with development of federally-owned coal in split-estate situations. However, it is important to note one major difference—namely, while current law allows a surface owner to effectively veto development of coal resources, under the bill a surface owner ultimately could not block development of oil or gas underlying his or her lands. This difference reflects the fact that appropriate development of oil and natural gas is needed.

RECLAMATION REQUIREMENTS

The bill's third part (Titles III and IV) addresses reclamation of affected lands.

Title III would amend the Mineral Leasing Act by adding an explicit requirement that parties that produced oil or gas (including coalbed methane) under a federal lease must restore the affected land so it will be able to support the uses it could support before the energy development. Toward that end, this part of the bill requires development of reclamation plans and posting of reclamation bonds. In addition, so Congress can consider whether changes are needed, the bill requires the General Accounting Office to review how these requirements are being implemented and how well they are working.

And, finally, Title IV would require the Interior Department to—(1) establish, in cooperation with the Agriculture Department, a program for reclamation and closure of abandoned oil or gas wells located on lands managed by an Interior Department agency or the Forest Service or drilled for development of federal oil or gas in split-estate situations; and (2) establish, in consultation with the Energy Department, a program to provide technical assistance to state an tribal governments that are working to correct environmental problems cased by abandoned wells on other lands. The bill would authorize annual appropriations of $5 million in fiscal 2005 and 2006 for the federal program and annual appropriations of $5 million in fiscal 2005, 2006, and 2007 for the program of assistance to the states and tribes.

Mr. Speaker, our country is overly dependent on a single energy source—fossil fuels—to the detriment of our environment, our national security, and our economy. To lessen this dependence and to protect our environment, we need to diversity our energy portfolio and increase the contributions of alternative energy sources to our energy mix. However, for the foreseeable future, petroleum and natural gas (including coalbed methane) will remain important parts of a diversified energy portfolio—and I support their development in appropriate areas and in responsible ways. I believe this legislation can move us closer toward this goal by establishing some clear, reasonable rules that will provide greater assurance and certainty for all concerned, including the energy industry and the residents of Colorado, New Mexico, and other Western states. Here is a brief outline of its major provisions:

OUTLINE OF BILL

Section One—This section provides a short title (''Western Waters and Farm Lands Protection Act''), makes several findings about the need for the legislation, and states the bill's purpose, which is ''to provide for the protection of water resources and surface estate owners in the development of oil and gas resources, including coalbed methane.''

Title I—This title deals with the protection of water resources. It includes three sections:

Section 101 amends current law to specify that an operator producing oil or gas under a federal lease must—(1) replace a water supply that is contaminated or interrupted by drilling operations; (2) assure any reinjected water goes only to the same aquifer from which it was extracted or an aquifer of no better water quality; and (3) to develop a proposed water management plan before obtaining a lease.

Section 102 amends current law to make clear that extraction of water in connection with development of oil or gas (including coalbed methane) is subject to an appropriate permit and the requirement to minimize adverse effects on affected lands or waters.

Section 103 provides that nothing in the bill will—(1) affect any State's right or jurisdiction with respect to water; or (2) limit, alter, modify, or amend any interstate compact or judicial rulings that apportion water among and between different States.

Title II—This title deals with the protection of surface owners. It includes four sections:

Section 201 provides definitions for several terms used in Title II.

Section 202 requires a party seeking to develop federal oil or gas in a split-estate situation to first seek to reach an agreement with the surface owner or owners that spells out how the energy development will be carried out, how the affected lands will be reclaimed, and that compensation will be made for damages. It provides that if no such agreement is reached within 90 days after the start of negotiations the matter will be referred to arbitration by a neutral party identified by the Interior Department.

Section 203 provides that if no agreement under section 202 is reached within 90 days after going to arbitration, the Interior Department can permit energy development to proceed under an approved plan of operations and posting of an adequate bond. This section also requires the Interior Department to provide surface owners with an opportunity to comment on proposed plans of operations, participate in decisions regarding the amount of the bonds that will be required, and to participate in on-site inspections if the surface owners have reason to believe that plans of operations are not being followed. In addition, this section allows surface owners to petition the Interior Department for payments under bonds to compensate for damages and authorizes the Interior Department to release bonds after the energy development is completed and any damages have been compensated.

Section 204 requires the Interior Department to notify surface owners about lease sales and subsequent decisions involving federal oil or gas resources in their lands.

Title III—This title amends current law to require parties producing oil or gas under a federal lease to restore affected lands and to post bonds to cover reclamation costs. It also requires the GAO to review Interior Department implementation of this part of the bill and to report to Congress about the results of that review and any recommendations for legislative or administrative changes that would improve matters.

Title IV—This title deals with abandoned oil or gas wells. It includes three sections:

Section 401 defines the wells that would be covered by the title.

Section 402 requires the Interior Department, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, to establish a program for reclamation and closure of abandoned wells on federal lands or that were drilled for development of federally-owned minerals in split-estate situations. It authorizes appropriations of $5 million in fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

Section 403 requires the Interior Department, in consultation with the Energy Department, to establish a program to assist states and tribes to remedy environmental problems caused by abandoned oil or gas wells on non-federal and Indian lands. It authorizes appropriations of $5 million in fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007.

IN HONOR OF THE INSTALLATION OF RABBI HOWARD A. STECKER AT TEMPLE ISRAEL OF GREAT NECK

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call to the House's attention a wonderful event which reflects the vibrancy and dynamism of the Jewish community in my district. On Sunday, March 28, Temple Israel of Great Neck will celebrate the installation of Rabbi Howard A. Stecker as Spiritual Leader.

Originally from Fair Lawn, New Jersey, Rabbi Stecker received a Bachelors Degree in English literature from Columbia University before going on to The Jewish Theological Seminary, where he was ordained in 1992. While in Seminary, he served as a student chaplain at Lenox Hill Hospital, counseling patients of all faiths.

Rabbi Stecker served for 4 years as Assistant Rabbi of the Shelter Rock Jewish Center in Roslyn, New York, under the leadership of Rabbi Myron Fenster before serving for 7 years as Rabbi of the Jewish Community Center of West Hempstead. In December of 2003, Rabbi Stecker became Rabbi of Temple Israel of Great Neck.

Rabbi Stecker served on the Board of Directors of the Solomon Schecter Day School, in Nassau County. He also played an important role in the formation of its high school and spent 5 years as co-chairman of its education committee. Rabbi Stecker currently serves as President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Nassau and Suffolk Counties, an organization that provides educational and social opportunities for local Rabbis. Despite his many responsibilities in the community, Rabbi Stecker makes plenty of time to spend with his wife, Deanna, and their three sons, Joshua, Daniel and Zachary.

I commend Rabbi Howard A. Stecker for his continued dedication to Jewish community on Long Island. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in congratulating Rabbi Stecker on his appointment as Spiritual Leader of Temple Israel of Great Neck.

RECOGNIZING DEVIN HARRIS

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Devin Harris of the University of Wisconsin men's basketball team, who was recently named the 2004 Big Ten Conference player of the year. Devin is only the fifth Badger player in history and the first since 1950 to receive the honor. He led his team to a twenty-four and six record entering the NCAA tournament and a second-place finish in the Big Ten while scoring over twenty points a game. He was also among the Big Ten leaders in assists, steals, assist-to-turnover ratio, and three-point field goal percentage. In addition to being the player of the year, Devin was the only unanimous first team all-conference selection, and was also named the Most Outstanding Player of the Big Ten Tournament after leading the Badgers to the tournament championship, the first in school history.

Beyond statistics and awards, Devin has continually amazed the Badger faithful with his effervescent style of play and penchant for playing even better when it mattered most. His silky smooth ballhandling and signature step-back jump shot contribute to his astounding ability to break down a half-court defense and find a way to score, while his speed and leaping ability have led to some spectacular dunks in transition. His versatile game makes it difficult for one defender to stay with him, which opens up opportunities for his teammates, and he consistently gets them the ball when those opportunities arise. Everyone plays better when Devin is on the court, and that is what makes him a truly special player.

If Badger fans needed any other reason to love Devin, he is also a homegrown talent, coming to UW from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, where he was the state high school player of the year at East High. Even with that, however, it would have been difficult for anyone to predict that he would develop into the player that he has. This past fall, when the Big Ten coaches named him the pre-season conference player of the year, Devin was as surprised as anyone. But there is no surprise left in awards for Devin Harris. No one who saw him play this year could doubt that he deserves this honor, and our recognition.

SONGS OF CUBA, SILENCED IN AMERICA

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article by singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, which appeared in yesterday's March 22, 2004, edition of the New York Times. As my colleagues are aware, for nearly three decades, Mr. Browne has been a popular and valuable contributor to American music and culture. Cementing his role and contributions to American culture, last week, on March 15th, Mr. Browne was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In his article, "Songs of Cuba, Silenced in America," he laments and challenges the current U.S. policy of denying visas to Cuban artists who wish to perform and share their musical art with the U.S. public or who are being honored for their work by their American peers. I couldn't agree more with Mr. Browne when he describes these artists' work as a way for Americans to hear in song a reflection of the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the Cuban people—a cultural communication that is frustrated by a U.S. policy which aspires itself to suffocate all such contact and communication.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that when change does come to Cuba we will deeply regret the lack of contact, communication, and genuine understanding between the United States and the people of Cuba. I believe the United States would better prepare for change by encouraging now the free exchange of ideas, the freedom of travel, the rich exchange of culture and heritage between our two peoples, including our artists and ordinary Americans.

I want to thank Mr. Browne for sharing his views and insights, and I commend his article to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

[From the New York Times, March 22, 2004]

SONGS OF CUBA, SILENCED IN AMERICA

(By Jackson Browne)

LOS ANGELES.—Carlos Varela, the great Cuban singer-songwriter, applied for a visa to come to the United States to sing his powerful, amazing songs. He had concerts planned in Miami, New York and Los Angeles. Our government turned him down.

Visas have been denied to other Cuban artists because their visits are ''detrimental to the interests'' of our country. In essence, the government says that if Carlos Varela plays concerts in the United States, the money he makes would go to Fidel Castro. This is untrue. In Cuba, renowned artists keep much of what they earn, because the government does not want them to leave the country and live somewhere else. Yet, the Bush administration used the same reasoning to keep Ibrahim Ferrer, of the Buena Vista Social Club, and Manuel Galbán from attending the Grammy award ceremony in Los Angeles last month. (Both men won awards.)

It also forced the postponement of concerts by the Spanish flamenco master Paco de Lucía because he plays with Alain Pérez Rodríguez, a Cuban-born bassist. I congratulate the State Department on finally determining that Mr. Pérez is not ''detrimental to the interests'' of our country, although those of us who were able to reschedule and hear him play this month know that he is a truly dangerous man.

In a profound way, our government takes on the role of oppressor when it tries to control which artists will be allowed access to our minds and our hearts. We may think we are isolating Cuba with our embargo and our travel restrictions, but it is we Americans who are becoming isolated. People travel to Cuba from Australia, Britain, Canada, Italy and Spain—countries we consider staunch allies.

United States foreign policy toward Cuba is unpopular in America, and for good reason. It stops Americans from traveling to Cuba and Cubans from coming into the States. It stops us from sharing medicine with the ill and restricts our ability to sell food to the hungry. This policy is an outdated relic of the cold war and exists only as a political payoff to Republican-leaning Cuban-American voters in Miami.

The policy of punishing Cuba works only when Americans see the angry face of Cuban repression. But in the face of Carlos Varela, and the language of his music, Americans would not find the mask of a demon, but hear the aspirations of people just like themselves.

Perhaps the most prominent paradox here is that Carlos Varela is known not only for his talent, but also for his courage to speak out through his songs, many of which have been interpreted as critical of the Cuban government.

While these young Cubans respect the accomplishments of their leaders, they are ready, indeed impatient, to run their own affairs. They want freedom for themselves and independence for their country. They want the new Cuba to be created by the Cuban people, not by the United States.

I believe in justice and human rights in the United States and abroad. I am saddened by the treatment by the Cuban government of the political dissidents in their country. I long for the day when there is freedom for both Cubans and Americans to travel in both directions across the Straits of Florida without undue interference by their governments.

I want this freedom not just for artists but for all people, American and Cuban, who live each day in the hope for a just and prosperous future. Giving Carlos Varela a visa to sing in America would be a good way to begin.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I unavoidably was absent last Thursday. Had I been present, I would have voted on Roll Call 66—"no"; on Roll Call 67—"no"; on Roll Call 68—"yes"; on Roll Call 69—"yes"; on Roll Call 70—"yes"; on Roll Call 71—"yes."

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO END PENALTY FOR CITIZENSHIP

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to ensure that family members who have petitioned to immigrate into the United States are not penalized as a result of an award of citizenship to a sponsoring parent or spouse.

My office has been involved in many cases in which my constituents are caught in a contradictory situation. If a legal resident sponsor of immigration applicants becomes a U.S. citizen, the petition he or she filed as a legal permanent resident is essentially moved from the second preference category to the first preference category with accompanying alteration of the category priority date.

While this is not a problem for most, as the wait list for the first preference category is generally shorter, it has become a problem for some, primarily our families from the Philippines. It is here that, unfortunately, the quota for unmarried sons or daughters of American citizens is longer than that for unmarried sons and daughters of legal permanent residents. As a result, the wait time for some petitions is