

Despite these dire conditions which have idled hundreds of thousands of productive farmland and caused billions of dollars in economic damage, the Bureau of Reclamation has unnecessarily diverted water from the Central Valley Project which serves the entire State, 20 million or more people, to salmon habitat in the Klamath River. I say “unnecessarily” because the chinook salmon of the Klamath River are not threatened or endangered and have, in fact, been returning in near record numbers.

Mr. Chairman, the Bureau has misused over 100,000 acre feet of water over the last 2 years, which will be enough for up to 800,000 people or even 30,000 acres of cropland.

What is more, stakeholders have already reached an agreement. All the stakeholders in the area have a previous agreement to ensure enough water for both humans and for salmon, according to the Trinity Record of Decision.

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The Bureau's actions go above and beyond the requirements of the agreement and negatively impact the very stakeholders that agreed to it, including my constituents.

Two years ago, a bipartisan group from this Congress sent a letter urging the Bureau of Reclamation not to carry out this activity. Mr. Chairman, this amendment simply prohibits the Bureau of Reclamation from releasing water beyond the record of decision it is a party to and ensures that cities and farms have access to as much water as possible, especially during this acute drought period. It also maintains the river flows that stakeholders have agreed to and forces the Bureau of Reclamation to keep its promises to the people of California.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this amendment but, believe me, with sympathy toward what the people of the West are facing. I just hope that we can get through this situation reasonably and seamlessly somehow. I oppose the amendment because it would lock in a specific operating regime, regardless of facts on the ground.

In 2014, the Bureau of Reclamation made the decision not to release water above the minimum requirement, clearly showing they are realistic and willing to change to meet the circumstances at hand. I hope the gentleman agrees. Reclamation monitored temperatures and fish health to balance risks.

Then last September, the Bureau of Reclamation did release flows because of a deadly detection of a parasite impacting salmon. Yet we must ensure that the massive fish kill of 2002 doesn't happen again. This balancing act is really difficult, but we cannot

sacrifice the environment either. We must find a way to balance the needs of people and the environment in the West.

Further, in the Klamath Basin, we must meet our obligations to the tribes who have relied on the river. None of this will be easy. We should not be locking in an operating regime that ignores science and does not allow us to adapt to changing circumstances.

On this basis, I oppose the gentleman's amendment and honestly hope, as a country, we can do what is necessary to help the West.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, well, I appreciate that sentiment on helping the West. Perhaps a pipeline from Ohio with all that excess water during flood flows would help us out. But short of doing that right now, indeed, coming back to what is happening with the fish we are speaking of in these systems, the salmon in the Klamath River that we are speaking of are not in danger and are near record numbers in that leg.

This amendment will assist actually downstream on the Sacramento River the endangered winter-run chinook with this additional flow. So even though there may have been detected a parasite, it is not affecting natively what we are talking about here.

And this goes beyond the Record of Decision with agreed water flow amounts of the stakeholders involved. So this is more by whim of BOR once again deciding that additional flows, based on no science beyond the Record of Decision, are taking valuable water away, and it could happen again in this record drought year.

We need not lose the opportunity to have these waters, or other ones talked about earlier tonight, based on the whim of a bureaucracy somewhere that really doesn't seem to be paying attention to the needs of California's farms, cities, and that the water is actually being used to the best benefit of the fish being debated in any one of these systems. So diverting more water away from this is not productive. It doesn't fulfill any scientific goals.

With that, I ask the “aye” votes of this Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, before I make a motion, let me thank you for your excellent stewardship of this bill through general order, through the amendment debate in the wee hours of

the morning. We all appreciate it. It has been fair and helped move it along in an orderly manner.

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) having assumed the chair, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

HONORING THE ARKANSAS TOWNS OF MAYFLOWER AND VILONIA

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, this past Monday, April 27, marked the 1-year anniversary of the devastation that occurred when a tornado struck the Mayflower, Vilonia, and Paron communities in Arkansas, destroying more than 400 homes and costing 16 people their lives. The theme of this year's anniversary is, “Remember our loss, celebrate our recovery.”

I have had the opportunity to visit with folks in these communities and to hear their stories of courage and resilience. While I mourn those that are lost, I am thankful for the health and safety of Martin and Kristin Patton and the miraculous survival of their family. Their home literally disintegrated around them.

I am thankful for the leadership of Vilonia Mayor James Firestone and Mayflower Mayor Randy Holland who, along with county and local leaders, are charting a course toward the future. In the face of this tragedy, they furnish us with an inspirational model of solidarity and hope.

I applaud the recovery efforts and dedication of these great Arkansas communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Paron Community in Pulaski County and the Faulkner County towns of Vilonia and Mayflower, Arkansas have experienced tragedy and disaster over these past years, but their resilience and determination to rebuild and recover has never been more prevalent.

Four years ago, on April 25, 2011, an EF2 tornado struck Vilonia, killing four of its 4,000 citizens.

Not two years after that, on March 29, 2013, the residents of Mayflower were left reeling after being flooded with 5,000 barrels of heavy crude oil that erupted from the burst Pegasus Pipeline.

The ability to bounce back after such misfortune is a testament to the great determination and toughness of the townspeople of Vilonia and Mayflower.

And that ability was put to yet another test when, on April 27, 2014, the Mayflower,

Vilonia, and Paron communities were struck by a monster of a tornado.

That tornado was classified as an EF4 with reported winds approaching 200 miles per hour. The half-mile wide twister left a swath of destruction that stretched for over forty miles. In fifty-six minutes, more than 400 homes were destroyed and sixteen people lost their lives. The National Weather Service stated that this was the single deadliest tornado to hit the state of Arkansas since 1968—nearly fifty years earlier.

This past Monday, April 27, marked the one-year anniversary of the devastation wrecked during this horrific storm. The theme of this year's anniversary is, "Remember our loss; celebrate our recovery."

Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to visit with folks from Mayflower and Vilonia and to hear their stories of courage and resilience.

While I mourn those lost in the April 2014 tornados, I am thankful for the health and safety of Martin and Kristin Patton and the miraculous survival of their family. Their home literally completely disintegrated around them and I certainly join them in counting their blessings of moving into their new home last weekend, 364 days after that frightening evening.

I am thankful of the leadership of Vilonia Mayor James Firestone on the job for six and one half years; four of them in a "recovery mode." I am grateful for his leadership with that of the city council in carefully charting a course toward the future.

I am thankful for Mayflower Mayor Randy Holland, who, with county and local leaders, is crafting new economic development directions for this growing community.

In the face of tragedy, they, along with all those who selflessly provided financial support and thousands of volunteer hours, furnish us with an inspirational model of solidarity and hope.

As these brave communities continue to recover and rebuild, I applaud them for their dedication to their neighbors, economy, and community.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MILITARY COMPENSATION AND RETIREMENT MODERNIZATION COMMISSION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114-30)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

My Administration fully supports the underlying objectives of the recommendations that the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (the "Commission") offered in January. These recommendations represent an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems.

As I directed in my letter of March 30, my team has worked with the Commission to further analyze the recommendations and identify areas of agreement. At this time I am prepared to support specific proposals for 10 of the Commission's 15 recommendations, either as proposed or with modifications that have been discussed among the Department of Defense, other agencies, and the Commission. These include the following:

Survivor Benefit Plan
Financial Education
Medical Personnel Readiness
Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Collaboration
Child Care
Service Member Education
Transition Assistance
Nutritional Financial Assistance
Dependent Space-Available Travel
Report on Military Connected Dependents

In some instances, the Department of Defense is already taking actions to implement these recommendations, and I will direct the Department to develop plans to complete this implementation. In those areas where legislation is required, I expect the Secretary of Defense to transmit to the Congress on my behalf the relevant legislative proposals, which I recommend be enacted without delay.

With respect to the remaining recommendations, given their complexity and our solemn responsibility to ensure that any changes further the objectives above, we will continue working with the Commission to understand how the following proposals would affect the All-Volunteer Force:

Blended Retirement System
Reserve Component Duty Statuses
Exceptional Family Member's Support

Commissary and Exchange Consolidation

I believe there is merit in all of these recommendations and that they deserve careful consideration and study. I will ensure that the Congress is kept apprised of this ongoing work.

Finally, I agree with the Commission that we need to continue to improve the military health care system. The health care reforms proposed in my Fiscal Year 2016 Budget are a good first step and offer service members, retirees, and their families more control and choice over their health care decisions. This remains a critical issue, and my Administration will work with the Commission and interested Members of Congress in the coming months to develop additional reform proposals for consideration as part of my Fiscal Year 2017 Budget.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, April 30, 2015.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. WAGNER (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today after 4 p.m. and

May 1 on account of attending the promotion ceremony of her son Raymond Wagner, III to Captain in the United States Army.

Mr. LEWIS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.) the House adjourned until today, Friday, May 1, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1318. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Azoxystrobin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0248; FRL-9926-24] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1319. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Phenol, 2-(2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-6-dodecyl-4-methyl-; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0418; FRL-9925-78] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1320. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Arkansas; Revisions to the State Implementation Plan; Fee Regulations [EPA-R06-OAR-2015-0054; FRL-9926-91-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1321. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) [EPA-R05-OAR-2011-0969; FRL-9926-81-Region 5] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1322. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, and the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incinerator Units [EPA-R06-OAR-2013-0763; FRL-9927-00-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1323. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Revisions to the State Implementation Plan; Stage I Regulations [EPA-R06-OAR-2014-0846; FRL-9927-10-Region 6] received April 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.