PUTTING FISH BEFORE PEOPLE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, California is suffering one of the worse droughts in its history. More than half of the State’s water supply is being cut off. In some communities “water police” go from door to door to enforce water restrictions. Homeowners are forbidden to water their lawns, except under the most rigid constraints, Sacramento offers an app so they can turn in their neighbors to the water authorities.

And yet, knowing full well that we are facing a devastating drought and that our dwindling water supply will be desperately needed by our people this summer, over the past several weeks the Bureau of Reclamation has released 70,000 acre-feet of water from dams on the American and Stanislaus Rivers to meet environmental demands that place fish above people.

This is enough water to meet the annual needs of a city of half a million people, all sacrificed in order to flush salmon smolts to the ocean, where they tend to swim anyway, and keep the river at the right temperature for the comfort of the fish.

The releases of this water are so enormous they are called “pulse flows.” Citizens are warned to exercise extreme caution on rivers undergoing pulse flows, so swift is the water current they produce as the water rushes toward the ocean.

Four months ago, Folsom Lake on the American River was almost empty. Yet on April 21, the Bureau of Reclamation more than tripled the water releases from Folsom and Nimbus Dams from 500 cubic feet per second to more than 1,500 cubic feet per second for 3 days. That is about 7,000 acre-feet of water.

On April 14, a 16-day pulse flow drained nearly 63,000 acre-feet of water from New Melones and Goodwin Dams on the Stanislaus. The irony is that if we hadn’t built these dams, these rivers would be nearly dry in this drought we hadn’t built these dams, these rivers would be nearly dry in this drought.

The releases of this water are so unreasonable these environmental laws threaten the health, safety, and prosperity of the human population throughout these drought-affected lands?

California’s chronic water shortages won’t be addressed without additional storage. There are plenty of suitable sites, but critics have delayed them indefinitely and made them cost-prohibitive.

Until those laws are changed and new dam construction can begin, our State and Federal Government have a responsibility to encourage our dwindling water supply as carefully as we ask our citizens to.

The wildly frivolous and extravagant water releases from our dams last month make a mockery of the extraordinary sacrifices that our citizens are making to stretch supplies in this crisis.

Perhaps, at least, these releases will serve to educate the public on just how unreasonable these environmental laws are—and the policymakers responsible for them.

HONORING NORMAN LUMPKIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of veteran newscaster Norman Lumpkin, who passed away on Tuesday May 6. While we mourn the passing of this pioneer, I am comforted in knowing that his legacy will live on through the barriers he broke for Black journalists in the State of Alabama.

I join with his family, friends, and former colleagues in remembering Norman Lumpkin for his numerous contributions to the industry.

Norman launched his longstanding media career by working for radio stations in Montgomery, Alabama, and Indianapolis, Indiana. However, Norman had to fight when he was hired in 1969 by WSFA in Montgomery, Alabama. He was the station’s first Black reporter and also the first Black reporter hired in the Montgomery media market.

Historian Richard Bailey defined Norman’s prolific career in 3 words: “forceful, thorough, and believably.” Bailey further noted that Norman personified Black broadcasting. He coined the phrase, “If you don’t want to hear it on this station, don’t let it happen.” The phrase represented not only his thirst for truth but his commitment to accurate reporting.

Norman was guided by these principles when he was assigned to cover the reelection bid of then-segregationist Governor George Wallace in 1970. During the race, Norman admitted that fellow reporters would give him misinformation to embarrass him in efforts to discredit his journalistic integrity.

But this passionate advocate for truth was not deterred. In fact, Governor Wallace personally made sure that Norman was kept abreast of new developments and campaign events. Through his extraordinary coverage of Governor Wallace, Norman not only earned credibility but a lasting respect from those in the industry.

His perseverance proved that he was poised to become one of the best investigative journalists in the State of Alabama.

Norman Lumpkin also made history off-camera. He was the first Black president of the Alabama AP Broadcasters Association and was inducted into the National Academy of Television and Arts’ prestigious Silver Circle in 2007.

He eventually left WSFA in 1999 and became news director at Montgomery’s ABC affiliate before serving as public relations director for the Alabama Highway Department, where he eventually retired.

Today, I honor Norman Lumpkin for serving as an impeccable role model and source of inspiration for generations and professional peers. Through his extraordinary coverage of Governor Wallace, Norman not only earned credibility but a lasting respect from those in the industry. The phrase represented not only his thirst for truth but his commitment to accurate reporting.

On behalf of a grateful Nation and State, we salute this American hero and Alabama treasure. Saying thanks to Norman Lumpkin somehow seems woefully inadequate, but on behalf of the countless journalists and media professionals that you have inspired, we honor your legacy and your place in Alabama history.

I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the passing of a great veteran journalist, Norman Lumpkin.

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

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