up with to do that, or water quality issues. Oh, my gosh, they are going to affect the water quality.

We already know how to do that. We don't cut trees near the creeks anymore. We don't do much near the creeks and the rivers. We stay away. They know how to do that prescription. It still takes forever to get a permit to do any of these things.

As the State moves toward more mandates on electric cars, on electric stoves, and electric trains and trucks—thankfully, a mandate got pushed off a little bit on trains and trucks because I don't know how people were going to get their supplies and get provisions if nobody can ship it in because of vehicles that don't even exist at the level of emissions that they are talking about.

Just let attrition do its job. Let everybody replace the trucks with new trucks over time, and maybe even us farmers could buy the ones that are only 10 years old that are still nice, running trucks when we only use a few thousand miles a year. No, we don't even get exemptions for that.

It is one thing after another to try and do business, to try to be a farmer, to be a rancher, to be a miner, or anything in the State of California and so much of the West.

I hope this place doesn't emulate some of the regulations that California has coming along, like one called the PRO Act, which means you basically have to be in a union in order to work. You can't be a self-employed contractor.

These are the things that come from California that they are trying to push here. Thankfully, we are going to have a change in direction here in leadership coming from the White House.

If we are going to be more successful, we have to consider the Endangered Species Act working the way it was intended, the way Congress passed it back in the early 1970s.

I don't think the weapon that has turned into would have even passed in Congress because nobody would have wanted to have been responsible for what you see now, with people being sued to death if they have a stocked pond on their land. Somehow that can be interpreted as you have now changed the waterways and you have changed the ability for a species to be there, like the raise of Shasta Dam.

They are going to find a species there to keep it from being raised. It is an existing dam which already had plans on the books to make it taller to begin with, except the war came along, and they kind of put off raising it more. They will find a species to try and stop it from being raised a mere 18 feet and adding 600,000 acre-feet.

Endangered Species Act will be used to try and stop the type of timber management that is needed so badly in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and every other area.

One of the counties that I have part of the forest in that is known as the Mendocino National Forest on the western part of my district and flows into the coastal area, 97 percent of that

national forest has burned over about a 20-year or 25-year period.

What a stellar track record. Yes, 97 percent of this particular forest that we are supposed to manage has burned over this period of time. That is worse than an F grade. It is astounding that the citizens are putting up with this.

□ 1230

What I see happening in southern California is they are pushing back on the leadership that has gotten us into this situation. We are going to be there for them. We are going to be there right now as we are, as the firefighters—not me, not us, but we are making sure that things are going to be provided so they can get through this immediate emergency, get the fire out, get people stabilized, and then go forward in the rebuild process.

There is nothing wrong with asking for accountability on how we keep out of the situation in the rebuild, as they did in Paradise, as they do just about everywhere else to improve so we don't subject the next generations to the same danger.

Why would you do that? So you don't have cockamamie ideas like Governor Newsom and others have on re-envisioning L.A. and all that.

What does that mean? Does that mean people are going to have choices? Does it mean they are going to have freedoms? Is there going to be some mandate there on how they are forced to live and how they are supposed to stay in tight communities, things like that?

I do have a degree of anger over this as well because I have been watching it long enough as a legislator, as a private citizen, and watching this happen to my neighbors, watching this happen to the taxpayers of the U.S., but of California. So many people are leaving the State that were in business or have a retirement. They are not going to stay and pay for this anymore. They are angry, too.

Leadership is important. Competence is important. Having the fire systems ready at the go, and if it isn't ready enough, if it isn't big enough, then we talk about: Well, how do we make them better? How do we make them bigger. How do we have more capacity for the hydrants? How do we have more water waiting for us? How is the fire department not allowed to know that the people running Santa Ynez Reservoir have had it empty for nearly a year and that they might draw upon that?

Mr. Speaker, three million gallons in three tanks versus 117 million just up the hill. That would have stretched a few hours' worth of firefighting ability to several days out of that 117 million if it had been there and available.

Being able to fill that 117-million-gallon reservoir over and over again with the aqueduct, with the water that could come from the north—no. Instead, it is running out to the ocean. No. We can't build the reservoirs we need to add to the water supply that

everybody needs, people need, SoCal needs. The crops in San Joaquin Valley that I showed you are so important to people all across the whole country. There are people in my neighborhood that need it.

Again, there is plenty of water. There is plenty of know-how. The loggers, the timber people, so many of them are unemployed and have the know-how that could be managing the forest in a way that is ecologically sound and correct. They are not allowed to do it.

Do you know we have to fight every year for something called SRS, the Secure Rural Schools fund that costs taxpayers? I am blessed that there is not pushback on that. We used to have a timber industry that the receipts from the timber we would cut would go for these local—the money stayed locally, the timber receipts, at least a portion, for counties to pay for schools and roads. That is why it is called the Secure Rural Schools. It pays for the county roads, at least in part, and the local schools.

With the spotted owl and the environmental movement taking the ESA and weaponizing it in the early seventies, late seventies, and the eighties, those timber industries died off. The number of mills we used to have in California—which are an important partner in all this. We need to have those wood mills, so if we finally do get around to logging this product and what people need that we will have the infrastructure to actually do something with it.

Instead, since those receipts are gone and since that economy is gone, my constituents, my county supervisors, and other locals have to come here hat in hand to D.C., can you be sure the Secure Rural Schools fund stays in the next appropriation bill or whichever mechanism we are working on at that time. Would you put that in there for us?

Geri Byrne, a good friend, is heading up the Rural Counties of California. She has been an important partner on that, and I would hate to have to look her in the eye and say: We will try. We think we can get it done. We will probably get it done.

Will we get it done in time? We have to get it done before March, otherwise the counties are going to be upside down on that fund that they need to get through that year.

Wouldn't we rather have the receipts come from the forest? Wouldn't you rather have people doing the work, to produce the timber and wood products and paper products that you need from America and not have to have these good folks come hat in hand and beg for another taxpayer fund? I know what side I am on.

We are held up by leaders, whether it is at my State level or some back here in D.C. in these agencies that are just completely thinking about something else. The urgency to get things done, the urgency to get permits done, they don't seem to care how long it takes to

get a permit done. There are people out there waiting, people waiting to do whatever the construction project is, whatever the clearance project is.

It makes you wonder.

That is why I am excited about this DOGE group that Elon Musk and Mr. Ramaswamy are working on to say what parts of government are working and what parts aren't. Where do we fund? Where do we not fund?

Because taxpayers have every right to ask those questions as well. We are talking about this situation here, taxpayers have a right to know: Are they going to do better next time? Yet, the mantra seems to be like, oh, you are placing conditions. Conditions is the dirty word of the week on this. It is all rehearsed. It is all coming out on the same memo.

Let's think of another word. Guard-rails. Is that good enough? Put guard-rails on it. It doesn't matter the euphemism. You need to be sure that Federal taxpayers are going to see at the end of the day the wise use of that so we are not back here in 40 years doing the same thing over again.

That is so hard-hearted and cold. No, it is not. We are going to help those folks. I am grateful for the help we have had in the north. I know the folks in southern California, once they get their feet under them, will be too. I think they want the freedom to be able to reestablish themselves in little towns like Altadena. A lot of nice, regular folks there. This isn't the rich elite. These are more regular folks. They just want a chance to maybe get back to how they were, and I hope we can help them do that. I hope we can somehow get them back to where they were. Maybe it will be with more resilient homes next time made out of different materials. That is good.

We also need to help them with the brush clearing on the mountains above there that are being stopped by regulations or the funding getting pulled back by Newsom. Mr. Speaker, \$100 million, I think, got pulled back and part of that would have been the brush clearing that is so badly needed, which creates a buffer when the Santa Ana winds blow fire toward you. If you don't have that brush there, you have got a much greater chance of stopping the fire before it hits the houses there.

So the people in Altadena would like to have that help, I am sure. They would like to have people that are accountable to bring the leadership that is needed to have that readiness.

We assume, as citizens, that things are ready. We assume our police force is ready, the fire department is ready, the infrastructure is ready, the water is being stored. I guess we assume that because we assume we have smart people in those positions that are thinking ahead. We are doing our day-to-day jobs in this Republic. We are not a democracy; we are a Republic. We elect these people that are supposed to be thinking about that stuff.

Certainly, I come down here and rant about this on the floor and whenever I

can in committee, and others always want to talk about something else, like the mass inflow of illegal immigrants that cost California so much money.

California is spending money on a whole lot of things. I mentioned the high-speed rail. We are spending money on a whole lot of things that aren't helping its citizens and, indeed, helping someone else—some that are here illegally, giving benefits that are outrageous.

Well, why should the Federal taxpayer basically help subsidize that? California, during the COVID era, drew about \$20 billion from the Federal Government to help supplement unemployment benefits and after a period of time when it was clear, they weren't going to pay it back. California, instead of paying it back, has now decided to sack employers by doubling the unemployment insurance amount they have to contribute as part of the pay package for their employees. It went from 0.6 to 1.2, I believe. That is going to cost the employers. Ultimately, it is going to cost the employees themselves, because there is less ability to give raises. All of that is because California blew the \$20 billion on something else instead of the maintenance obligation of paying it back to the Federal Government on that unemployment fund.

Is this good? Is this an accountable record that people say: Oh, yeah, just give them money willy-nilly. Not a chance. Not a chance.

So we can demand accountability and not be bad people for it. We are looking for solutions that are long-term and we will help those folks. Our hearts are with you in southern California because I know at the end of this, instead of the rhetoric you are hearing that might be getting you wound up, you would like accountability as well.

You are already angry at some of the folks down there. You are angry at some of the folks in Sacramento that are putting—you are probably angry that the Democrat-controlled legislature is putting, as a requirement, as a condition for some of the State aid that should be going to southern California, the \$50-million package of lawsuit money they want to use to fight Trump. That is tied together in a package right now in the State legislature.

So they are pointing at us for talking about accountability. We don't even have a package put together quite yet as we still have to assess all the damages postfire. We are doing everything we can to help during the fire with what people need, but postfire, you then have to assess that. That takes a little bit of time, and we need accountability.

I hope people demand accountability to the people that put them in this place to begin with in California and at the local level.

We are with you on this. We are with you on that accountability. We will be there to help the right way.

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

HONORING AND CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF CIVIL RIGHTS ICON, REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. MFUME) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Speaker, I may not use the entire 60 minutes, but I appreciate the opportunity. I would encourage other Members of the House, who are still in town, to certainly come over and to seek recognition on this as I try to talk a bit about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and why it is so very important that we, at least here in the House, take a moment or two or, in this case an hour or less, to reflect on the life, the legacy, and even some of the myths that have circulated over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to rise to really celebrate the birth of civil rights icon and leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who, had he lived, would have been 96 years of age yesterday, and to talk a bit about the dream that he tried to put forward in his short 39 years of life, a dream that he felt would be the North Star and the beacon for our country with respect to human rights and human dignity.

As I thought about that and I thought about his dream, I am reminded of a passage in Scripture, Mr. Speaker, in the book of Genesis, chapter 37 and verse 18, where it says, "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another: Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Well, that dream, despite the bullet of a lone assassin on April 4, 1968, did very much grow, thrive, and replicate itself as a dream not just for a race of people or group of people but as a dream for an entire Nation.

I remember in 1980, as a young member of the Baltimore City Council, petitioning the council to join with other local governments around the Nation to push for the establishment of a Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday in our respective towns, cities, and hamlets.

For years, every January 15, I, along with so many others, would drive from Baltimore to Washington to join civil rights leaders and recording artists like Gil Scott-Heron, The Last Poets, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Jesse Jackson, Congressman John Conyers, and thousands of others, and we would rally right here on the steps of this Capitol, in the cold, in January, on the 15th of each year, again, to petition for the establishment of a Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday.

□ 1245

I, like many others, recognize that that in and of itself was a beginning.

The real beginning, however, has to go back to the Federal legislation that recognizes Martin Luther King Jr. Day as the bill introduced first by Congressman John Conyers of Michigan just days after the assassination of Dr. King.

Unfortunately, it would take 15 years of those protests, perseverance, attempts, tenacity, and pure resolve by civil rights leaders and others across this Nation for the holiday to become recognized, and then finally signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1983. Then, unfortunately, it would take an additional 17 years for it to be recognized in all 50 States across the country.

Fittingly, Martin Luther King Jr. Day was designed to intentionally inspire all Americans to volunteer and to give back to their communities. In fact, it is the only Federal holiday classified as a national day of service.

Like so many others, I feel personally driven out of my respect for the life and legacy of Dr. King to find a way to celebrate this observance through acts of service, for it is only through reflecting the values and the morals and the principles of Dr. King into our lives that we will enact the dream that he has so often been associated with, where justice is the supreme ruler, freedom is the dominant creed, and equity the common practice.

I would urge us to take a moment in this discussion or any other discussion, a moment of remembrance to really talk about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the man, the myth, and the legacy.

I think it is important to point out that Dr. King was born, as I said before, on January 15, 1929, in the segregated south in Atlanta, Georgia, where his grandfather began the family's tenure many, many years ago in another State as the pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

After graduating from Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary, Dr. King then enrolled in graduate studies at Boston University. It was in Boston where Dr. King would meet Coretta Scott, who was also a student at the nearby New England Conservatory. As we all know and as history has taught us, the two would ultimately marry, and Coretta Scott would become Coretta Scott King, and together they would be a formidable force in their own right, in their own time, and in joint pursuit of equality and justice for all.

This remarkable partnership between Dr. King and Coretta Scott King also brought forth four children who grew up to embrace, uphold, and protect the values that their parents had devoted their lives to. I would be remiss if I did not uplift the names of Martin Luther King III, Bernice Albertine King, Yolanda Denise King, and Dexter Scott King, who we unfortunately lost last January.

In 1954, as I indicated, their father became the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery,

Alabama. Dr. King, by this time, was a member of the Executive Committee of the NAACP and would join also the Montgomery Improvement Association. He would also help to create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization that was formed to provide leadership for a growing and sustaining civil rights movement.

Dr. King rose to prominence as a revered leader of that movement in 1955, when a young woman, a seamstress by the name of Rosa Parks, refused to move to the back of the bus in Montgomery because of the color of her skin. Inspired by one woman's act of moral courage, in the face of an immoral systemic system of law, Dr. King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott that lasted 381 days and is heralded as the catalyst, that one act that began the modern civil rights movement.

Now, in order to understand it, you have to keep it in its proper context. Citizens of Montgomery were so outraged that they could pay and were forced like everyone else to pay their taxes, that they could contribute to the economy, that they could find a way to sustain families, and that they could find a way, as all citizens did, to support the government there, only to be told that they could not ride a bus to get to work unless they sat in the back of the bus because of the color of their skin.

It might be difficult to understand, but it is important to point out that those men and women who wanted to maintain and hold onto their dignity decided that they would walk to work, walk to the store, walk to church as opposed to sitting in the back of that bus any longer. Mr. Speaker, 381 days is a lot of days, and it takes a lot of resolve to get through something like that.

It is one thing to see it in a history book. It is another thing if you are living it and you are walking all those miles every day, through summer, winter, fall, and spring, back and forth, to do the things that you had to do, like get to your job, the things you needed to do, to shop for groceries, and to be able to do anything else, but they did it for 381 days. They did it because of the inspiration that they got from Rosa Parks, and they did it also because of the inspiration that they got from this young preacher by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr.

During that boycott, Dr. King was arrested. His home was bombed, and he was subjected to personal abuse over and over again. Now, he was arrested. No one else that did anything else to stop him was arrested, but he was arrested simply for articulating the problem, supporting the efforts of Ms. Parks, and encouraging a community to stand up and to speak for itself.

As I said, his home was bombed. He was subjected to all kinds of insults and personal abuse. By the way, Dr. King was locked up in jail 29 times for standing up for fairness and fair play.