So here the rest of the world is laughing at us, looking at us and saying why is it we have a country that does not use its own resources. It is pretty mind-boggling to me.

The first effort of this administration, in order to hide this agenda of not wanting to provide our own energy, was to do away with hydraulic fracturing. A lot of people don't know what that is.

Hydraulic fracturing is a technique started in my State of Oklahoma in 1948. There has never been a case of groundwater contamination in over 1 million of these applications since 1948. Yet the President made a speech about 6 months ago saying we need to use this good, clean natural gas, and it is plentiful, cheap, and we have a lot of it, we should use it—but we have to do something about hydraulic fracturing.

The reality is we cannot get into any of these tight formations for oil or gas without using hydraulic fracturing. It is a perfectly safe process. They are trying to kill fossil fuels by stopping it.

Just last week the EPA said, like an endangerment finding, that we have now said in the State of Wyoming, in this very shallow well up there, only 600 feet, that somehow there is some contamination, and it was due to hydraulic fracturing. It is not. Hydraulic fracturing is done 1 mile, 2 miles down deep. That is one of the efforts.

The second issue we are addressing tonight—and this is significant. It is almost as if, with all the majority they have supporting the President with the 2012 elections coming up, I am in shock a lot of my colleagues on the left side, on the Democratic side, are following President Obama off this plank and going along with these efforts to kill fossil fuels. The most recent one is the one we are talking about tonight, and that is the pipeline.

On November 10 the Obama administration State Department announced it would delay the Keystone XL Pipeline decision until after the 2012 elections. This delay came shortly after the head of the Sierra Club, the executive director, Michael Brune, tied their political support for President Obama's reelection to the Keystone decision—and they went along with it. That is what we are facing right now. It is something that is very punitive to our whole country, not just in terms of the fact that we cannot use our good, cheap energy we develop right here but the number of jobs.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is estimated to add more than 250,000 permanent jobs for U.S. workers and add more than $100 billion in annual total expenditures to the U.S. total economy. During the construction phase alone, it would generate more than $585 million in State and local taxes.

I am particularly interested in this. As to my State of Oklahoma, I did not bring it with me, but there is a map that shows where this pipeline would go in order to get to the tight formations in Alberta. You will notice two-thirds of the way down is Cushing, OK. Cushing, OK, is kind of the intersection of all the pipelines. Right now it is clogged. It is full, and we cannot open it. Oklahoma alone, it is expected, if they would open the Keystone Pipeline, would have some 14,000 new jobs. That is just in my State, in Oklahoma alone.

The construction of the pipeline is expected to add about $1.2 billion in new spending in my State of Oklahoma. We have heard Senators from Nebraska and North Dakota and South Dakota talk about how it would affect their States. Just in my State alone, once operational, it is projected that it would add more than $667 million in property taxes.

Cushing, OK is a very important part of this. It is mind-boggling. When I go back to Oklahoma—I hope we go back sometime tomorrow—and people ask the question of why is it, since we want cheap oil and gas right from the North American Continent—why would they stop a pipeline to carry it?

They do it because politically they do not want that to happen. I believe it is important to look at the other aspects. Jim Jones—a lot of us knew him when he was a four-star general who served with a lot of dignity. He was very successful. He became the National Security Adviser to President Obama.

He said:

> In a tightly contested global economy, where securing energy resources is a national must, we should be able to act with speed and agility. And any threat to this project, by delay or otherwise, would constitute a significant setback.

He ties this in to national security. He further said the failure to move forward with the project will prolong the risk to our economy and our energy security and send the wrong message to job creators.

One of the opponents of the pipeline thinks that stopping the construction would prevent Canada from developing its tar sands. We have the far left environmentalists who think somehow they can stop this activity in Canada when we know what will happen if we continue to stop the transportation through the pipeline all the way from Alberta down into Texas.

According to Austan Goolsbee, a former Obama chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers—keep in mind he is on their side. He said:

> It's a bit naive to think the tar sands would not be developed if they don't build that pipeline.

He went on to say:

> Eventually, it's going to be built. It may go to the Pacific, it may go through Nebraska, but it's going to be built somewhere.

They go ahead and talk about the fact that they have already approved a way of getting it to the west coast of Canada and shipped to China. So this is something where there is no justification for stopping it other than the political justification. Other than the administration looking at the far left environmentalists—it all started in Nebraska—they said there is one little area that might not want it. So what do they do in Nebraska? They got together and changed the routing of it so it goes to an area where there is no opposition, and there is still no pipeline.

I think even if we were to have to stay here—and I am the last one who wants to stay here for any length of time—a key issue right now is getting that open again.

I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately following my remarks, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. BROWN, be recognized.

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

MORTGAGE FINANCING

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this morning it was announced that the former officers of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are going to be prosecuted, or cases have been filed, for their misrepresentation of the liabilities that both of those institutions posed to the American Congress and American taxpayers.

Last year when we passed the Dodd-Frank amendment on mortgages and on risk retention, we exempted Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae from the liability that every other company in the country had to go through. We find ourselves today in a place where Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae have cost the American taxpayer at least $171 billion. That number is rising because of the exemption from Dodd-Frank; Freddie and Fannie, other than FHA, are the only act in town.

A week ago I introduced a piece of legislation to deal with this issue. It is a piece of legislation that will terminate Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae and create a bridge, or a transition, from where we are to a privatized mortgage securitization and guarantee program.

I want to briefly address how that takes place because in the end it will pay back the American taxpayer. It will put Freddie and Fannie out of business, and we will have a robust mortgage market available to the American people as the housing market begins to recover in this country.

First of all, the legislation creates a new entity called the Mortgage Finance Agency. It is an agency with directors that are appointed by the President with advice-and-consent approval by the Senate. Its directors are members of the government that deal with financial institutions and financial regulations. It will have advisory groups for people affiliated with housing, and it will be established with the following goals: Within a year it will be up and running so it can be a guarantor of quality residential mortgages—and I underline QRM, quality residential mortgages.

The mortgage disaster America has today was a failure of underwriting. We didn't make good loans. We made high-risk loans because they had high coupon paper and securitized it on Wall Street. People made a lot of money, but America lost and today our economy suffers because of it.

The new mortgage finance agency would be able to guarantee and wrap high-quality residential mortgages. In those wraps and in those guarantees they would receive a fee which would go into a catastrophic fund to back up the risk on those mortgages.

In addition to that, the QRM requirements would make it essential that no loan was made 95 percent loan-to-value. Any loan above 70 percent would have private mortgage insurance on the amount up to 95 percent, and within 36 months the agency would be required to have supplemental insurance coverage to take the risk down to 50 cents on the dollar.

It would be required by the fifth year to have a game plan established and a plan of liquidating the asset and privatizing the guarantee to the private sector. That is a very important process because it is the bridge to the end of Freddie and Fannie and the taxpayer guaranteeing of residential mortgages. We would have a situation with a downpayment of 5 percent, private mortgage insurance of 25 percent, and supplemental insurance of 20 percent, and the risk to the government would be 50 cents on the dollar.

In the great recession values fell 31 percent. In this recession they have fallen 33 percent. So the government's coverage would be 17 percent in addition to the liability that exists today. It is a very good place to have the government and to build an entity that brings us back to a mortgage market in the United States of America that is viable and that works.

I don't like Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, and I don't like what happened, but it has happened. I know everybody wants to terminate them, and I do too. But we have a difficult housing market in America that will only come back when this robust capital is flowing into the mortgage markets, and that will only take place when we get ourselves out of the current dilemma and on a path toward privatization.

The American private sector is a tremendous entity. It has proven in many ways they can find a solution to most all problems we have, but we have to create a bridge to that privatization. We have to create an entity that works, an entity that is self-sustaining, and change some of the principles of lending back to the way it used to be in this country so that when people borrow money on their houses, they really have a job, and it is verified, and their credit score indicates they can make the payments they are going to be required to make; that their credit history is a good history, and the house appraises and the underwriting is sound. Most importantly of all, the borrower has skin in the game, and there is insurance on the mortgage above 70 percent and supplemental insurance down to 50 percent. When we do that, we have qualified residential mortgages, an entity that in the beginning can secure those and can guarantee those and can, at the end of 10 years, have an institution that can be privatized.

Here is the real kicker. Upon privatization, the money that is made by the government on the sale of the entity goes to pay back the taxpayer for the $171 billion or more they lost, and any excess money, which more than likely there would be, goes to reduce the national debt.

So I hope everyone in this body will look at the Mortgage Finance Agency proposal I introduced last week. When we come back next year, instead of griping about the problems we have had, let's start looking to the solutions that will take us back to the America we love economically and the housing market that is absolutely critical to our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, we ask a great deal from our first responders, from firefighters, and from police officers to keep our neighborhoods safe from violence and drugs. We ask them to put their lives on the line, to save people from burning buildings, to track down armed criminals. We ask and they give each day and each night. That is why we cannot just honor them through parades, memorials, speeches on the Senate floor, showing up at various kinds of festivals, but we honor them by the priorities we set in our Federal Government, in State legislatures in Santa Fe and Columbus and Atlanta, in city halls, and in county courthouses.

Earlier this year, Ohioans overwhelmingly rejected issue 2, which would have curtailed the ability of first responders, firefighters, and police officers not just to organize and bargain collectively for their wages and their benefits but, much more broadly than that, to have them sit down and negotiate with their employers, with cities, with counties, with the State, and with taxpayers for safety equipment and adequate staffing.

This was a victory for them. The defeat of issue 2 was a victory for hard-working men and women in Ohio. It was the only time in American history when the issue of collective bargaining was on a State ballot for a statewide vote, and voters voted more than three-fifths—61 percent to 39 percent—to preserve collective bargain rates. Again, collective bargaining not just for themselves in terms of wages and benefits but collective bargaining for police officers' safety vests; for firefighters to have the right kind of safety equipment; for teachers organizing and bargaining collectively at the negotiating table for class size. It was way more than about them and that is why the voters of Ohio, in such a resounding number, voted to preserve collective bargaining and what it meant to public employees and what it meant to our way of life for those who are not public employees, and that is at the State level.

At the Federal level we must continue to fight to ensure these brave public servants have the resources necessary to safely perform their jobs. That is because so many give the ultimate sacrifice. In the last 10 years, 47 law enforcement officials representing 35 Ohio agencies were killed while on duty. Forty-seven law enforcement officials were killed while on duty just in a decade.

According to the FBI, 48 law enforcement officials across the country were feloniously killed in the line of duty in 2009. More than 57,000 law enforcement officials were assaulted while performing their duties.

This past May during National Police Week, I attended a Greater Cleveland Police Officer Memorial service in Huntington Park in Cleveland. During the service, I met Sara Winfield of Marysville, OH. Sara's husband Bradley Winfield was a deputy in the Marion County Sheriff's Department, a north central community, when he was shot and killed while on duty. In her grief, this widow, with two young sons to care for, has become an advocate ensuring that those who protect us are protected themselves. That is why I cosponsored legislation introduced by Maryland Democrat BEN CARDIN that would create a national blue alert system aimed at apprehending criminals who injure or kill law enforcement officials.

Modeled after the Amber Alert System used to find missing children, the blue alert system would disseminate critical information about suspected criminals to other law enforcement agencies, the public, and the media. When someone has gunned down a police officer, police departments all over the region, the State, and the country need to know about it. Blue alerts would be broadcast to local media and on messaging signs. It would include a detailed description of the suspect, the vehicle, and other identifying information. It would encourage State and local governments to develop additional protocols to help apprehend suspects.

Eleven States already have such a system, but if it is only on the State level and the perpetrator who killed the police officer escapes to another State that doesn't have it, it doesn't work so well. That is why Senator CARDIN's national blue alert bill is so important.

Ohio doesn't have this. I am encouraged that the Ohio Senate recently passed a version of this law. Again, it needs to be national so that it goes