

the U.S. economy, the minority business community. Through their nationwide network of MBDA Business Centers, the MBDA has helped minority firms access contracts, capital, and enter market opportunities, both domestic and global.

Over the last 5 years specifically, this assistance has provided minority firms access to nearly \$20 billion in contracts and capital. I thank the MBDA for all it has accomplished over the last 45 years, especially the work at the Memphis MBDA Business Center in Tennessee Nine, my congressional district in Memphis, Tennessee.

In the coming years, the growth of America's workforce will come from minorities, and we need strong minority businesses to achieve maximum economic growth. I am certain the MBDA will lead the Nation to achieving our full potential.

HONORING DON MANN

(Mr. SCHRADER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has spent over 37 years in public service, including 20 years in my district in beautiful Newport, Oregon.

I am speaking, of course, about Don Mann, who recently retired as general manager of the Port of Newport after 18 years at the helm. Don's tenure at the Port was marked by significant changes that will reverberate in that region for years to come. His leadership and vision are beginning to make the central Oregon coast an economic hub.

Don led the charge, putting together the proposal that relocated NOAA's Pacific Marine Operations to Newport, Oregon, against all odds and some pretty big cities to the north. It is an incredible achievement that cannot be understated.

Not to rest on his laurels, Don has continued to work hard improving the international Port of Newport, which will also provide significant economic development for that region.

I just want to say, Don, it has been a pleasure working with you. I have enjoyed it immensely. Your tireless work on behalf of Oregonians is recognized. I wish you and Carolyn all the best in retirement.

Take care, my friend.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield to my dear friend, Mr. LAMALFA.

Mr. LAMALFA. I appreciate my good friend from Texas. Thank you for yielding time tonight.

I wanted to speak a little bit about some issues affecting California and the wise use of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

California's high-speed rail, on its surface, may have sounded promising to voters when they acted on it in the 2008 election—until you take a closer look at it.

Once the planning on the project began, the public found it would take billions of dollars to build and operate beyond what they were promised when it was on the ballot. What had been a \$33 billion ballot pricetag was exposed at a November 2011 public hearing as a nearly \$100 billion project.

After some scrambling to make plan changes, which likely render it illegal from the enabling legislation voters passed as Prop 1A, we now see the current \$69 billion plan, which uses low-speed modes in the urban areas of San Francisco and LA, again, found illegal under Proposition 1A. The tripled, then discounted, doubled pricetag is far from what 52 percent of California voters said "yes" to.

High-speed rail's ballot measure was delayed by the State legislature two election cycles before finally placing the High Speed Rail Initiative on the 2008 ballot, where Californians approved what they thought would be a reasonably managed project to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles with a 220-mile per hour train.

Because of Proposition 1A, the State could fund a portion of the construction with \$9.95 billion in bond funds, with the assumption that the rest of the money would come from private investors. At the time, the 2009 stimulus act was unknown.

The high-speed rail project that we have today has been plagued with poorly drafted funding plans, with little or no accountability to anyone for the absurd amounts of money spent so far. No accountability means millions of dollars spent on consultants, environmental impact reports, even lobbying here in Washington, D.C., and on numerous lawsuits from Californians who stand to lose their homes, farms, and businesses because they are in the path the high-speed rail would travel.

Recently, a Superior Court judge ruled that the High Speed Rail Authority needed to redraft a 2011 funding plan for the project. The judge halted all bond sales because the Authority hadn't attained the necessary environmental clearances for the areas of the State where construction is planned to begin, nor shown there was even a plan of financing to complete even the first phase of the project.

Meanwhile, the State schemes to inappropriately use truck weight fees or to use cap-and-trade funds in order to prop up the high-speed rail's bottom line.

If a Superior Court judge says that Californians can't spend any more money on the planning and construction of high-speed rail, why should America taxpayers via the Federal Government?

Nearly \$3.3 billion in grant money has been awarded to the High Speed Rail Authority by the Federal Government via the aforementioned stimulus package that was approved in 2009 by a different Congress. This is to spend on construction. However, the Federal grant award is based on California's ability to match the Federal dollars with State funds from the bond. So it is my hope the Federal Government will put all the money earmarked for the high-speed rail on hold.

Mr. Speaker, given the judge's recent ruling, I don't believe it is in the best interest of California's taxpayers or America's taxpayers to continue throwing money down this high-speed rathole. These Federal dollars should be used for pretty much anything else, such as building more freeway lanes, expanding airports, or, especially in this time of severe drought in California and the West, redirecting these scarce dollars to alleviate drought now and in the future with new water storage and infrastructure, which all Californians will benefit from.

Instead, even after the judge's ruling, the High Speed Rail Authority said that they would continue to press forward the funding efforts to seize land from farms and businesses and hurriedly perform the necessary and very expensive environmental reviews. They now plan to front-load the project with funding from the U.S. taxpayer via the Federal funds we saw in the stimulus package because the State funding has been put on hold by the judge unless we in D.C. say "no."

California has \$8.6 billion in bond dollars left to spend on building the high-speed rail, as nearly \$1 billion has already been spent without yet turning a shovel. Assuming they still receive the \$3.3 in stimulus funding and the total cost to build is the lowball number of \$69 billion, this means the High Speed Rail Authority has less than one-sixth of the funding necessary secured at this time. To me, the math doesn't add up. Perhaps in Fantasyland, where the monorail rail runs, it does.

Would you continue to invest in something that has a majority of the already-secured funding put on hold because your illegal business plan has holes big enough to drive a train through? I think not.

The Authority also hasn't shown any restraint in using taxpayer dollars. To date, they have spent upwards of \$600 million on engineering and environmental consultants without ever breaking ground. The Madera-to-Fresno segment alone is going to cost \$987 million—an unbelievable amount of taxpayer dollars for a segment that can't even operate trains as a stand-alone project.

So many affected residents of the Central Valley, and all over the State, are happy the funding has been put on hold. Their farms, residences, and businesses are threatened to be seized, shut down, and destroyed for a project that will not ever happen.