Mr. GARDNER. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2017

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Thursday, February 2; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 38; finally, that there be 6 hours of debate remaining, equally divided in the usual form.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

STREAM PROTECTION RULE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we are gathered here this evening to seek to defend against the Congressional Review Act effort to overturn the clean stream protection rule. It is interesting that this first Congressional Review Act measure that we are taking up should be one that puts money into the pockets of the fossil fuel industry and lifts their obligation to clean up public streams that they have ruined with their pollution.

As I have been in the Senate, I am in my second term, and I am more than halfway through it. By Senate standards, I don't expect that is very senior, but it is enough that I have seen some patterns develop.

One of the patterns I have seen develop is that my friends on the other side of the aisle talk a really good game on deregulation, on regulatory reform. They give speeches on the burden of undue regulation. They give speeches about the cost of regulation. Over and over they seek deregulation. But when it comes time to actually do something, every single time that I can remember, the deregulatory effort goes to the benefit of two groups. One is Wall Street and the other is polluters. The rest is just talk.

Sure enough, here we are with the first Congressional Review Act effort, and the choices are money in the fossil fuel company's pockets versus our natural heritage of clean streams for ourselves and our children. And which way do we go? Put the money in the fossil fuel pockets—to heck with the clean streams. This would be 0.3 percent of coal industry revenues to clean up after the mess they have made.

I grew up and I was taught that if you spill something, you clean it up. If you make a mess, you clean it up. But in this building, if it is the fossil fuel industry, if you make a mess, too bad, we will take care of you. You are our guys. We don't care about the stream. We don't care about the people who live downstream. We don't care about people who might fish in it. We don't care about the fact that this is God's creation. We care about making the coal companies happy.

It happens over and over. If it is not polluters, it is Wall Street. If it is not Wall Street, it is polluters. As to all this talk about deregulation, watch where it goes—Wall Street and polluters. Here we are with the archetypical challenge between private benefit and public harm. The very purpose of government—even conservative commentators say—is to protect the public from being harmed by those who cause them harm as they pursue their private benefit. What could be more the case than coal waste polluting public streams? We don't care; we are going to go to bat for the coal companies. I tell you, there are special rules around here for the fossil fuel industry.

We heard President Trump's promises to drain the swamp of the outside influence of corporate special interests and lobbyists in our government. Well, particularly when it comes to fossil fuel interests, that oft-repeated promise seems to have evaporated in the murky haze of his transition. From the very outset, operatives of the Koch brothers and other fossil fuel interests have infiltrated his team.

Some of the biggest swamp alligators have floated up as his nominees to run federal agencies that protect our public health, that enforce our laws, that maintain our natural resources, and even those who carry out our international diplomacy. With all these nominations, the President isn't draining the swamp. He is filling it with exactly the kind of big special interests that most Americans voted to keep out.

Our Republican colleagues are jamming and stacking the confirmation hearings in a rush to fill in this swamp Cabinet before the American people can get a good look at the nominees. By the way, the byproduct of all of this is the swamp gas of climate denial.

A strong majority of voters polled since the election called on President Trump to do more to address global warming. So let us look at the record of this fossil fuel swamp Cabinet.

Today, we voted on ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson to be our Secretary of State. Like President Trump, Tillerson and ExxonMobil have been talking out of two sides of their mouths about climate change. Sometimes Tillerson acknowledges climate change exists, pointing to a revenue-neutral carbon fee like the one I have introduced as the best way to address it. At other times, he plays up imagined scientific uncertainty and overestimates the costs of action. In 2012, Tillerson said:

> I'm not disputing that increasing CO_2 emissions in the atmosphere is going to have an impact. It will have a warming impact.

As far back as 2009, he backed a revenue-neutral carbon fee like the one I introduced as the best way to address the problem. But in 2013, he questioned whether we should do anything at all to slow climate change, asking: ''What good is it to save the planet if humanity suffers?''

That is the climate deniers' false premise—that humanity will suffer from our solving a problem that they face.

In 2015, Tillerson told an ExxonMobil shareholder meeting that he thought the world should wait for science to improve before solving the problem of climate change. He couldn't find one State university in this country that would agree with him. He says that because it is the fossil fuel industry stall strategy. It is so ironic coming from the longtime head of ExxonMobil to say we should wait because it has been well documented by the Los Angeles Times, by Inside Climate News, and by others that ExxonMobil—despite conducting some of the leading climate science for decades—has played a devious role in undermining public understanding of these dangers.

For years, Exxon has underwritten a shadowy network of denial organizations—we have called it here on the Senate floor the web of denial—with the purpose of delaying any steps to reduce the use of fossil fuel. Between 1988 and 2005, ExxonMobil contributed over $16 million to a network of phony-baloney think tanks and pseudo-science groups that spread misleading and false claims about climate science. In response to public outrage about ExxonMobil's role in funding climate denial—it knew it had been caught—it claimed that it would stop and that it had stopped. But in 2015, ExxonMobil was still funneling millions to groups pedaling climate denial. According to its own publically available ''2015 Worldwide Global Giving'' report, over $1.6 million, or one-fifth of ExxonMobil's public information and policy research contributions went to organizations active in deceiving the public about climate change—groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council, the National Black Chamber of Commerce, the Hudson Institute, and the Manhattan Institute.

Under Tillerson's leadership, Exxon spent untold millions of dollars obstructing climate action and burying real science in a cloud of nonsense. The nonprofit research organization Influence Map found that ExxonMobil spent