

Not only that their mismanagement of our water supply has, among other things, diminished our capacity to respond to wildfires.

First of all, it has been decades since California has built significant new water storage, not since the State water project. Secondly, even the water that we do have, when it comes down, much of it gets diverted intentionally into the ocean, again, supposedly for environmental reasons.

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I can tell you that in 2023, when we had record storms in California, I visited the site of the Folsom Dam, and you had water cascading out of the dam, 10,000 cubic feet per second, almost all of it going eventually into the ocean.

At that time, by the way, we had a flood emergency declared, of course. Yet, somehow we were also still under a drought emergency. Californians were told, you are not allowed to water your lawn. The legislature was passing draconian restrictions on indoor water use to 25, 30 gallons a day.

Businesses were banned from having lawns in front of their property. In some parts of the State, you had to have a low-flow device for your shower head, and then they would punish you if you used too much water when you took a shower, if you didn't take a 5-minute shower.

All the while, we are sending staggering amounts of water into the ocean, and we are failing to build the storage that would actually catch the water and preserve it for when we need it.

Another example, relevant to the situation in L.A., the California Coastal Commission actually rejected the building of a desalination plant just a couple of years ago.

California, over the course of many years, has, in a political way, chosen to allow its forests to become overgrown and to impose artificial scarcity on its water supply.

At the same time, our State, and many of our municipalities, such as Los Angeles, have had completely backward priorities and have demonstrated a total failure of just basic competence when it comes to government performance and the provision of services.

That was highlighted very clearly in this case. When you had the Los Angeles Fire Department telling the city, do not deprive us of our funding. Yet, the city decided to do it anyway. The fire department said that the reduction in funding would severely limit the department's capacity to prepare for, train for, and respond to large-scale emergencies.

As the city council, the mayor, were deciding not to fully fund the fire department, they had plenty of time for things like passing a resolution reaffirming Los Angeles as a sanctuary city. It was already a sanctuary city. It is already a sanctuary State, but they

decided that was their priority, not to prepare for the risk of wildfire, not to fully fund the fire department, but to pass another resolution making itself a sanctuary city, yet again.

We will be learning more, I expect, about how it possibly could be that we have fire hydrants that are not working, that water isn't coming out of them, and how we didn't have the necessary personnel on hand despite the high wind conditions. It serves to underline on the one hand the misguided priorities, and on the other, the lack of basic competence.

Additionally, Los Angeles and California, more generally, have continued to lead the Nation in homelessness. California has roughly half the unsheltered homeless in the United States. There is a whole host of reasons that this is not a good thing, but one of them is that encampments tend to lead to a lot of fires.

In fact, in just one year, in 2023 alone, there were almost 14,000 fires related to homelessness. Again, we don't yet know exactly what caused the set of fires that are still ongoing, but we do know that this city has been as bad as any in terms of letting homelessness proliferate, allowing encampments to go unchecked, and, thereby, creating more dangerous conditions for its residents because of the risk of fire.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will point out that California has an insurance crisis that has been growing and growing and growing, year after year after year, and our State's political leaders have simply allowed it to happen.

They have done not nearly enough to mitigate the risk of fire that is the underlying cause of the increased rates. They have done essentially nothing until recently to stabilize the situation, to stabilize the markets. As a result, you have insurers that have now pulled out of the State entirely, and millions of people are losing coverage.

In my district, we have whole communities where everyone has lost coverage, and they are kicked to the California FAIR Plan, forced to pay three times as much, four times as much, five times as much as they were paying before. The FAIR Plan is now on the verge of collapse, accounting for the absolutely catastrophic losses that we are seeing in Los Angeles.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening and is still ongoing, sadly, in Los Angeles is a truly unimaginable tragedy in terms of the images that we are seeing, in terms of the dislocation that it is causing. I expect that we will learn that, at least to an extent, it was an avoidable one.

This should serve as a major wake-up call that our State needs to start doing things differently, that we need to get back to basics. We need to get back to basics in California: Build our roads; manage our forests; store our water; maintain our grid; fund our police and our fire departments; do the things government is supposed to do, do them well, and do nothing else.

If we can get back to basics as a State, then we can stop catastrophes like this from happening in the future. Perhaps someday, in the not too distant future, we can start leading the Nation in the right ways again.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, January 13, 2025, at noon for morning-hour debate.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. YAKYM:

H.R. 241. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for access standards with respect to the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services that are applicable to certain veterans with mental disorders; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H.R. 242. A bill to require annual surveys of Federal employee managers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 243. A bill to prohibit United States recognition of Bidzina Ivanishvili or any Government of Georgia that is led by Bidzina Ivanishvili, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 244. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide eligibility for TRICARE Select to veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. GREEN of Tennessee, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 245. A bill to require any applicant for a Federal grant to submit a certification that such applicant is not in violation of section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself and Mr. CASTEN):

H.R. 246. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the limitation on the amount individuals can deduct for certain State and local taxes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms.