upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States.

We would be infinitely better off if we gave our time to repairing the problems that are there as opposed to standing in the intersection talking about how bad it is.

□ 1230

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1965, FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2728, PROTECTING STATES' RIGHTS TO PROMOTE AMERICAN ENERGY SECURITY ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 419 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 419

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this section and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-26 shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the five-minute rule and shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2728) to recognize States' authority to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this section and shall not exceed one hour, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-27 shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as the original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the five-minute rule and shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such further amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill, as amended, to the House with such further amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and any further amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, this resolution provides for a structured rule for the consideration of H.R. 1965, the Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act, as well as for consideration of H.R. 2728, the Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act. The rule provides for each bill to receive 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources, except that on H.R. 2728, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will control 20 minutes of the 1 hour provided for.

The rule makes in order eight amendments for H.R. 1965 and five amendments for H.R. 2728. In both cases, the number of amendments to be offered by Democrats outnumber those to be offered by Republicans. A number of those amendments which were filed and not made in order violated the House rules either by not being germane or by violating CutGo. So this is a very fair and generous rule and will provide for a balanced debate on the merits of these important pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand before the House to support this rule, as well as the underlying pieces of legislation, which are both important bills aimed at making the United States more energy independent.

I appreciate the hard work of the sponsors, Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado, Mr. FLORES of Texas, as well as the work of the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), as well as that of the chairman of the Science Committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH). These are significant pieces that will move our Nation forward.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from Utah for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, for this body to spend the final week before a week-long break, one of the final weeks of the year, the third-to-last week of the legislative year, considering messaging bills that aren't going anywhere is a disservice to this country and one of the reasons that this institution is as unpopular as it is. Rather than taking on immigration reform, rather than protecting Americans from employment discrimination, both of which bills passed the Senate with strong majorities, including many Republicans, we are instead debating a bill to move backward rather than forward.

H.R. 1965 and H.R. 2728, the Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act and the so-called Protecting States' Rights to Promote Energy Security Act, circumvent future Federal regulations designed to keep people safe and healthy by handing over jurisdiction to States that have any guidance, even a few words of guidance, regarding hydraulic fracturing. We will be talking about the example and what this means in my home State of Colorado in

a few moments. But neither bill will become law. Unlike immigration reform, unlike ENDA, which would end workplace discrimination against gays and lesbians across our country, these bills will not become law.

Similar legislation to H.R. 1965 was considered last Congress. This legislation was opposed by the administration. It was not brought up by the Senate, and yet here we are debating it again in the House of Representatives when we have real business to take care of.

These are not the issues that my constituents are calling in demanding that I take action on. They are demanding that I work to fix our broken immigration system. They are demanding that I work to balance the budget. They are calling in demanding that we work to improve upon health care delivery in this country; yet, instead, we are discussing bills that are detrimental to the economy of the district that I represent and destroy jobs.

Let me discuss H.R. 1965 first. This bill's central premise is to allow oil and gas companies to drill wherever and whenever they want to drill on public lands. This bill is completely irresponsible and prioritizes the needs of the oil and gas industry over every other use of our public lands, including the drivers of jobs in my district: hunting, fishing, skiing, and off-road vehicle recreating.

This bill sets arbitrary deadlines for the BLM to approve drilling applications and requires the BLM to lease at least 25 percent of lands nominated by the oil and gas industry each year.

In addition, the underlying bill offers millions of acres of public lands for lease to companies that are trying to develop a fuel source that has not even proven to be viable—oil shale—without regard to the impact on water or our local economy or environment.

I represent the district that includes popular destinations like Vail and Breckenridge and Winter Park, Colorado. People from across the country come to enjoy our skiing in winter, our outdoor recreation, our hunting, our fishing, and white water rafting. When you use areas of land for extraction and you create oil rigs, the heavy truck traffic and roads associated with the extraction industry, people are less likely to want to come visit for these other purposes. It will hurt our ability to attract tourists from the rest of the country if we don't have adequate safeguards around the Federal lands which are part of Eagle and Summit Counties and on which our economy relies.

Now, on H.R. 1965, I did offer several amendments to try to improve these bills, but only one of my amendments was made in order under this rule. I am pleased at least my amendment with the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) is in order, which requires the National Academy of Sciences to study and report to Congress about the impact of flooding on oil and gas facilities and leaks and spills from tanks, wells, and pipelines.

My district recently fell victim to horrendous floods. We call it our 100-year flood in Boulder, Larimer, and Weld Counties. A number of drilling operations were impacted, and we are continuing to assess the damage, not only with regard to drilling operations and potential contamination, but of course our people are digging out with regard to their homes and their offices as well. The September floods in Colorado caused an unprecedented level of destruction to thousands of oil and gas facilities in northern and eastern Colorado. As a result, over 43,000 gallons of oil and over 26,000 gallons of produced water spilled from the tanks, wells, and pipelines into the floodwater.

That is why I joined Representative DEFAZIO, the ranking member of Natural Resources, in sending a letter on September 25 to Chairman HASTINGS requesting a hearing to fully understand the consequences resulting from the flooding. That hearing hasn't been scheduled yet, but I am hopeful that we can resolve this issue, hold congressional hearings, understand how this issue affects my district, but also affects other districts that might be subject to flooding that house drilling operations.

With regard to the oil shale amendment, I am disappointed that the other amendment I offered with Mrs. NAPOLITANO was not made in order. It would have simply required a study. The U.S. Geological Survey would have studied the impacts of oil shale leasing on the quantity and quality of water available in the West. My friend from Utah knows that water in the West is a very important thing. You know, gold is for looking at, and water is for fighting over. Frankly, when we look at the impact and the potential impact that a very heavy use of water would have with some of the extraction techniques that are being explored for oil shale production, we need to look at the impact that would have on water that we need for agriculture, for homeowners, and for recreation. And a simple study would be a first step in doing that.

Unfortunately, under this rule and this closed process, we were not allowed to bring forth this amendment to discuss a study of how oil shale production would affect water uses. Many of the test processes use enormous amounts of water to develop oil shale. It is very concerning because the largest known deposits of oil shale are in the Green River formation, which include portions of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, all three of our States experiencing over the last several years drought conditions and have scarce water resources that are relied upon by our residents and by our farmers.

Thirty million users of water, including farmers, ranchers, and municipalities, depend on water from the Colorado River basin. My amendment would ensure that we have a better understanding of how much water oil shale would use and could pollute or otherwise impact through the quantities used of the water available for other purposes.

Now, I would like to turn to H.R. 2728. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a national issue. It is something that we need to address here in Congress. It is something my constituents are demanding of me that we address here in Congress, but H.R. 2728 is not what my constituents had in mind.

□ 1245

In this election this month, earlier here in November, four of the five largest municipalities in my district—Fort Collins, Boulder, Lafayette, and Broomfield—passed measures that put bans or moratoriums on fracking.

Never before in my time in public service have I ever seen an issue that has been the number one issue on the ballot in four of the top five municipalities. And I should add, it was scheduled to be on the ballot of the fifth, but it was deferred. The petitions to put it on the ballot were deferred, and we expect it will be on the ballot at Loveland at this point if the citizens continue with their push for an initiative there.

We have seen tremendous growth in natural gas development due to fracking and directional drilling in the last decade alone. That is a great thing. It is a great thing for American energy independence. It is a great thing for American manufacturing. It is a great thing for reducing our energy costs.

In Colorado alone, 50,000 wells have been drilled, and many more have been drilled nationally. These drilling activities, however, in a district such as mine, a district that is an extraction district, are occurring very close to where people live, work, and where they raise families, yet our State doesn't have any meaningful regulation to protect homeowners.

It meets the definition of having fracking rules; it certainly does. Unfortunately, the fracking rules are overseen by an oil and gas commission that is heavily influenced by the oil and gas industry. They don't have at their disposal the independence or the ability to enact real penalties for violations of our laws, and their charge is not first and foremost to protect homeowners and families and health. That has led to this backlash, which is why even very conservative towns in my district—one of the towns that had a 5-year moratorium on fracking elected a very conservative mayoral candidate by a 60–40 margin, which is not unusual for this town. These are folks who are fundamentally conservative voting for a conservative candidate for mayor, who won, and yet, at that same election, that same year, they passed a moratorium on fracking in Broomfield County.

This is of great concern to the people in my district. The growth of fracking without commonsense Federal guidelines, without commonsense State guidelines, has caused an enormous

amount of friction between the American Dream of homeowners in my district and our Nation's need for energy.

State and local rules are an important part of the equation, but we also need standards at the Federal level, particularly as relates to Federal lands—namely, BLM lands—which are an important part of the equation to address impacts that go beyond any particular community, such as keeping our air free from pollution, keeping pollution out of our lungs, our waterways, and our drinking water.

Some State and local laws addressing oil and gas extraction are woefully unprepared. The extraction industry hit before they had the chance to even create a local regulatory framework, or they have one that is woefully outdated and relates to the extraction technologies that were prevalent decades ago rather than the new extraction technologies that are being deployed today.

Colorado is trying to update its oil and gas rules, but they really haven't done anything to create a meaningful framework to protect homeowners and families, which is why four of the five largest municipalities in my district have either banned or put a moratorium on fracking.

We have a State issue, and the State has actually threatened to sue some of these same municipalities for that ban. That is not a Federal issue, but this has been an enormous issue in my district. The citizens in my district want more protection, not less, when it comes to fracking.

The industry reaction has been extremely counterproductive. The desire for my citizens to see more protection—somehow the industry interprets this as the citizens need more information or need more marketing about how great fracking is. That is not what they need. They have got plenty of that. The opponents of these ballot initiatives, the oil and gas initiatives, spent millions of dollars educating my constituents about how wonderful and harmless fracking is. That is not what they are asking for. If we could take some of that money and instead apply it to recapturing gases from the well sites and ensuring that we have closed systems for the water recovery instead of the marketing campaigns, we would actually make progress with regard to increasing consumer confidence and the confidence of my citizens in the process. But that is not what we have seen to date, and this bill will not help bring it about.

For almost 5 years, I have represented Colorado's Second Congressional District. In that time, I have witnessed exponential growth in natural gas extraction in and around our district. I have met with too many families and communities that have been forced from their homes and devastated by nearby fracking activity.

Fracking has occurred hundreds of feet from homes, schools, and playgrounds. I have been powerless to stop it. We tried to ask an oil and gas company not to frack near a school in Erie, Colorado, Red Hawk Elementary, but the response that I got at my office after two letters continues to be a formulaic response from their attorneys that ''we have the right to frack here and we will.''

Many families are fleeing those communities not because of lack of information, not because the oil and gas company hasn't done everything they can to have wonderful ambassadors in our community creating a lot of great literature, advertising all over our airwaves. That is not why families are fleeing. They are fleeing because they don't want to live next to an oil rig or have their kids going to school next to a fracking pad or oil rig. That is just common sense. There is no amount of marketing or information that will change their minds, and that is the fundamental flaw in the reasoning process that many in the oil and gas industry have had to date.

I have heard many stories from families about getting fracked, and as a result, I had introduced the BREATHE Act in the last Congress and the FRAC Act, requiring disclosure of fracking fluids, removing the exemption that fracking has from the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, the small-site exemption.

I, unfortunately, have gotten to experience fracking firsthand here in this last year. For more than a decade, I have had a peaceful family farm, about 50 acres, near Berthoud, Colorado, where my father-in-law lives. That is our house there. Fracking, without any notice to us, because, of course, it wasn't required under State law, occurred hundreds of feet from our home. In July, overnight, without any warning, a towering drill rig arose, literally across the street from where my father-in-law lives. You can see it right here.

The sounds of the 24-hour-a-day-and-night operation led us to invite my father-in-law to have to stay with us in Boulder in our apartment on our couch during the active phase of the drilling process. The rig was spewing black smog and making loud noises at all hours of the day. And when the drilling rig went up without notice or warning, our little dream and our life became a nightmare and was thrown into turmoil.

Last night, at the Rules Committee hearing, Chairman SESSIONS and Chairman HASTINGS spoke about a Web site, www.fracfocus.org, that supposedly reveals all the chemicals used during the fracking process. But FracFocus is actually not revealing at all. It gives operators sole discretion to decide what information they display and what they don't display.

This is actually an example of a well. This is the one that is very close to our house. You will see that, of course, many of the ingredients of the fracking fluids are completely noncontroversial. We know they are largely water, sand, and quartz. We are not talking about that. That is not the issue. As you will see, they have ''proprietary'' listed next to several vague terms. They have surfactants here, proprietary. So people in the neighborhood don't even know what environmental contaminants to measure for or to look for.

Again, from a marketing perspective, the oil and gas companies are saying it is not leaching into groundwater, there are not surface spills; but, at the same time, they are refusing to provide the information that would allow the independent verification of their claims and safety.

When I looked up the drilling site near my house on FracFocus, there were many ingredients that were listed as proprietary, including surfactants and polymers; and because of the lenient policy of FracFocus, the company that drilled near my house withheld the only information that we were actually interested in in terms of what was being used in the ground.

We need to look at a commonsense approach to fracking. The constituents in my district are demanding it. We could have voted on such a balanced approach to fracking. I introduced, as an amendment to H.R. 2728, the BREATHE Act. The BREATHE Act was identical to a bill that I introduced earlier this Congress. It would have reversed the oil and gas industry's loophole to a provision in the Clean Air Act that protects the public from small air pollution sources that might individually be de minimus but, in the aggregate, released large volumes of toxic substance into the air.

We have to talk about the concentration of this operation. In Weld County, Colorado, there are close to 50,000 wells. Again, for any particular fracking pad, the emission profile is small; but, if you have a number, a dozen, two dozen, 100, in a limited area, the emission profile is going to look a lot more like a factory or even a coal-burning plant than it does something that can be rounded down to zero. We need to look at the fact that the concentration of thousands of wellheads in a very limited geographic area has a profound potential impact and cumulative impact on air quality that affects our health and our quality of life.

My amendment is critical because there is significant evidence that oil and gas wells and their associated infrastructure, including heavy truck traffic and diesel engines, contribute to air pollution. Chemicals such as benzene and volatile organic compounds and methane are associated with oil and gas production sites and should not be subject to an exemption from the Clean Air Act. Despite the growing proof that the oil and gas industry causes air pollution, oil and gas operators are still exempt from the basic Federal protection afforded by the Clean Air Act.

I offer this amendment and introduced the BREATHE Act because people who live near oil and gas developments deserve the protections of the

Clean Air Act, just as other Americans do who live near factories, just as other Americans do who live near coal-burning plants. We have 55 sponsors for the BREATHE Act, yet it has not received a hearing or a markup; and on a party-line vote yesterday in the Rules Committee, it was not allowed to be considered as an amendment to this bill.

Another amendment I helped offer to the underlying measure would also improve the legislation. The amendment I offered with Mr. HOLT allows the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations to minimize fugitive methane emissions on public lands.

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that often leaks during the drilling and transportation of oil and gas. In fact, methane leaks are so common in oil and gas drilling that we have rural areas in the Upper Green River Basin in Wyoming that have recorded higher concentration levels than the worst pollution days in downtown Los Angeles.

Fortunately, there are already control technologies available to minimize air pollution in operations. If the oil and gas companies would use just some of the money that they spend on lobbying and on marketing and on all the wonderful advertising that they are doing on our airwaves in Colorado and, instead, upgrade their facilities to recapture methane, I think we could actually see some progress on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment when it comes up for consideration later in the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are calling for real solutions in Congress. The people of the Second Congressional District are for an all-of-the-above approach to energy. We are for solar. We are for wind. We are for oil. We are for gas. We are for hydro. We want to make them all work. And just as there would be a zoning process around creating a windmill in a residential neighborhood that is 100 feet tall right near your home, there should be a zoning process around the extraction of oil and gas, especially near where the constituents of my district live and work.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a messaging bill that might help the majority's relationship with oil and gas companies, but what we really need is a balanced approach that ensures that we can develop our domestic oil and gas resources in a way that doesn't destroy jobs in districts like mine and protects the health of Americans across our country.

These bills fall short on that account. And despite our effort to amend them, the rule doesn't allow many of the most important amendments that would remove the exemption from the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act and ensure that we have an extraction industry that is consistent with the public health.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, the rule that we have before us is about two bills. The first bill deals with fairness for those who live in public land States as to the ability to process oil and gas leases. The second bill deals with fracking, the fracturing of oil that is a policy that started in the 1940s in the State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES), who is the sponsor of the second bill, to discuss that particular portion.

□ 1300

Mr. FLORES. I thank Mr. BISHOP for the time to discuss this rule and the important underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, everyone, Republicans and Democrats, like to talk about clean, affordable natural gas. Yet, the Bureau of Land Management has proposed duplicative Federal regulations on the very technology that has facilitated the shale energy revolution, and that is hydraulic fracturing.

States have a proven record in regulating hydraulic fracturing for over 60 years. Obama administration officials are already on the record stating that hydraulic fracturing is safe and that States have a strong role in its regulation.

The proposed BLM regulation of hydraulic fracturing on Federal lands appears to be a solution in search of a problem that does not exist.

The legislation that I have cosponsored with Mr. CUELLAR, H.R. 2728, would stop this Federal overreach by recognizing States' authority to regulate hydraulic fracturing and prohibit the Interior Department from enforcing its proposed regulations in any States that already have a regulatory protocol for this technology.

There are already existing Federal regulations that apply to other energy activities on Federal lands. The tradition of States having a primary role in developing our onshore energy resources has contributed immeasurably to our shale energy revolution, however, and imposing another Federal one-size-fits-all-approach only hampers domestic energy production.

The Federal Government already takes 10 times longer to issue an energy activity permit than States do. Why would we want to give these bureaucrats any more flexibility or tools to deter activity on taxpayer-owned lands? After all, over the last 5 years, natural gas production on Federal lands is down over 20 percent, and the rest of the country has seen dramatic increases.

States are better able to decide how to craft environmentally responsible regulations that reflect both the geology and the water needs of their States. This is why American energy development continues to thrive on private lands and State lands, despite the decrease on Federal lands.

If left unchecked, the new BLM regulations are only the beginning of more Federal overreach that will eventually hamper production on private land.

We are in the midst of an energy transformation, Mr. Speaker, in the way that we produce energy in this country. This energy revolution has created hundreds of thousands of well-paying American jobs in the industry.

More importantly, however, energy from abundant, safe, affordable, and clean natural gas has put America in a position to be globally competitive in manufacturing, where we can create millions of great middle class jobs while simultaneously meaningfully decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, as we have seen over the last decade or so.

Today's rule provides for the legislation that helps us responsibly develop our taxpayer-owned energy resources, and we will later consider legislation that will bring energy to the marketplace.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule, and I urge support for the underlying legislation.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and to the two underlying bills. In fact, these bills are, themselves, solutions in search of problems. They tear down environmental protections and they restrict public participation in an attempt to expand oil and gas production.

But the truth is, oil production on Federal lands has gone up significantly since 2008, and Federal regulations have not stopped States from implementing their own fracking rules.

These bills are nothing more than reckless giveaways to big oil and gas companies that put American families and the environment at risk.

H.R. 2728, for example, would preemptively prohibit the Federal Government from setting even minimal safety standards for fracking. Fracking, whether onshore or offshore, poses serious environmental and public health risks that we don't fully understand now.

We know very little about the environmental and public health impacts of onshore fracking, and we know even less about offshore fracking. Offshore fracking has been occurring for over 20 years off the California coast, with at least four fracs approved as recently as this year.

Federal regulators and the public only recently became aware of these activities, thanks to FOIA requests released last summer. We know virtually nothing about the size of these fracs, the chemicals being used, or the impacts on the marine environment.

They have been approved with categorical exemptions and decades-old permits that are woefully inadequate, and that is why I offered an amendment to H.R. 2728 to stop these activities until a full environmental review is conducted. Unfortunately, my amendment was not made in order, which is disappointing.

If oil companies get to inject millions of gallons of fracking fluids into

our public lands, then the least we can and must do is study the impacts of those activities. Whether it is done offshore or onshore, we have a responsibility to ensure that fracking is safe, but the bills before us this week greatly undercut this crucial responsibility.

So I urge my colleagues to stop this reckless giveaway to Big Oil, and oppose this rule and the underlying bills.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

When Ronald Reagan was first elected President, he talked to his National Security Advisor—I believe his name was Richard Allen—and told him that his policy for foreign affairs was going to be ''we win and they lose.'' It shocked his National Security Advisor because they had always been talking about managing communism or coexisting with communism. This was the first time somebody had actually come up with such a specific and precise rationale and policy for the Nation.

But President Reagan also realized, for him to actually enact his goal, they first had to fix the economy, which, as strange as it seems, was worse than the economy we have today. With double-digit inflation, double-digit unemployment, double-digit interest rates, he had to first fix that before he could go on to his goal of actually winning the Cold War.

He also recognized that if he was going to fix those economic problems, he had to have a reliable and affordable source of energy, and that, indeed, was one of the problems that caused the situation they were in under the Carter administration.

Earlier this year we brought a couple of bills forward, one for the Defense Authorization Act and the Defense Appropriations Act, and I said at the time that the reason we had those here was because it allowed and empowered our State Department.

Foreign policy is whatever we are willing to fund as far as military growth. They are interrelated.

One of the things this administration appears to have forgotten is the interrelation between improving our economy and improving energy production at the same time, although they have done well in trying to forward green energy solutions.

Unfortunately, as much as that is a positive and proper approach, most of what they have done has failed to reach the goals they established for themselves, and not only that, much of it has also been involved in scandals. Also, it cannot be done at the time you are attacking traditional forms of energy.

So that is why we are here. One of the realities is that, oddly enough, at this particular time, we are producing more energy in America than we have for a long time. And the numbers are always all over the place, depending on what the starting date is with these surveys. Whether you go to an industry like the Western Energy Alliance or a neutral entity like the Congressional Research Service, they are all saying basically the same thing. There is a slight increase in offshore energy on Federal lands. There is not an increase in onshore energy production on Federal lands, depending, once again, on what base you are using, and our increase in production, which is true, has almost all come from private lands, State-owned lands, and Native American lands of this country.

Now, the fact that we are closer to energy independence is nice, but that is not our goal. That is simply an infamous goal that we should have.

The goal should be to reduce the amount of energy coming into this country and becoming more energy independent so we can actually help people, so that we can come to the point where we are producing enough energy from this energy-rich Nation to make sure that we have affordable electricity, so when a family goes into a room, they don't have to worry about turning on the light, impacting their kids' college education fund; so that even low-income families can realize they can heat their homes in the winter; so that one can travel from Point A to Point B in your car and realize it is affordable; so that jobs actually are plentiful, especially spinoff jobs.

It is not those who necessarily are working at the site in which you are developing the energy, but the spinoff jobs: the trucker that goes to and from bringing product into or away from the site, or those who are doing the motels and the restaurants that are feeding the workers, those who are working on Main Street that are providing food and resources to those who are providing the services to those particular workers.

In Western States, like the State of Utah, it is essential, also, to our education fund. If you were to look at this particular chart, the chart on the top, the States in red are the States that have the hardest time, the slowest growth in their education funding.

The chart on the bottom, the stuff in red is what is owned by the Federal Government. I hate to say it, but there is a relationship between the amount of public lands owned by the Federal Government and the inability to try and fund the proper education system.

What that comes to, in gross terms, is over the last 20 years, Western States, the predominantly public land States, have increased their education funding by 35 percent. The rest of the Nation, which has very little public ground, has increased its education funding by 68 percent. They are doubling the growth of it.

What simply matters is that States in the West that are public land States have a difficult time of funding their education system when they are prohibited from being able to develop a lot of the resources which are found in those Western States. That is one of the reasons why we have a difficult time in funding our own education system and why the first bill in this rule is asking for Western States to be treated fairly in this particular process.

Whether one likes it or not, to vote against these bills unintentionally harms kids, and it harms education in the West. If our funding for education in my home State is going to be effectively increased, it has got to come from development of the natural resources that are in my State and not putting impediments in the way of the State moving forward.

This is the map of significance that I showed you. Everything that is red is that which is owned by the Federal Government, and you find—glory be—we have the predominance of it here in the West, in my State.

There is a difference in how energy is developed in the red areas, as opposed to the basically white areas. If you were trying to develop areas in the white, which has very little Federal land, it simply means a company goes out, they contact a property owner, get the right to do exploration, and then, if they find something which they wish, they buy either the land or the mineral rights and go ahead and do it.

On the red areas, the public land areas, the process is far, far different. It has been said on this floor that this bill would allow oil companies to go wherever they want. That is an overstatement. It is not quite accurate.

In the red areas, what happens is, first, the Federal Government, in this case, the Department of the Interior, will establish a regional management plan to establish which areas are proper for economic development, for drilling, and for mining. Not all areas are, so not all areas become part of the regional management plan, and only those areas that have potential for economic development in oil and gas are the ones that are listed in the RMP.

Then it goes through a NEPA process. Once the NEPA process for the RMP is completed, then the Interior Department decides what areas that are listed as potential energy development areas will actually be leased by the Federal Government.

Then they are let out to bid. That also has to go through a NEPA process before, finally, a company can bid on lands and go through and try to find out if it is worthy to develop. If they wish to develop, then they also have to go through an application for drilling.

Now, in most States, the white area, that application for drilling by itself takes between 15 to 30 days. In the red area, that application has been averaging over 300 days, which is where the unfairness takes place.

The first bill that is in this rule would say, okay, let's split the difference, and we will say you make the decision within 60 days; plenty of time to make that particular decision.

It is also noted that, in all of these processes I went through, from the RMP to the NEPA process, to the lease, to the lease bid, to the second

NEPA process, to the APD, there is opportunity for citizens to have input, free speech access to input.

Now, that costs the Department money to access that, which is true, but it is part of their job, so we accept it.

□ 1315

However, when the bid is actually made or a protest is made to that bid, that is extra work for the Department, which, in every other area of government, we would require a fee when some kind of citizen action requires extra work to expedite the paperwork for that type of protest or that type of policy or that type of request.

The companies that do an APD are already charged that by the Department of the Interior. They pay a fee of $6,500 every time they have a request to drill. This bill codifies that. But also it says that, if you are going to challenge or protest one, this is not the opportunity for citizen input that you have along the process each and every step. But if you are actually going to do a challenge of this, then you also should pay a fee because this challenge requires extra work and extra expense on the part of the Department, and this is put at a $5,000 fee. It is $6,500 to actually request the permitting process to start and $5,000 if you want to protest it.

In my State, unfortunately, we have seen examples where, on what I consider to be a whim, the President or the administration or the Department of the Interior has simply withdrawn leases that have gone through all of those steps I indicated and were effective and were put into motion. The first thing this administration did was to withdraw 77 leases in Utah. It had a catastrophic effect upon the Uinta Basin in my home State, where unemployment skyrocketed immediately after that was done, not only because the leases were withdrawn, but the private companies that were doing their work on private lands also saw the handwriting on the wall and wished to no longer go forward with that because of the implications of the withdrawal of those leases.

I got a letter from one of the kids who was living there. She was in junior high school. She asked me to please do something about it because her father was not working on the wells or the sites of those leases. He was one of the truckers, a private contractor who was taking stuff into those sites and trucking stuff out from those sites. And she was so happy because her family had been situated. They were doing well. They had finally bought a house and bought some property, and she had her dream of finally having a horse. And she wrote to me, pleading to see if we could change what this administration had done with those 77 leases so she could simply keep her horse. It didn't happen. She lost the horse. Her father lost the job. They lost the house. They lost land and had to go back to Salt Lake City to find employment.

Recently, in this same area, once again going through the process, the Interior Department identified 800,000 acres that were susceptible and appropriate for economic drilling development. They were those that were already abutting existing leases or intermingled within existing leases. But there were 800,000 acres. When they came up with the lease process, the administration decided to only offer 144,000; and then before the lease actually went out to bid, they withdrew almost 100,000 of those 144,000 because they had found a question in their minds as to what the impact might be.

Now, I recognize this could be legitimate. I mean, the Federal Government has only owned this land since the Mexican War. Obviously there are things that can slip somebody's attention in the first 180 years of looking at a piece of property. But nonetheless, only 44,000 acres were put out to bid. That is 5 percent of the total that was identified as acceptable for this kind of development.

Now, we are not talking about wilderness areas or national park areas or conservation areas; only areas that were susceptible and appropriate for this concept, which is why the 25 percent figure is really kind of a modest figure of what should be the case and should be taken.

If we were to pass these two bills, it is very easy to realize that the desert could bloom again because that is the purpose. These bills, for the first time, identify Native American interests and make sure that Native American interests on Native American lands are going to be respected by the Federal Government. They take it.

Four score and 7 years ago, we started a fracking process in the United States—give or take a score. But this fracturing process has, so far, been working. We have a list of those from the EPA, from the Interior Department, from both Energy Secretaries, the last two Interior Secretaries, a former EPA Administrator, the current Administrator, former BLM Directors who have all said that there is no identifiable problem with what the States are doing with fracturing. The States do have this experience in doing it.

The language is very clear. Sometimes people say, well, there are no regulations because they can't find a specific regulation. It mentions the word ''fracturing.'' But to be honest, and not trying to be too wonkish, if you have rules and regulations that talk about wellbore construction or drill site integrity, that is what is necessary to ensure the health and safety of individuals. And States do know how to go do that, and they do know how to protect that area.

The actual question, though, is, if we are coming up with rules for fracturing—and this deals with the bill that Representative FLORES was addressing—where should the decision be made on how to implement those rules? Should it be made here in Washington or should it be made in the State where the situation exists?

I have a great deal of empathy for what the gentleman from Colorado was saying was what he wished to see in his home State. I would be more than happy to allow him to do anything he wanted to do. If, indeed, they want to cancel all kinds of fossil fuel development in the State of Colorado, I would be more than happy to allow him to do that. I just don't want that in my State.

And unfortunately, the conventional wisdom is always that only people in Washington, D.C., have the broad view to make decisions for the entire Nation. That is a ridiculous wisdom. That is inaccurate. States are just as competent. There are as many smart people who live and reside in States, their Department of Environmental Quality, which we have in the State of Utah, as live here in Washington. They can make these decisions. They can do it well.

If a State does not want to make these kinds of decisions, does not want to have these kinds of rules, allow a national rule to take precedence. No problem. But if a State is willing to be independent and make decisions for themselves, we should allow them to do it because the States are just as good and, unfortunately, often better than the Federal Government in making these kinds of provisions.

You see, one of the things that is happening—the good gentleman from Colorado did talk about what is happening in his State. And once again, if his State wants to ban all kinds of these activities, if they want to ban all development of fossil fuels, that is fine.

This bill's adoption does not stop Colorado from doing anything that Colorado wishes to do. Not passing this bill will stop the State of Utah from having primacy and doing what the State of Utah wishes to do.

Look, we are not talking about the decimation of enormous tracts of Federal land. Within the Federal campus, there are over 650 million acres. That is one-third of America that the Federal Government owns. Of those 650 million acres, 450 million acres are already set aside for preservation and conservation and will never, never have any kind of development or any kind of drilling taking place on those 450 million acres.

The amount of area that has been identified as potential for economic development is only 38 million acres. But on those 38 million acres, allow the States to move forward to make sure that what the State wants on our local lands is respected and that what happens on Federal public lands is fair and equitable to what happens on private lands in non-Federal States.

With that, I look forward to anything the gentleman from Colorado has to say, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself 30 seconds to respond.

To be clear, there is not an effort in Colorado, as the gentleman insinuated,

to somehow prevent the extraction of fossil fuels from occurring in Colorado. In fact, quite to the contrary. Because of the lack of meaningful State regulations, many cities and counties are banning extraction; and four of the five biggest cities I represent have moratoriums or bans on fracking precisely because there are insufficient Federal and State guidelines. So it is really working with counterpurposes and hurting the very prospects for the extraction industry that the gentleman aspires to assist by not having adequate regulation to safeguard people's homes and families.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is correct that none of the dialogue that we just heard is mutually exclusive from creating jobs, from providing a growing economy, having a sustainable environment, and maybe having even a national energy policy. This should not be a conflict between who has read and who has not in terms of land and the ability to use Federal lands and education. We can do both. And what I believe is happening is that we are trying to take sides without looking constructively at everyone's amendments to make this legislation what it should be.

I have always advocated for a national energy policy. Today I rise to discuss the amendments that I offered to try to bring people together. I listened to the discussion.

Since the industry pays $6,500, we must let individual protesters pay $5,000. I would venture to say that the amendment that I offered would have been a fair one. It is to eliminate that amount. It could have been a compromise, make it a $1,000 fee. But in actuality, this blocks individuals from even expressing their viewpoint even though they have been able to go through the process of comment.

I did get an amendment in which will help ensure that the legislation, should it become law, will not apply or be interpreted in such a way that it unfairly burdens injured parties seeking relief. My amendment No. 2 indicates that this shall not be construed to abridge the right of people to petition for the redress of grievances in violation of the first article of the amendment to the Constitution, a right to protest.

Another amendment that I had was also an amendment to protect individuals, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses by removing the provision in the bill prohibiting recovery of attorney fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act. That amendment was made in order to create a level playing field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. There are a number of other amendments that I offered to H.R. 2728. One would have made it clear that the deference accorded to State law under section 44 of the bill applied only to fracking operations conducted on State lands but not to Federal lands. This was a good amendment that did not make it. A number of amendments did not. Some of my amendments did, and I want to say thank you. But I believe we can work together for a national energy policy that works for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the rule governing debate on H.R. 1965, the ''Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act,'' and H.R. 2728, the ''Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act.''

As the Member of Congress from Houston, the energy capital of the nation, I have always been mindful of the importance and have strongly advocated for national energy policies that will make our nation more energy independent, preserve and create jobs, and keep our nation's economy strong.

I am not pro- or anti-fracking. I strongly am ''pro-jobs'' and ''pro-growing economy'' and ''pro-sustainable environment.''

Volatile energy prices threaten economic security for millions of middle class Americans and hits consumers hard, raising gas prices and straining budgets for millions of American families.

It is a familiar story, but in order to restore lasting security for middle class families we need a sustained plan for American energy, not false promises of quick fixes.

That is why I carefully consider each energy legislative proposal brought to the floor on its individual merits and support them when they are sound, balanced, fair, and promote the national interest.

Where they fall short, I believe in working across the aisle to improve them by offering constructive amendments.

That is why I offered several amendments for the Rules Committee to consider in reporting the bills covered by this rule.

Three of my amendments were made in order by the Committee and for this I wish to express my appreciation to Chairman SESSIONS and Ranking Member SLAUGHTER hearing the bills before the House.

Four other amendments that I offered were not made in order by the Committee, which I regret very much since I believe strongly that each would have made genuine improvements to the bills.

For the benefits of all Members, I will describe these amendments briefly.

JACKSON LEE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 1965, ''FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT''

Jackson Lee Amendment #1 would have eliminated the new $5,000 filing fee that creates a higher barrier for individuals, small businesses or communities to protest agency actions taken pursuant to the bill.

A filing fee of this magnitude would unduly burden the ability of farmers, ranchers, homeowners, communities, and small businesses aggrieved by agency action to seek redress to vindicate their rights or obtain a remedy for a legally cognizable injury.

Although the Committee did not make in order Jackson Lee Amendment #1, I am pleased that the Rules Committee made in order Jackson Lee Amendment #2, which will help ensure that this legislation, should become law, will not applied or interpreted in such a way that it unfairly burdens injured parties seeking relief.

Jackson Lee Amendment #2 provides that this legislation:

''[S]hall not be construed to abridge the right of the people to petition for the redress of grievances, in violation of the first article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States.''

We should never take for granted the precious and unique right—even for democracies—of citizens to hold their government accountable and answerable to the judiciary for redress for legally cognizable injuries.

I am also pleased that Rules Committee made in order Jackson Lee Amendment #3, another amendment offered to protect individuals, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses by removing the provision in the bill prohibiting recovery of attorney fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act.

This amendment levels the playing field and conforms the bill to current law and practice.

Since its enactment in 1980, the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) has enhanced parties' ability to hold government agencies accountable for their actions and inaction.

EAJA also helps deter government inaction or erroneous conduct and encourages all parties, not just those with resources to hire legal counsel, to assert their rights.

The EAJA is used to vindicate a variety of federal rights, including access to Veterans Affairs and Social Security disability benefits, as well as to secure statutory environmental protections.

The EAJA promotes public involvement in laws have a significant impact on the public health and safety such as the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

2. JACKSON LEE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 2728, ''PROTECTING STATES' RIGHTS TO PROMOTE AMERICAN ENERGY SECURITY ACT''

I offered several amendments to H.R. 2728, the ''Protecting States' Rights to Promote American Energy Security Act'' that address State and Federal interest in developing and enforcing fracking regulations.

The first of these, Jackson Lee Amendment #1 to H.R. 2728, would have made it clear that the deference accorded to state law under section 44 of the bill applied only to fracking operations conducted on state lands but not to federal lands.

My amendment would not impact the ability of states to approve fracking on state or private lands.

I am disappointed that the Rules Committee did not make this amendment in order because it would have markedly improved the bill.

Before offering this amendment I canvassed and consulted key stakeholders in my district and was advised by them that a patchwork of 50 separate sets of legal rules and regulations governing fracking operations on federal lands was inefficient, expensive, and unduly burdensome. I agree. My amendment would have ensured that there would be only a single, uniform standard governing fracking operations administered by the Department of Interior.

Federal lands are held in trust for the benefit of the American people. They are a source of national pride as well as a source of revenue for a wide range of industries, which include ranching, logging, mineral extraction (including oil and gas), and tourism.

I am hopeful that this amendment will be reconsidered by the Senate or the bicameral conference as the bill makes its way through the legislative process, particularly since the Rules Committee also declined even to make in order another version of the amendment, Jackson Lee Amendment #2, which required only that the Secretary review and approve state fracking law before permitting it to govern fracking operations on federal land.

Mr. Speaker, fracking is a new and promising mining technique that has proven to be very effective and profitable for oil and gas extraction processes. This appears to be good news for our nation's energy and economic but the technology is still in its infancy.

That is why I am also pleased that the Rules Committee made in order Jackson Lee Amendment #3, which provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall annually review and report to Congress on all State activities relating to hydraulic fracturing.

I urge my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee Amendments made in order under this rule.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds, if I could, simply to say that what the bill does, does not restrict any kind of free speech opportunity for individuals. They still have the right of comment, which is totally free, in any of those processes from the RPM to the NEPA to the lease to the leased bid to the second NEPA to the APD. So that is there only when an effort actually causes an additional expense to the government, which is typical and standard. That fee is actually going to be initiated to try to cover the costs to the Federal Government.

It is my pleasure now to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), the sponsor of the first of the two bills, who has a bill that will ensure that the standards become fair and equitable for everyone throughout this Nation.

Mr. LAMBORN. I thank the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to my colleague from Colorado who has raised some concerns about the issue of hydraulic fracturing. And we all agree. There is a place for reasonable regulation; there is a place for the surface rights of homeowners and businesses in the area of a well to have their safety and health protected; and we would all agree with that.

In Colorado, we really do have a pretty comprehensive and well-thought-out system of regulations. Some of the objections may really get more into State and local issues that my colleague has raised, the distance of setbacks and things like that, but I hope we will not miss the main point.

The main point: these bills are before the House this week. We want to improve the American economy. We want to create more jobs. Energy is one of the bright spots in an otherwise anemic economic recovery. And if you look at where the energy production is really taking off, it is on State and private lands. For my colleague from Colorado, it is a private land scenario that he is dealing with.

Federal lands need to catch up. There are billions of acres of Federal lands, including offshore. I know we are going to concentrate on onshore, but we have not kept up with energy production, and yet this has otherwise been a bright spot in our economy.

So if we want to create jobs for the American people—and these are some of the best paying jobs—if we want to have an expanded manufacturing base, if we want the cost of energy to consumers to be as low as possible so that they can go out and spend their hard-earned money on everything else that they need for their families and not have as high of a utility bill, then we need to pass these three bills this week.

□ 1330

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, there is a place to talk about reasonable regulation that has to be in place for the drilling process, for the capture of gas, and for how to treat the water that comes back up from a fractured well.

Yes, let's look at those things; and let's also look at the State role and not think that the Federal role has to take over completely, as we have some in this administration who would like to do.

But the bottom line is we need American jobs. We need a stronger economy. We need lower prices so people keep more of their hard-earned money. That is what these job bills are about this week. It is about the economy and jobs.

So we will get into a discussion later today, tomorrow, and Thursday on making sure that the environment is protected, making sure that everyone else has their rights protected; but let's create jobs. That is what these bills are going to do. That is why I am proud to be a sponsor of the bill that comes up later this afternoon that we will be talking more about.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire whether the gentleman from Utah has any remaining speakers. If not, I am prepared to close.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I have no further speakers.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to make sure we don't go home unless we finish the budget by December 13.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. I will submit for the record, as well, a recent poll. The Denver Post published an article this past summer that states that 65 percent of Colorado residents favor protecting wilderness parks and open space and our Federal lands for future generations and 30 percent support more drilling.

It has been 144 days and 13 hours since the Senate passed its immigration reform bill, S. 744. We have introduced H.R. 15 here in the House. Each day that the House refuses to take up reform costs the country $37 million. Already there is more than $5 billion in potential lost revenue so far.

If we can take up immigration reform and pass it, I would even support allowing that revenue to be used to keep the loopholes for the oil and gas industry open—something that I have long opposed. But if we can pass immigration reform, I would accept that pay-for as a way of keeping the oil and gas loopholes open for the next several years.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that the comprehensive immigration reform bill would increase our GDP by 3.3 percent, raise American wages by $470 billion, and create an average of 121,000 jobs for Americans each year. So rather than take up a job-creating bill for Americans that reduces our deficit, we are taking up a bill that hurts the economy and hurts jobs in districts like mine.

The longer we fail to act on immigration reform, the greater the cost to the American people. Take the example of the solvency of the Social Security system. As the Social Security Administration estimates, close to two-thirds of the 8 million undocumented people who are here currently work underground. No surprise. They are not allowed to work aboveground in official jobs with payroll deductions, and neither they nor their employers are able to legally declare their earnings or pay their payroll taxes.

Today, only 37 percent of undocumented immigrants pay Social Security taxes. Experts are estimating that our Nation loses about $20 billion in payroll taxes each year. We will continue to lose that money until we pass H.R. 15, comprehensive immigration reform.

The Senate has acted—with strong Republican support and strong Democratic support—and passed bipartisan immigration reform last June; and yet the House hasn't had a single moment of floor time for any immigration reform bill, despite the fact that four have been passed through the committee.

The time is now. We are here today, we are here tomorrow, we are here 2 more weeks. If we need to come back, let's do it.

The country is demanding that we create jobs. Comprehensive immigration reform will do that. The country is demanding we shore up our entitlement programs. Comprehensive immigration reform will do that. The country is demanding that we reduce our deficit. Comprehensive immigration reform will do it. Securing our borders,

protecting our country from terrorists—law enforcement, the faith community all support immigration reform.

In closing, I want to again state the article I am submitting for the record says 65 percent want to protect our environment and 30 percent are for more drilling.

The people have spoken. These bills are out of touch. It is time to take up comprehensive immigration reform.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule and the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[From the Denver Post]

POLL OF WESTERNERS ON DRILLING ON PUBLIC LANDS: 65% PROTECTION; 30% DRILLING

(By Bruce Finley)

A new poll finds that 30 percent of the residents of Colorado and the western United States favor oil and gas drilling on public lands, while 65 percent support protecting wilderness, parks and open space for future generations.

Results of the poll done by Hart Research Associates were presented Monday by the policy group Center for American Progress, which with the Wilderness Society was launching a campaign for balance.

''This is a case where Washington's policies and rhetoric are still locked in a drilling-first mind-set, but westerners want the protection of public lands to be put on equal ground,'' said John Podesta, chairman of the Center for American Progress, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

''Voters do not see conservation and development of public lands as an either-or choice. Instead, they want to see expanded protections for public lands—including new parks, wilderness and monuments—as part of a responsible and comprehensive energy strategy,'' Podesta said.

U.S. domestic oil and gas production has reached record levels, with more than 37 million acres of public land leased to companies for drilling. Polling and focus group discussions were conducted in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Nevada in April and May.

The poll asked participants to state what they regard as a very important priority, and 65 percent said permanent protection of public lands. Results showed 63 percent prioritized ensuring access to public lands for recreation, while 30 percent favored ensuring access to oil and gas resources.

The poll found that 29 percent supported use of public lands for grazing livestock.

Western Energy Alliance officials in Denver cited a different poll. It found that more than 78 percent of voters nationwide favor increased development of oil and natural gas in the United States.

Voters have a favorable view of ''how oil and natural gas in produced in America,'' said Tim Wigley, president of Western Energy Alliance in a statement. ''Almost one in four (24 percent) chose federal lands over state or private lands.''

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I appreciate the poll that was presented into the RECORD; but that is why, I would submit, the Interior Department has a resource management plan. Those RMPs are established in the first place so that incompatible relationships and incompatible entities are not put in the same area. It is why you can actually have both.

What the two bills before us that would be brought to the floor under this rule do is allow States to have a say in what is going on, because States are confident. They are closer to the problem. They should have a say and a stake and make a statement in this particular issue.

If these bills were brought to the floor, public land States in the West—the red areas on my map—would be treated fairly and treated closer to what is happening in the white States, where there is little public land.

This is also, though, one of the things that I want us not to lose focus on. It is not about drilling or not drilling. It is what is the purpose of developing our energy resources, that is, to make sure that people can heat their homes and have lights in their houses, that they can drive from point A to point B and afford it, and so that people can have jobs so that that little middle school girl in my State can actually have a place for her horse. That is what these bills are about.

More importantly, for Western States, the public land States, is to allow us to generate the revenue we need from the resources we have in our State to fund an education system. If these bills are defeated, the ability of Western land States to adequately fund their educational systems will be stymied.

It is important. If you care about kids, you have to provide this kind of resource for the Western States. That is why these two bills are not just rehashes. These two bills are essential for those of us who live in the West.

For the sake of the education system of Western kids, I would encourage everyone to support not only the rule, but support both underlying bills. They are important. This is a fair rule. It is appropriate legislation. They are good bills and a fair rule. I urge their adoption.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 419 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

At the end of the resolution, add the following new section:

SEC. 3. It shall not be in order to consider a concurrent resolution providing for adjournment unless the House as adopted a conference report on S. Con. Res. 8, establishing a budget for the United States Government by December 13, 2013.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution. . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the notion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rile, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 223, nays 194, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 590]

YEAS—223

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—194

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Campbell
Cárdenas
Davis, Rodney
Gosar
Herrera Beutler
Lowey
McCarthy (NY)
Radel
Rush
Sinema
Thompson (PA)
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)

□ 1402

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama and Mr. CAPUANO changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 590 I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted, "yes."

Stated against:

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 590, had I been present, I would have voted, "no."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 222, noes 196, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 591]

AYES—222

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—196

Andrews
Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo

Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—12

Campbell
Coble
Fleischmann
Gosar
Gutiérrez
Herrera Beutler
McCarthy (NY)
Radel
Rush
Thompson (PA)
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1410

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 591, I was unavoidably detained—I would have voted, "yes."

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

FEDERAL LANDS JOBS AND ENERGY SECURITY ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. 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 H.R. 1965.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 419 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1965.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1414

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1965) to streamline and ensure onshore energy permitting, provide for onshore leasing certainty, and give certainty to oil shale development for American energy security, economic development, and job creation, and for other purposes, with Ms. FOXX in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

THE CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

□ 1415

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, with millions of Americans still looking for work, growing debts and deficits, and energy prices that are still far too high, the United States needs to implement an all-of-the-above energy plan to responsibly harness our Nation's energy resources on our Federal lands.

New energy production is one of the best ways to grow the economy and create new jobs to put people back to work. One needs to look no further for proof than to States like North Dakota that have flourishing economies and some of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, all due to energy production. Because of this energy boom, the U.S. is now projected to be the world leader in oil production by 2015, surpassing Saudi Arabia.

The catch is that this increased oil production is happening on private and State lands—which is good—places that aren't as restricted by onerous Federal regulations and policies. Federal lands are being left behind.

However, this lack of production on Federal lands is not for a lack of resources. We have tremendous potential for new onshore oil and natural gas production on Federal lands, but the Obama administration is actively and purposely keeping these resources off limits. Leasing and permitting delays, regulatory hurdles, and ever-changing rules are a few of the reasons energy production on Federal lands is in decline.

President Obama has had the four lowest years of Federal acres leased for energy production going back to 1988. Under his administration, the average time to get a drilling permit approved on Federal land is 307 days. By contrast, it takes an average of only 10 days in North Dakota to get a permit; and another example, in Colorado it only takes 27 days.

It is no wonder that State lands are flourishing while Federal lands are experiencing a decrease in energy production. That is unacceptable, and this bill today offers real solutions to unlock the shackles that have been placed on our Federal lands.

H.R. 1965, the Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act, is a package of bills that will help us expand oil, natural gas, and renewable energy production on public lands. It will streamline government red tape, break down bureaucratic hurdles, and put in place a clear plan for developing our own energy resources. Even more importantly, this bill will spur job creation and help grow and strengthen our economy.

Madam Chair, I want to take a moment to specifically highlight the importance of the third title in this bill, the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act. The NPR–A was specifically designated in 1923 as a petroleum reserve. Let me repeat that: NPR–A was specifically designated in 1923—that is 90 years ago—as a petroleum reserve. Its express purpose was to supply our country with American energy. That was the foresight of Congress 90 years ago. That is why it is completely unacceptable that the Obama administration this year finalized a plan to close half of NPR–A to energy production. Let me repeat: we set aside NPR–A 90 years ago for energy production, and this administration unilaterally shut off half of it. So this bill would nullify that plan and require the Interior Department to produce a new plan for responsibly developing these resources.

This bill would require annual lease sales in the NPR–A and ensure that necessary roads, bridges, and pipelines needed to support energy resources out of the NPR–A can be approved and completed in a timely, efficient manner. Now, Madam Chairman, this is crucial to the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System, TAPS. It is crucial because that pipeline needs to remain fully operational.

Much focus has been given to the Keystone XL pipeline, and properly so; but we cannot forget that TAPS is one of the most important pieces of energy infrastructure in our Nation. Reduced production in Alaska has left TAPS at less than half of its capacity, threatening a shutdown that would cost jobs