

Earlier this year, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, whom I voted against, rejected Colorado's updated Regional Haze Plan. They didn't reject Colorado's plan because the science was wrong. They didn't dispute the goals, and they didn't dispute the modeling. They rejected it to prop up a handful of aging coal plants—coal-fired electrical generation plants—that were already planning to close. The utilities had created the models, had found the replacement sources of energy, and were ready to close those older, less-efficient, and significantly dirtier generation plants.

The Trump administration seems to think we must choose between clean air and affordable energy, which is nonsense. Colorado has shown that that is a false choice. Time and time again, we have brought communities and utilities and regulators together to protect our clean air supply without hurting our economy or our energy supply.

Last summer, the Front Range experienced the lowest number of ozone action alerts in a decade. Let me say that again. Last year was the lowest number of ozone action alerts in a decade. Thanks to bipartisan investments in renewable energy, Colorado ranked among the top 10 States in overall energy production.

The administration's decision doesn't lower costs for anybody. It just means more pollution and more haze in those very places we treasure the most.

Colorado is never going to move forward by returning to the 1970s. For decades, we have fought tooth and nail to ensure that our mountains are visible and our national parks are the most beautiful and the most enjoyable in America. We should support this measure and prevent Washington politics from clouding Colorado's hard-fought progress.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNLOCK AMERICAN ENERGY AND JOBS ACT

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation on a critical subject for the American people. I rise because Congress—this Congress—has a historic opportunity over the next 6 months to deliver an energy and economic bonanza for the American people by overhauling our broken permitting process.

President Trump has shown bold leadership, cutting redtape and attracting transformational investment. Just last year—just last year—he helped catalyze \$92 billion of new investment for the Keystone State at the

Pennsylvania Energy and Innovation Summit in Pittsburgh. And since then, other enormous investments in advanced manufacturing and transformation energy infrastructure have been made in our Commonwealth.

But the President cannot carry this alone. A true overhaul requires Congress to reclaim its article I responsibilities and to ensure that the Federal Government is a partner to American energy dominance, not an obstacle to American energy dominance—and an obstacle is exactly what our permitting system is today. It is what it has become.

A McKinsey study found \$1.5 trillion in critical infrastructure is frozen in permitting limbo, holding back 2.4 trillion in economic activity.

It takes 5 years—5 years—to get a permit for a powerplant. That is longer than it took us to win World War II. Transmission lines take nearly 8 years.

The supply-demand gap tells the same story. From 2013 to 2024, U.S. natural gas demand surged 49 percent, and pipeline capacity grew by 26 percent; storage capacity, 2 percent. Demand—demand for energy—is sprinting, and capacity is crawling.

And nowhere—nowhere in America—is that failure felt more acutely than in Pennsylvania. Our Commonwealth is an energy superpower. But because so much of our energy infrastructure crosses State lines, rivers, and wetlands, nearly every project in Pennsylvania needs Federal approvals, and the current system makes that almost impossible to obtain.

Take the PennEast Pipeline, a project that would have delivered Pennsylvania natural gas to New Jersey homes and businesses. Environmental activists weaponized this permitting system to kill it. Over 12,000 direct and indirect jobs—gone. And PennEast is just one example among many.

And here is the sad irony: Pennsylvania ranks third in the Nation in electricity production, second in the Nation in natural gas, and second in nuclear power. And yet, Pennsylvania families face a 20-percent hike in energy prices that are projected over the next 3 years; Pennsylvania businesses, up to 30 percent.

If we lacked the needed capital or the workers or the reserves, rising prices, they might make sense. But we have all three. The obstacle holding back Pennsylvania energy is Washington made. And it is time—it is time—for Congress to fix it. We must do better.

And done right, permitting reform will force Federal and State governments to move faster, to clear the backlog, and to unleash a wave of investment across our economy. It will lower prices. The projects stuck in limbo could power more than 50 million homes. That backlog drives up cost on everything, from farming to fighter jets. Cheaper energy means cheaper everything. It will create great—great—high-paying jobs. Every new nuclear

plant, every new pad, every oil rig, every pipeline, every new power line unlocked by reforms, means thousands of jobs—thousands of jobs—for welders, electricians, pipefitters, and engineers in small, industrial towns across America—towns like Bloomsburg, PA, where I grew up.

And it will make us more secure. We are in a head-to-head race with communist China for AI leadership, and the stakes are existential. We cannot afford to lose, and we cannot win without more energy.

The recent fighting in the Strait of Hormuz is a stark reminder: We cannot rely on the rest of the world to power our future. We must build it ourselves, and we must be the supplier—the supplier of choice—to our allies around the world.

And that—for all those reasons—that is why I am introducing the Unlock American Energy and Jobs Act. This is gold standard—the gold standard—for what Pennsylvania and the country needs.

The bill addresses four chokepoints. First, it stops opponents from weaponizing the Clean Water Act as a general-purpose veto, setting hard deadlines and limiting reviews in actual water quality concerns; No. 2, it scraps the outdated rule forcing American LNG exporters to seek case-by-case Federal approval before selling our natural gas abroad; No. 3, it modernizes nuclear licensing to match today's technology and decades—decades—of proven safety in America and around the world; and No. 4, it brings common sense to environmental litigation which activists routinely use to kill projects that have already cleared every single regulatory hurdle.

Now let me be clear—let me be clear—this is not an argument—this is not an argument—for abolishing environmental standards. It is not an argument for shutting down public debate. It is an argument for decisions that are timely, decisions that are lawful, and decisions—and this is most important—that are final.

We can do both: We can protect our natural resources, and we can still build America's future.

And now—now, my friends—is the moment. We have a pro-energy President. A Republican Congress determined to unleash American energy. I have spoken with many, many of my Democratic colleagues who want projects, who want these same kinds of projects unlocked in their States too. The common ground on this topic is real, and the American people are demanding—they are insisting—that we seize the moment.

Now, I know with all the issues going around, I know that time is short and the priorities are many. Some are urgent, like ending the DHS shutdown. But we must be ruthless in our prioritization. If we let this moment slip, we lose a golden—golden—opportunity for lower costs, to create jobs, and to transform our economy.

President Trump laid the blueprint, and I am encouraged by the bipartisan conversations that are already underway, but it is up to us. It is up to us to make this momentum permanent. And it is up to us—us in this body—to unleash a new era of American security dominance.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

S.J. RES. 99

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of our workers, our businesses, and our economy. Specifically, I am here to talk about my resolution, which we will be voting on shortly, to protect the millions of workers who could lose their jobs because of an extreme Trump administration rule.

This is an issue that affects all of us because, well, let me tell you, when industries like agriculture and construction lose workers, it impacts their supply chains and prices go up.

In my State of Nevada and across every single State in this Nation, our economy, well, it is fueled by our workers. This includes thousands of individuals who live in this country legally. Thousands of individuals who live in this country legally, who have legal authorization to work, and who show up every single day to do the jobs that keep our communities running.

These workers, they are doing everything that is asked of them. They have been vetted. They are playing by the rules. They are paying their taxes. And yet today, because of a misguided rule change by the Trump administration, many of them are at risk of losing their jobs and their livelihoods through no fault of their own. That is because workers with employment authorization documents, also known as work permits, must renew them every few years, but they can only file that paperwork 6 months before their permit expires.

While 6 months seems like a long time, the processing delays at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, especially under this administration, are even longer. They can stretch well beyond 6 months.

And so for years, there had been a simple, commonsense solution. If a worker filed their renewal on time, their current work permit would be automatically extended while the government finished processing their application. It is the government that was slow, not the worker.

This way, people wouldn't have a gap in work authorization. This policy kept people working. It provided stability for businesses, and it prevented needless disruptions to our economy.

But last fall, that changed. The Trump administration issued a rule that fully eliminated these automatic extensions, pulling the rug out from under workers who did everything right.

Now, these individuals face an impossible choice: stop working and lose their income and their ability to provide for their family or risk working without authorization and risk deportation.

It also puts our business owners in a terrible position. Employers are going to be forced to go without workers or have to let go of workers whose work permits expired because the government took too long to issue their renewals. That is why many business groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, are opposed to this reckless Trump rule.

They know it will affect key industries like agriculture and food processing, construction and even childcare. And we know what happens when there are fewer workers able to meet demands: Prices go up.

So think about it. More than 3.5 million legally authorized workers nationwide could be impacted by this misguided rule. In construction alone, roughly 600,000 workers could be forced off the job, right as we face a critical shortage of labor needed to build much needed housing across America. In Nevada, we already have 11,000 fewer construction workers than we did just a year ago, and even more workers are sidelined because of paperwork delays.

What is this going to mean? Projects are going to stall, costs will rise, working families will feel it in the form of higher housing prices and fewer available homes. And it doesn't stop there.

In hospitality, an industry that is the backbone of Nevada's economy, more than half a million workers nationwide could be affected. So for a State like mine, where tourism drives growth and supports countless small businesses, losing thousands of workers in our hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues would be devastating.

Fewer workers means reduced capacity. It means lower service levels. It means lost revenue, not just for our businesses but for entire communities that depend upon a strong tourism economy. And that is wrong. It is just wrong.

It is why I introduced a resolution under the Congressional Review Act to overturn this harmful Trump rule. My legislation would restore automatic extensions for workers who have already been vetted and who have their work permits while their paperwork is being processed.

This is about fairness. It is about stability, and it is about helping our workers and our businesses.

So today I am asking my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in taking a simple step, a vote to support workers and the business community. So let's overturn this harmful rule change that will hurt families, small businesses, large businesses, and our entire economy. Let's put America's workers—again, our businesses, everything, our economy—first by reinstating automatic extensions for work permit renewals. If we don't, we risk

losing 3.5 million workers from our workforce. And trust me; we will all pay the price.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

S. RES. 139

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today, I am bringing the Congressional Review Act resolution to the floor to challenge EPA's disapproval of Colorado's regional haze plan. I want to thank my colleagues Senator HICKENLOOPER and Senator WHITEHOUSE for joining me in this effort.

For decades, we have relied on a simple principle in this country to keep our air clean: States and the Federal Government work together to reduce pollution and protect public health. That includes programs like Regional Haze, which is designed to improve visibility in national parks and wilderness areas, like Rocky Mountain National Park in Northern Colorado.

In 2022, Colorado submitted a good-faith plan to improve air quality. The State provided a range of solutions—including the voluntary, already-planned retirement of aging coal plants.

The decisions to close these plants were driven by basic economics. Colorado utilities recognized that it no longer made sense to keep them open, based on the high costs of maintaining and operating. And so in its regional haze plan, Colorado incorporated these previously made decisions into the State's strategy to reduce air pollution.

But EPA rejected Colorado's plan—not because it failed to meet Federal standards. EPA rejected it because President Trump is laser-focused on keeping even aging coal plants operational, regardless of the costs or the desires of the local communities.

EPA's disapproval of Colorado's plan was based on an unprecedented and flawed legal theory. EPA alleges that under section 110 of the Clean Air Act, Colorado must somehow prove these coal plant requirements would not violate the Constitution's takings clause, or, in other words, not constitute an illegal government seizure of private property. But that is an impossible case for the State to make. It is also not, in fact, what section 110 of the Clean Air Act requires or what Congress ever intended.

And to make matters worse, the EPA made this shift without any meaningful public input. And the consequences of President Trump and Lee Zeldin's actions are real. They are real for Colorado and for the West and for this country.

They are making it harder—harder—for Colorado to chart our own path on the energy transition and trying to force Coloradans to pay tens of millions of dollars to keep outdated coal plants running. And they are doing this at a moment when energy prices have already increased as a result of the administration's own reckless actions.