

people at risk; and threatened the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, otherwise known as NOAA, undermining our work to combat the climate crisis.

This is just the beginning.

Under this legislation, Federal employees who resist, circumvent, or prevent Musk's illegal and unconstitutional takeover would be protected against retaliation for their efforts to fight back.

The world's richest man should not have the power to unilaterally dismantle the Federal Government and the critical services it provides Oregonians.

Federal employees are at the forefront of fighting Elon Musk's power grab, and we must protect them. All week, I, like all my colleagues, have been hearing from constituents who are demanding action.

Let me be clear: We will use every legislative, judicial, and public pressure tactic to stop Musk's takeover and protect our workers. This multifront battle will be fought in the courts, the Halls of Congress, and in the public sphere. We must stay loud. We must stand tight. We must press on.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, a few hours ago, I stood with members of unions, employees at the Department of Labor, and people walking down the street who saw what we were doing and wanted to join in and support the cause.

As I stood out there and spoke in favor of the efforts they were making to be heard, to protect their jobs and protect their ability to work for the American people, it reminded me of my father who had worked in that same building four decades ago until he was forced out during the Reagan administration.

To my colleagues who were there today, I thank them for joining. To the employees who were out there, I say this: I lived through what you are going through right now and I understand. For that reason, I recommit myself to working hard to protect your rights, to make sure that you don't get forced out of government, even though you haven't done anything wrong.

You have the experience and the expertise to do the work that the American people need, and we want to make sure that you have a chance to continue to do that.

I thank the Congressional Labor Caucus as well for standing up and making sure that we continue to fight here in Congress to protect their rights.

Lastly, I thank all of those people out there, whether they are union members or attorneys or employees, who are fighting every day to get their point across and make sure that we are heard by the Trump administration. Thank you for what you are doing. I

urge you to continue to do the work that you are doing because it is making a difference.

The Trump administration has made many moves. Many of them have been, in my view, unlawful and unconstitutional, especially the ones that are impacting the employee rights that these government employees have earned over the decades, like my father who joined the Department of Labor after his service in the Air Force. They deserve to be treated fairly, with respect, and with recognition of the legal rights that they deserve to have.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to direct their remarks to the Chair.

ISSUES RELATING TO REBUILDING THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time and the opportunity to shed light on several subjects that we will cover here tonight. Indeed, there is much going on and much to be excited about, as well.

In my home State of California, we have several issues I will touch upon that have to deal with water, water supply, fire and forestry, and some rebuilding that will need to be done around our State.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN), my colleague and good friend, who is also here tonight. He has been a strong leader on immigration and, more specifically, controlling our border. He has also been sticking up for our families in this country and the values it is going to take to have strong families and maintain the founding values that will make our country strong. I appreciate his work and articulation on that.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, there has been so much in the news in the last 2 weeks, it is hard to know where to start.

I will cover a couple issues that the mainstream media has picked up on, though not done the best job uncovering, and one issue that made a huge difference in the lives of the most vulnerable of us that Donald Trump weighed in on not by doing something but by allowing an administrative rule to die.

The first great victory for Donald Trump, which hasn't been reported out there, concerns the effort by the Biden administration, which ran out of time, to get rid of what they call 14(c) certificates.

Everybody may be familiar with light manufacturing or packaging done

in their district by people who are handicapped. Maybe they have spina bifida, maybe they have Down syndrome. In any event, for this reason, they are not able to be profitably employed for above minimum wage or minimum wage dollars.

Each State does it a little bit differently, but the States make an estimate of what that employee is worth, and maybe they are paid \$5 an hour for, like I said, light manufacturing or packaging.

If you tour these facilities—and I think every Congressman ought to tour them at least once—it is one of the most enjoyable things you can do, because you will find the people who have been dealt a difficult lot on life so happy to see you, so happy to see what they are doing with you, so happy to make friends with the other employees there who have different abilities and other employees who are usually in a supervisory capacity.

These are also a godsend to the parents or guardians of these folks. Under normal circumstances, they have to worry when the guardians or parents die off what type of friends and what type of social life they will have, but because they frequently stay in these facilities or work in these facilities for 20 or 30 or 40 years, they develop lifelong friendships which are so important for these folks to have.

Now, had Donald Trump not won the election, it would have continued to work through the administrative rule process, and it is entirely possible that these sort of facilities would have been shut down by a Biden or Harris administration. They were working toward that. You might say, why would anybody take away the right for these people to have these jobs.

The reason is, they will say, because if we are paying somebody \$5 an hour, we are taking advantage of them. We can't take advantage of them, so we would rather have them shut down.

How horrible is that? To the most vulnerable members of our society, Joe Biden was prepared to say, if you want to work here for \$5 an hour, tough. We are going to close that facility, or we will leave the facility open, but you will no longer be able to work. You will no longer have the pride of being able to get a paycheck and spend it on clothes for yourself or gifts for your parents, what have you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank President Trump for not continuing with that administrative rule. At least, probably for the next 4 years, we know the jobs of these folks, which mean so much to them—more to them than I would say the average citizen in our society—I thank President Trump for allowing the most vulnerable members of our society to have the choice to continue to work for, in some cases, subminimum wage, but have the enjoyment of that independence.

I should point out that almost all the people I am talking about have some SSI payment in addition to that, so it

is not like they are expected to pay a mortgage with their \$5-an-hour job. They get other governmental assistance, as well.

I know there are a lot of other things we have been grateful to President Trump for these last couple weeks, but keeping the 14(c) certificates is a tremendous victory for the most vulnerable of us. I don't think it would have happened if President Trump didn't get elected.

Now, the next thing to look at. We have heard people talk about Elon Musk and what he wants to do to USAID.

First of all, I will point out that the reason people are mad at Elon Musk, who can't do anything on his own—all he can do is advise the President. The reason they are mad at him is, horror of horrors, he thought there was a government program that wasn't necessary. That is not the way things work here.

Nobody believes that if Elon Musk had Donald Trump's ear and came out for more preschool, if he came out for more mental health funding, if he came out for expanded government daycare, the folks on the other side of this aisle would be praising Elon Musk for being a forward-looking person and for doing what people on that side of the aisle want to do, which is either expand old programs or come up with new government programs.

Quite frankly, as long as I have been here, I am sure there must be some government program that ended, but I can't think of any.

Elon Musk is under attack for actually suggesting a government program is unnecessary. I praise him for that. There is nothing wrong with him advising President Trump. I don't know if folks would feel better if they gave him a position and \$100,000-a-year salary. I don't know, but it is refreshing that some of the most successful people in America can use their mind, their brains to advise President Trump on how to be a good President.

It is particularly good to have somebody outside this building who is not used to the swamp-type mentality of we never under any circumstances get rid of a program; the only question is whether we are going to expand it 2 percent or 8 percent. It is great to have a friend who can look at some programs and say, hey, maybe this program sounded good when we first created it in 1963 or whatever, but it hasn't worked up to snuff.

Of course, I agree with Elon Musk that some of the money spent on these programs is even a moral stain on the United States of America, particularly a moral stain because we are spending money in other countries.

When we talk about gender-affirming care, that is where they give puberty blockers to young children. I think it is horrific that we would give puberty blockers to a 12 or 13 year old in America, but America is supposed to be the light unto the world.

Can you imagine the United States weighing in and giving gender-affirming care to the poor little children in Guatemala?

□ 1830

I mean, how bad can we be? How embarrassing can we be? That is what we do with the incredible amount of wealth that this country has been given? We take our wealth and try to screw up—what I would say is “screw up”—the poor little children in Guatemala?

I am glad Elon Musk came across this program, and upon people pointing out what is in the program, I am glad that Donald Trump, when he heard about it, full bore put his foot on the brake and said if the people running this program are spending the money that way, we have to stop spending money right away and look a little bit further into the program.

In any event, what I am going to do is, I am going to ask people on that side of the aisle to take an honest look at themselves. If Elon Musk announced that we needed more preschool, if Elon Musk announced we were going to need more mental health, with where the mental health professions are today in favor of these puberty blockers and that sort of thing, would they really be concerned that he is advising President Trump, or would they be praising him? Would The Washington Post and The New York Times be praising Elon Musk for being openminded and ignoring the hidebound conservative members of the Republican Party? Of course, they would be praising him.

The only reason they question whether or not he can advise President Trump is because they don't like, for almost the first time, the first time that I have been here, that we genuinely are seeing a government program begin to end, hopefully.

The third thing I will point out is that President Trump signed a bill today dealing with men in women's sports. It was a good bill. There are not a whole lot of men participating in women's sports around the country, but it is certainly a little weird that when one sets up a swimming tournament, a track meet, or something where it is very clear we have the men's event and the women's event, that under any circumstances we take a man and say, well, just because you feel like a woman today, we are going to pretend you are a woman. I think that is unusual enough.

I am going to hope—and President Trump has had executive orders on this topic, as well—that we are able to do something statutorily about getting rid of government funding for programs that do things like give surgeries on minors, give puberty blockers on minors. There is no shortage of intelligent people who will say this is damaging, not to mention there are a huge number of people with just plain common sense who realize that you don't try to engage in irrevocable medical procedures with 14- or 15-year-olds.

In fact, I would say it is medically inexcusable to engage in these procedures when people are 24- or 25-years-old. After all, in this country, you know, you can't buy a beer until you are 21 years old, can't buy a cigarette until you are 21 years old. I wouldn't think any medical professional with any morality—I realize they are making money on this—would harm these young people.

Now that we took care of the ridiculous idea that men should be able to pick whether they are men or women, depending upon, I guess, whether there is a track meet that day, I hope our leadership team begins to go after these so-called medical professionals who are doing irrevocable damage, either with drugs or surgeries, on people under 18.

Quite frankly, they ought to be barred for people under age 21. Quite frankly, the medical society ought to, on their own, make it clear that it is medical malpractice to do this sort of thing even on a 25- or 26-year-old because we all know very well that the way we feel about things when we are 20 or 24 or 25 is frequently very different from the way we feel about things when we are 30 years old.

I thank the gentleman from California for allowing me to address these issues. Remember, folks out there, if you have a ward or a child who worked for what used to be called a sheltered workshop, President Trump kept your ward or child employed the way they want to.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) on that, for sticking up for families, and in other conversations on sensible border policy, which is going to keep our country safe and strong and our employees of this country more likely to be employed. It is appreciated.

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 (Mr. ONDER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, picking up on a little bit of what Mr. GROTHMAN was saying here a moment ago, I would like to point out as well that I think a real national heroine, a young woman who has really stepped up, out of necessity, but also out of a strong desire to do the right thing and have the right thing, is Riley Gaines, a collegiate swimmer who swam so successfully and did much winning at the University of Kentucky.

She is the one who also had to face off in competition against a basically 6'4" male and was denied opportunities, denied recognition, because of the unfairness and imbalance of girls and

women in their sports having to face boys and men in their sports as well as all the discomfort from shared changing areas and the unfairness of losing out on the ability to win competitions that might put them in a position to win medals that might ultimately win them a scholarship from high school into college or put them in a national competition or an international competition if you are at the collegiate level or at the Olympic level.

We saw some horrific things, in my view, in this last Olympics, where the young woman who was a female boxer, I believe she was from Italy, how humiliated she was when she had to face basically a male boxer with a clear physical advantage and just get the heck beat out of her in the process.

One of the saddest things I have seen in a long time was her collapsing on her knees just in tears at that Olympic event afterward because of the unfairness of it all and how hard she trained for years and years to be in that position only to have, in this case, the Olympic committee say that we will let anybody compete against the women in this case.

I know Riley Gaines personally and just find her to be a dynamic young woman who will stand up for the right things. She didn't ask for this position. She was a competitor and doing her thing. She was thrust into this position because she saw what needed to be done, what needed to be made right on this, and stuck up for other women and girls in their sports and in their other domains.

Riley has gotten a lot of good work done, including, today, the Presidential declaration that this would no longer go on in this country, especially things that the Federal Government might have involvement in or sanction. I congratulate President Trump for straightening things back out a little bit and putting some common sense back into that area.

Mr. Speaker, I also heard the debate here tonight on Federal workers and the opportunity that has been put in place here, if they seek and so choose—and there is the word “choose,” “choice”—to take advantage of an opportunity if the job they are in is not meeting where they want to be, or you might see reduction in some of these government programs, in some of these government agencies.

It is a pretty generous exit of 8 months of pay and such to retire from that job or move on from that one and go seek other opportunities. We heard a lot of caterwauling about that tonight, about, I guess, the essentialness of every single government agency and every single worker.

Now, there are plenty of really good workers willing to work hard and do a good job in so many of our Federal agencies, but there are also quite a few who aren't as motivated. We see this battle over them returning to work, as is being mandated.

We saw President Biden, just before leaving office, trying to give out super-

generous contracts and extend the term of not having to be at the workplace based still upon, basically, the COVID era and getting used to that concept, to that way of doing things.

It is proper for people to show up to work. It is essential. Around here, we had proxy voting, and our committees were not meeting in person. Doggone it, it is essential in this place that we sit across from each other, that we sit next to each other and have these real debates in front of the American public to allow true public debate on the things that are going to affect over 300 million Americans through the decisions made here.

I am certainly glad we got rid of proxy voting here and got back to work doing things after the COVID era finally ended and a lot of manipulation that happened in that era. Still, we haven't completely recovered in our workforce and the attitudes, I think, of certain people who feel like they are entitled to just have the government send them checks, and the attitude of not having to show up to work.

We found that certain people can do a certain amount of work from home, but the battle here in town, where some really high percentage—I have heard a number as high as 92; I don't know if it is accurate or not—92 percent aren't showing up here. Some of these buildings are almost ghost towns from the workforce not coming in there. This needs to be looked at.

What is being looked at by the Department of Government Efficiency, DOGE, and Elon Musk is basically saying, hey, American taxpayers, we know you work hard for what you earn and what government takes from you.

These aren't contributions. We heard talk about these contributions. They aren't contributions. They are compelled payments of taxes here. You don't have a choice. They come start taking things away from you, auctioning off your home or your car or your farm or whatever, if you don't pay your taxes. It is not voluntary. It is not contributions, as these guys talk about. It is not an investment. They take it from you.

I think any taxpayer, any working person, has the right to demand that government is looking at things and is being efficient with what it is using.

The stones they are flipping over and what they are uncovering so far with USAID, and many other aspects I can't list here tonight, confirms what I think normal people know, that there is a lot of money being wasted in government by many entities.

Look at the situation in Ukraine. Now Zelenskyy is claiming that of about \$177 billion that has been transferred over there, he thinks only \$75 billion of it actually got to him or the causes they were working on over there in Ukraine. Where has \$102 billion gone? Are these real numbers? Let's investigate. Let's find out.

That is what we need to do, respectfully, with tax dollars that are taken

from people not voluntarily. Every aspect of government needs to have that accountability. It is okay to audit. It is okay to ask these questions. It is not against something or against a certain group of people. When we are talking about, in this case, the opportunity for employees to find other opportunities, then what would be wrong with that if they so choose and if agencies are going to be downsized?

Everybody is mad at Elon Musk now, at least on that side of the aisle. When he took over Twitter, now known as X, he cleared out about 85 percent of the employees there. A lot of them were just hanging on and going for the party there. He seems to be able to run that entity a lot more efficiently. That should be an example for government instead of the scourge that we are hearing that it is awful, terrible.

We appreciate those who do the things that we as Americans ask the government agencies to do, and they do them efficiently and with cheerfulness and remembering that the customers are the taxpayers, the people who come to the counter and say, hey, I need a permit to do this, or I need this or that service. These are the customers.

Getting a passport has been a problem. We have had horrific stories coming out of my own office during the height of COVID and such that you could hardly get anybody to process a passport for you, at least very timely.

□ 1845

In my home State of California, just a simple thing like a personalized license plate at the State level from the DMV takes 9 months now. It takes 9 months to get a personalized plate. Supposedly that is a revenue generator for the State.

We have got to really check and see what the attitudes of the people are who work and serve in government at any level, whether you are elected, whether you are hired, whether you are an agency head, what have you. These are good conversations to have, not the cattle rolling we are hearing about: Oh, my gosh, they might be displacing somebody. Well, maybe we need to have a little downsizing. I believe we do. That is what I have to say on that debate.

I am going to return back to issues going on in the West. I am privileged to chair the Western Caucus in the House here, and the important issues that it has addressed over the years, and a lot of that revolves around energy.

I will tell you what: The issue with energy in this country when we see skyrocketing prices of all types of fuel, that has been a major inflation driver. Really, two aspects of why we are suffering from inflation is government overspending beyond anywhere close to what revenue was and the trillions we have seen being spent by the government during the COVID era and beyond and the end of the Biden administration.

We are going to have to take some medicine on that and how about get

back to a concept of pre-COVID level of spending, maybe even adjusted for inflation, old inflation, not just massive inflation.

We have the right and the obligation to be looking at it this way. Inflation driven by massive government spending, eating up the pool of available currency and credit, as well as the cost of doing business driven by issues such as energy.

In farming, for example, on my own farm, a couple years ago we saw that our price on fertilizer tripled and our price of fuel doubled in that season. What does that mean for a farmer like me or any other farmer growing a crop?

They still have to be in the black at the end of the year. They still have to make profit. Those costs are going to be passed on somewhere, aren't they? It always comes back to the consumer. It always comes back to the taxpayer having to pay for these things. On one hand, government massive overspending here at the Federal level, and things that drive inflation, such as the cost of fuel and all of the things that are related. There is so much that depends on energy. Any type of production that depends on energy is going to have an impact on price. As an example, take diesel fuel, take a food product.

As a farmer, when you start out in the spring, you need fuel to start tilling the land and getting it ready for preparing the seedbed to plant that crop. Someone has to bring you the diesel to run your equipment. Soon after, someone delivers that fertilizer, likely with the diesel vehicle, someone delivers that seed.

At that point you planted, and you have irrigation of one type or another depending on your crop. In some cases, it is going to be fuel that is required to run the pumps or electricity to run wells, fuel for lift pumps. In some cases, you are fortunate, you have gravity-fed water much like we do in northern California. We do the storage of water.

What is our energy policy? I guarantee you, under President Trump it is going to improve. With that, we are going to see improved prices on energy. That will help us to tame inflation.

On the other side of the coin here with the work of Elon Musk and others on the Department of Government Efficiency, prices can go down if we are not doing so much massive spending and sucking up all the credit and all the currency out there by government action. It is a pretty good recipe.

Why don't we allow success to happen. The American people are clamoring for that as they have had their eyes opened on what is going on and where their tax dollars are going. I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you might just slow down a little bit and look and see what is really happening here and how people are feeling about that. How they are thinking about it. How they felt it for sev-

eral years in their wallets with inflation and wondering: Why do I no longer have money left over to do some of the things I want?

At the same time, where there are these mandates coming down the pike in my home State of California and affecting things nationally here. You can't buy a gas-powered vehicle anymore or a diesel-powered pickup in just a few years because we want to ban them because of CO₂.

That is taking choices away from people. That is giving them unaffordable alternatives, especially the more they ban and the more they drive up the cost of fuel in my home State. They keep adding on new taxes for climate taxes or CO₂ taxes. They have auctions for the privilege of making CO₂. Where did that come from?

It is like they devised a new currency, CO₂. I can remind you—you have probably seen me on TV doing this several times—but let me remind you. The composition of our atmosphere is those main components. Right there in yellow, that is nitrogen, 78 percent.

Now, I ask people: How much CO₂ do you think there is in the atmosphere? Most folks, you know, are going about their lives and not worried about all this stuff. They guess somewhere between 20 and 50 percent.

Nitrogen is at 78. Here in the blue is oxygen at 21. That adds up to 99. Third place, here in the green, argon is .93 percent. We are already at 99.93 percent that is not CO₂. Look over here. Here are some other trace gases that have to do with water vapor. There is even krypton gas up in the atmosphere. That is .03.

You come down here to this little purple stripe right here. CO₂ is .04 percent. It is practically a rounding error when you look at it on this chart. You would think it is an existential crisis the way John Kerry and all the others are taking their private jets over to Davos and talking about how we need to change our life. That people with the Paris accord and the World Economic Forum and others all want to make sure the United States is paying a heavy price for this.

Meanwhile, China builds more and more coal-fired power plants and does what they wish. They are not part of the Paris accord. Again, a little reminder of CO₂ and what that is actually going to be costing us.

Let's get back to other forms of energy here. I am showing you a picture of the Shasta Dam. It is actually starting to fill up right now. We are getting massive rains in northern California. On the Shasta Dam, they are actually not dumping the water at a higher rate. That makes hydroelectric power.

You see, it actually comes from the bottom of the dam is where the hydro-power plant is. That is a different form of spilling there that comes out of the spillway when they feel like they have an excess.

Hydroelectric power, if you want to play the CO₂ game for a moment, is

CO₂-free power. It is available 24/7. As long as you have water behind the dam, you can generate that CO₂-free power. It is reliable. You don't have to wait for the sun to come up to heat your solar panels or the clouds to go away or the rain to go away or the wind to come up to blow your windmill.

What is happening in northern California? Recently they decided after many years to tear down—this is kind of related to that subject—four dams on the Klamath River. You see some of the Klamath system here that helps transfer water to agriculture and other needs and wildlife, as well.

They tore them down. They took down four dams that produce hydroelectric power. The CO₂-free power everybody thinks they want. They tore them down. Guess what is happening now? Because they are getting a lot of rain in the area, we are actually getting flooding in certain areas. We will get more flooding with even a greater amount of rain because we don't have the dams anymore as a tool. This is all ostensibly to help a fish population go up and down the Klamath River.

The flaw in that thinking is that the Klamath Lake is actually a system that is based on a very shallow, rather warm lake up here that feeds the rest of the system here that is not really the best for the salmon that they are talking about. We gloss over that because we want to tear the dams out and score a win.

They got their way. They scored them. The whole basin here is being affected. The whole river system is being affected by where there used to be water and now you are getting sloughing. The people that live along the area there, their properties are now worth a lot less all because of, I think, fraudulent environmental claims that really have never been proven.

What are some of the other effects of watching those dams be torn out? The initial happening was dead fish, essentially four fish. When they removed those dams, there was a great concentration of silt that had built up behind them over 50, 60, 100 years, depending on the age of which of the four dams. We had this massive till of this and a whole bunch of other wildlife up and down the river as that silt is now being pushed 170 miles or so out to the ocean.

The salmon live on a 3-year cycle. If the silt doesn't wash all the way out to the sea in that 3-year period, what does that mean long-term for salmon populations? Will they die off as all the different cycles of salmon will be gone? Here is a dead fish. You had dead deer getting trapped in the silt. All sorts of wildlife, turtles, you name it.

In the name of the environment, pinning their ears back and just going, they tore the dams out anyway, and they have their sights on more. One is called Lake Pillsbury in Mendocino County, which a lot of people rely on

for drinking water as well as agricultural water. It used to be a power generator in that area, as well. The utilities decided it is not worth the fight anymore, so they abandoned it. If they get their way, it will be torn out soon, too. It is just one losing combination after another, all in the name of the environment, and another loser for the people.

The tear out of the Klamath dams cost the people \$450 million to remove those. Mr. Speaker, \$250 million of it came from a State water bond. The rest of the bond is supposed to be actually building water supply, including the Sites Reservoir. I will talk to you about that in a little bit.

Another \$200 million came from the rate-payers of PacifiCorp where they charge a surcharge to put money aside for the dam removal so the company can skate out of there without any real liability on the dams they own. That was the honey deal that was put together for that.

I will come back to this picture of the Shasta Dam here. When the water is not being run through the turbines at the bottom of the dam or like the one at Lake Oroville, then you miss out on the opportunity of generating low cost, highly reliable CO₂-free power.

The Shasta Dam isn't currently doing that right now, but Lake Oroville nearby, also in my district of northern California, is dumping water. I understand the Army Corps of Engineers has a goal of making sure there is enough storage to make up for massive amounts of rain. Indeed, we have gotten a lot of rain lately.

The Shasta Dam had a peak inflow of 120,000 cubic feet per second. I think it was yesterday. In Oroville, I think it peaked at about 107,000 cubic feet per second. Guess what? Both of those dams have still a massive amount of space behind them.

Oroville, I think it is 400,000 more acre-feet of space, maybe 450. The Shasta Dam is still about 500,000 acre-feet of space. This storm is going to end mostly, I think, tomorrow. At that point, they have already tailed off from those peaks I said in the hundred thousands. Each of them are down now about 50 to 60,000 CFS coming in. Those numbers continue to tail off as the rain stops.

We will have a situation where, yeah, we have got a good influx of water that is going to help fill the lakes. As I said, they are each still far from their goal of being full. If you recall, we went nearly zero for January on rain fall in northern California. We got some on the very last day. We are going to expect that we can count on filling these lakes in February or March.

April 1 is kind of the magic date where they relieve the flood control mandate on that. They allow the lakes to fill up more than their action level, which those numbers are being caught up to now and maybe have slightly exceeded their levels.

The thing is, they are quick to want to dump water. Yes, they are scared of this big storm right now, but it has just kind of brought it up to par. It is going to put us in a good position to be able to get the lakes full by the time May and June rolls around. There is nothing to say that they can't let water out a little at a time if it looks like it will get too full.

□ 1900

Mr. Speaker, but the haste, in my view, and it is my opinion, to let the water out—I think they want to bump Oroville up to 50,000. I think currently it is 33,000 CFS going out. They want to bump it up to 50,000, which isn't the greatest for people downriver at that level.

They could keep it at a steady 20,000 or 30,000 for a little while. Then, when the storm ends and they see the inflow has stopped, maybe they can take a timeout and forecast with the weather. We can watch the news and have a pretty good read on what the weather is going to be.

The Army Corps of Engineers is still using 50-year-old manuals from the seventies on how they want to plan the flood control aspects of the storage of these lakes. They say they are updating them. When will they be updated so we can use dynamic scoring, so to speak, on how weather is going to be predicted? Can we manage the lake in a way like, well, we don't see much weather happening in the next 2 weeks, so we don't need to let water out in February or March or what have you. Let's let it build up.

They are not allowing themselves to use that. They are still studying. They are still in the back room, studying and working on updating the manuals. They say we have 2 or 3 more years. Well, that is frustrating. Watch what happens when people don't get the water they need in the San Joaquin Valley to grow the amazing crops that we have in this State.

I showed this poster quite a bit in these floor talks of what California grows. When we don't have the water to do this stuff, you don't get this stuff from California. When we see that over 90 percent, even 100 percent, of some of these products are grown in California, are we going to import them from somewhere else? At what quality, price, and continuity? Can we have them come from the State because we actually do have the water supply in the north to supply the whole State?

Some of my northern California neighbors sometimes ask if I am going to send all the water south. They ask what is wrong with me. We have plenty of water if we would store it and if we would add to the Shasta Dam. We have the opportunity to raise Shasta Dam 18 feet, 600,000 more acre-feet of storage, and also the ability to not release water quite as quickly if they get to that point.

We see the water chugging down the Sacramento River without the re-

leases. There is a lot of water coming in. We get that, but that is what these structures are for, to take that ebb and flow, so to speak, and to be that rubber band. That is what dams are good for. That is why they are seeing flooding on the Klamath in areas, because they took the dams out and lost the hydroelectric power in the process.

We talk about how much water is getting away from us that could be generating power and growing crops in northern and central California—indeed, the breadbasket I just showed you.

Here is a more updated poster I have now of what has been happening. The water year, they score it from October 1 until the following September 30. This is starting from October of '23, the water year, up to, so far, a little earlier in January when we had this information. It is about a year and a quarter of flow.

What makes me crazy is we are not taking advantage right now of the water that is flowing out of Lake Oroville or coming out south of Lake Shasta and flooding the delta. During this year-and-a-quarter period that is almost current right now, we have a number of 29 million acre-feet that came into the delta.

Lake Oroville and Lake Shasta combined hold 8 million acre-feet. San Luis Reservoir holds about 2 million acre-feet. Nearby, New Melones is about 2 million. I think Trinity Lake is 2.2 million. I think Folsom Lake is a number of 800,000, if I remember correctly. We fill all those lakes one time with this year and a quarter's worth of flow that comes into the delta. That is what comes in.

Certainly, we are using some of that water and moving it to other places because we are smart and can design things. We have the engineers for that. We had the vision for that when we built the Central Valley Project in the thirties and the State Water Project in the sixties.

Their vision did put away a lot of water. They had a vision for even more, but they quit building it because the population didn't demand it at that time in the thirties or the sixties or whatever. It can't be built now because of all the environmental nonsense.

How much did we save? Twenty-nine million went in. Twenty-two million went out to the Pacific Ocean and turned into saltwater.

Some people say we should build some desal plants along the coast. Yes, we could do that. Certain areas might be strategically smart.

Guess what happened? I think a project called Poseidon in Huntington Beach, one of the beach towns in southern California, fought over it for 20 years. They tried to meet every mandate, every hoop to jump through on what it would take to get a permit from the California Coastal Commission and others. They spent millions of dollars to build that desal plant down there. They jumped through every hoop

and answered every question. They were told after 20 years they were not going to be permitted. There we are on our desal.

Where do we want the water to come from for anybody, for any purpose? It could come from right here, this 22 million we are wasting. What is happening right now? The mass inflow is coming down the Sacramento River, Feather River, and all these other areas. I would like to see what these delta inflows are today. They are probably pretty amazing.

There are two sets of pumps at the south end of the delta, a Federal set and a State set. President Trump has seen to it through the Bureau of Reclamation that the Federal pumps are running pretty strong. Some are around 90 to 91 percent capacity. State pumps are running at a much lower level, somewhere around 20 or 25 percent. It oscillates between that.

Why don't they run it at 100 percent and take advantage of the opportunity to fill the San Luis Reservoir, which is only three-quarters full right now, put water in the aqueduct, or put even more into the areas that water could be pooling in the Central Valley and doing groundwater recharge?

I was just told today that we saw some groundwater recharge last year due to some of those positive efforts. That is a tough deal for those folks down there because they have had overdrafts due to agriculture and due to having their surface water taken away from them on these projects because it is going out to the ocean on a fish deal. They had to run their wells. Maybe they ran them too much. We have had subsidence where the land goes down. It depresses somewhat. We even see that on the canals going through there.

We could be doing recharge right now, and the Governor has moved in a direction of allowing more recharge. For some reason, they have to get a permit every year. I talked to his team about that. I asked why we don't have the permits ready to go every year so we don't have to wait and lose time on that. Maybe that will be a precedent going forward.

We have groundwater recharge, filling the aqueducts in the southern California reservoirs that aren't full. For example, this one, which was empty when the fire broke out in the Pacific Palisades, is the Santa Ynez Reservoir. My understanding of it is that, done correctly, the aqueducts could supply some of the higher lakes—I think Lake Cachuma. Someone could straighten me out if I am wrong on this. Through the domino effect, surface water, I believe, could make it here. I know they fill this with well water also, but the lake was empty because they had to fix the cover over it.

They emptied it last February and haven't gotten around to doing the repair or finishing the job. It sat empty, 117 million gallons of water, which is about 40 acre-feet, which would have

helped keep the hydrants full instead of just a few hours as they are relying on three 1-million gallon tanks instead of 117 million. It lasted a few hours down there as they were valiantly trying to fight fires in the Palisades and other areas.

They could have had several days' worth of water had that been full. Was it bad planning? I don't know. Maybe it was bureaucracy. The crazy thing was the L.A. Fire Department didn't even know. They didn't have the knowledge that it was empty. Instead, there is a burned-out community because they didn't have everything they needed to be able to fight that fire the way they could.

Could they have beat it all? I am not sure. They had a lot of wind to beat. The firefighters fought valiantly, and people did what they could. Certainly, having that extra water supply could not have hurt.

I know I have seen plenty of that in my own northern California area, with communities just disappearing due to fire.

This falls more to forest management and land management. Down in southern California, they had a brush removal program in the areas adjacent and above those communities that burned. They suspended it. The brush is the fuel that allowed the fire, driven by high winds, to come all the way to the edge of town and burn through the town.

Maybe brush removal wouldn't be the be-all and end-all on that, but it sure would have helped. It would have given them more of a fighting chance. That is what it is. We are doing forest management, especially folks have seen around our cities, to thin the product, thin the trees and such to a point where a fire coming at a high speed from a distance hit that because the trees are thin enough and spread out enough that it hits the ground and slows down, so we have a chance to save whatever town it is.

We lost the town of Paradise partly because of that. We lost a town called Greenville in Plumas County. We lost another one next door called Canyon Dam above my hometown of Oroville, California. We lost the town of Berry Creek and other adjacent areas there due to fire after fire because of lack of management.

The one above Oroville, Berry Creek, had funding lined up to do some forest thinning around there. They had a grant. The local folks were going to do it. There was an 18-month process or longer to get the permits to do something. This is not something new, either. This isn't new under the Sun of thinning forests and managing them. They didn't get it done. Those areas burned. They burned out. These towns burned out.

I talked to a cattle rancher there about what that looked like for him. His family had been farming and ranching or grazing up in those forested areas for many generations and dec-

ades. Look it up on the Internet. Read his column. He is a man named David Daley, D-a-l-e-y. Look at his column. Look at the emotion. Look at what it meant to him on that. He wrote a really good column on that 2 or 3 years ago, on what that means. If we want to talk about a real human story on that and a real thing that affects the community, I ask my colleagues to look up David Daley. Search that and look at his column and the burned-out carcass of the cattle that he and his family run there, as well as all the other wildlife, the cougars, the raccoons, you name it. This happens to everybody.

The next effect of that after the fire is that when the rain does come, it is going to wash all this ash and all this mud down into the brooks, creeks, rivers, and streams and eventually into this area, Lake Oroville. Being a key part of the State Water Project, it supplies water to 20 million Californians.

It isn't just, well, the guys way up there in the sticks don't matter, whatever. No, that has an effect on pretty much the whole State that draws that water supply because we aren't doing a simple thing like something that is not new under the Sun of managing forests properly.

Well, they are going to clearcut everything. That is what they want to do. That is what the big timber and big lumber companies want. No, it isn't. That is nonsense.

Pay attention. Dig in on this. These folks that do it on their private land have an 80-year, 100-year plan of how they harvest, manage, and plant it back. That is what we need to have similarly on Federal lands or other government-owned lands, which I am reminded aren't government-owned. They are owned by the people. The government is supposed to be the steward of them. It is not being the steward.

The Forest Service is way behind the eight ball. They have 193 million acres under their purview. If they are managing 2 million of that per year, that is only 1 percent, which means it will take 100 years to get over all of it. Hopefully, they are accelerating the process. That is what we are trying to cause them to do here.

When they count burned-out land sometimes as treated acres, we can burn everything, I guess, and check the box that says it is treated. That is nonsense. That is terrible for everybody. The asset that timber is doesn't always get accounted for, for its value. We talk about what the cost of the firefighting was or the cost of the buildings and towns that were burned out. Do we ever get to see what the value is of the actual timber itself?

What we have isn't working. It is not all that successful with the management of these forested lands, the management of the water supply, and the ability we have to do so much better. It doesn't cause environmental harm. We have excess water for much of the year going out the delta and other areas that could be captured and put to good people use.

People still need the food. They still need these products. We can grow them in California, or we can try to import them from South America or somewhere else and become dependent on a foreign food supply. That is a really great idea. Then, we don't have the employment of our people. We don't have employment of the lumberjacks in small towns I represent in northern California and others like it in other States.

So, we have unemployment. We have small communities that are boarded up. We have all the things that go with the social aspect of the people who don't have the self-worth that comes from good, honest work. What does that get into? We know what that gets into. It ends up being alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, all the things that would be restored with a strong local economy, giving products that people need anyway.

They need wood and paper products. They need food products. They need electricity generated, whether it is by a hydroelectric power plant or any other manner of energy that can do it.

Uranium, why aren't we doing much more with nuclear power? It is CO₂-free, for all the CO₂ scorers out there, so why aren't we doing that?

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Environmentalists sue and stop over everything. We have to reform the Endangered Species Act; NEPA; and on the California State level, CEQA, to work for us once again. These are laws that the Fed level passed 50 years ago or longer, and they have been manipulated and they have been weaponized by courts, by judges, and by environmental groups to turn into everything else, even something as nice as a national park.

I would like to point out that the folks in Marin County, these farmers and ranchers there on an area called the Point Reyes National Seashore park, those folks came in in the early sixties and demanded they were going to bully these people off their land by eminent domain, so they struck a deal. They said, well, we will sell the land to the National Park Service as long as we have the ability to lease it back in perpetuity. That was the deal that was struck. As long as it is the same family that is in the operation there, the deal was it was supposed to be in perpetuity. They struck that deal, and they thought they could live with that.

Well, not too many years later after the weaponization of environmental laws and what is known as NEPA, a permit process, that got weaponized by environmental groups to sue the heck out of these people every time they tried to get an extension of their grazing permit. They were trying to get them for 20 years, then they said, well, we have to settle for 5 or 2.

For doing some of the environmental mitigation that they would be demanded of with only a 2-year lease, it is pretty tough to say, well, I can't put

half a million dollars into my sheds or my equipment or the drainage to control whatever might be coming off the dairy or the ranch, so they can't make the investment because they can't be assured they will be there long enough to do that. Basically they are screwed by the government and by environmental organizations. These are good, honorable people. They are very compatible with the land.

They say the tule elk are being affected by these cattle. The elk and the cattle get along beautifully together. There are many acres for them. They graze to a level that the land can sustain, and then they move them out. They move them to a different grazing area.

Grazing is a good thing, whether you are talking forested areas or as fire breaks or in this case at Point Reyes Seashore. These families have been disrespected and basically had a gun held to their head to sign an agreement only recently to say you are going to have to leave the land. These are good, hardworking people, and there doesn't seem to be much reward in California and some aspects of the Federal Government for being good, hardworking people, honest people, the ones that will pull over on the edge of the road and help you with your flat tire and make sure you are okay like that, you know?

What do they get? They get litigated to death. Some of them are very elderly now and they say that I just can't fight the fight anymore, I don't have enough money, I don't have enough will.

So what happens? The government wins. Extreme environmental organizations win. Somebody comes in and says they will save the day telling you, hey, we are going buy you out. You will get 15 months to be eased out of this. When all the employees are gone, and the cattle is gone, the dairies are going to go somewhere else.

It is hard enough to run a dairy in California anymore. They regulated that out of business. There are people who do not like dairy products. They don't like that. They don't like that it comes from animals.

You know, a lot of wrong people are in charge, and it has been pretty refreshing to see what the Trump administration has done to put things back in a direction here that rewards hard work, honesty, and the right way of doing things.

It can be kind of discouraging, very discouraging, and for the families, the farmers, the ranchers in this Point Reyes situation right now. My heart goes out to them. I hope we can find a solution for them because they shouldn't be getting kicked off that land. They, in good faith, when they were bullied off that land and had to sell to the parks or otherwise lose it to eminent domain, have now been bullied off by regulations, by NEPA, by endless lawsuits. That ain't right. That ain't America. They are still making a prod-

uct that people want and people need. They would like to continue to do that as good stewards of the land.

Instead, they have designs, like, well, we are going to have more tourism on there. Is that as good? I would suggest it probably isn't as good for that land, but they power ahead. I hope maybe something can be done to rectify that and rectify a lot of other things that have affected rural America so much so.

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

CHAOS, CONFUSION, AND MANUFACTURED CRISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague on the other side of the aisle as he was talking about how families want to be able to go to the grocery store and afford food for their kids; that they want to be able to put not just food on the table but put their kids in clothes and shoes and pay for their healthcare and for housing.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to share much of the frustration and anger of our constituents watching as the new administration has come in and done a whole host of things, announced a whole litany of actions but failed to deliver on the key promise of working to lower costs for American families. Costs are going up.

In fact, you may have seen the news today. Waffle House just announced that they are putting on a 50 cent surcharge per egg because the price of eggs have gone up so much. In fact, in my community in Highland Park, Illinois, a dozen eggs costs \$5.

A generation ago, President Clinton ran on a campaign built on a very simple axiom: It is the economy, stupid. What was true in 1992 is just as true in 2024 in the last election and is true today. The American people want their Representatives working and focused on the economy. They want us to be trying to create quality, well-paying jobs, provide more opportunities for themselves and a better future for their children. They want us to lower costs and raise the standard of living for all Americans.

Beyond economic growth and opportunity, they want us to make sure that we are helping to keep our communities healthy and safe and that we are focused on a strong national security and a strong national defense.

That is the charge voters gave us here in Congress and gave to the new President. It is hard to believe that we are only 2 weeks into the second Trump administration and already the early onslaught of chaos, confusion, and manufactured crises has been stunning. It is easy to feel overwhelmed. In fact, folks at home are telling me how