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# House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ELLMERS).

## DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
*September 22, 2011.*

I hereby appoint the Honorable RENEE L. ELLMERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

## MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

## THE MUFFIN MAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, do you know the muffin man, the muffin man, the muffin man? Yes, I know the muffin man, but he doesn't live on Drury Lane. He lives at the Department of Justice on Justice Lane and is growing rich on selling $16 muffins at Justice Lane.

The Department of Justice's inspector general states that at only 10 conferences the Department of Justice spent almost $500,000 on refreshments. That's $50,000 per conference for just refreshments. And that includes $4,200 for 250 muffins.

Madam Speaker, how come these critters cost $16 apiece? These are some high-dollar muffins that the Department of Justice is buying for its refreshments at conferences. Where do you even find a muffin that costs $16? I've never seen one. Maybe they're shipped in from a special bakery in France with some secret ingredient. My favorite bakery, RAO's in Beaumont, Texas, tells me these things should be about $2 apiece.

So why is the Justice Department with all those fancy lawyers letting the muffin man get away with this price gouging? Because the government doesn't care. It lives high on the hog with taxpayers' money.

So, Madam Speaker, do you know the muffin man, the muffin man? I know the muffin man, and the government should quit spending somebody else's money to keep the muffin man rolling in the dough.

And that's just the way it is.

## AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As Washington appears to be trapped in partisan gridlock, sliding to budget paralysis and the potential of another government shutdown looming, there is one particular area that doesn't get the attention it merits, even as it is the key to our economic recovery. This is our serious and ever-growing infrastructure deficit. America's roads, bridges, water systems, transit, aviation ports all are in serious need of repair.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has, over the years, given grades every 5 years to the state of infrastructure in the United States. Sadly, the latest survey showed that we are still getting a failing grade, and the gap necessary to bring these resources up to standard is growing larger, over $2.3 trillion for 5 years to make it in a reasonable state of repair.

For example, we lose 6 billion gallons of water every day through leaks in aging pipes and sewer mains throughout the country. This is enough water to fill 9,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. If you laid them end to end, you could swim from Washington, D.C., to Pittsburgh in the amount that is leaked every single day.

But it doesn't end there. In terms of the sad state of rail, deteriorating bridges, here is an opportunity for us to step forward dealing with a serious challenge that threatens America's productivity, threatens America's environmental and physical health, and puts hundreds of thousands of Americans to work at family wage jobs virtually overnight.

Madam Speaker, in times past, investment in infrastructure has been something that has captured the vision for the United States; but more than that, it has been part of how we have repaired some of our problems fiscally.

Remember in 1982, Ronald Reagan approved, as part of his budget stabilization program, a 5-cent a gallon increase in a user fee for gasoline that helped put the budget in balance and be able to finance needed infrastructure.

In 1993, as part of the Clinton program that led to the first balanced budgets that we had seen in decades, every year the deficit declined until the last 3 years he was in office, three successive years of increasing budget surplus, while we had an unprecedented increase in jobs, they included a modest gas tax increase.

There are a whole host of areas for user fees. I have bipartisan legislation for a water trust fund that would deal



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