more limited. It does not provide the choices that this plan does, and it does not provide the savings in the long run, the competition and negotiations provide.

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the gentleman brought that up, as we have to conclude our discussion here. I am glad the gentleman brought up the issue of saving Medicare, because, indeed, if no changes are made to the Medicare system, we all know that it is not actuarially sound, and it will meet its demise. The program itself will meet its demise within about 20 or 25 years.

And when my generation, the baby boom generation, reaches retirement age, the Medicare program will not be able to provide benefits to my generation. So the gentleman makes an excellent point. The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) also mentioned some of the reforms that we include, reforms of Medicare that we include in our prescription drug plan, which will facilitate the transition from the current Medicare system to a Medicare system that will be stronger, that will rely on competition in the private sector to drive down costs in the Medicare system and save Medicare for the long hall so that my generation and generations following mine will have the benefit of this program.

I appreciate the gentleman for yielding to me and saying that our plan does that, but the Vice President's does not.

Mr. THOMAS. I thank the gentleman for his comments. The solvency the day after tomorrow is important, the needs for tomorrow is important, but frankly we should not go one day longer than necessary to provide seniors with prescription drugs, and we ought not to keep talking about the issue. We did something, we passed it, especially when talking apparently coming from the Vice President is not truthful in the first place.

Mr. MCCRERY. We passed it in a responsible way. I would admit.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud we are doing it in not only a way that will save and strengthen Medicare for future generations and provides more choice for seniors, but it provides more health care for seniors. Ours is the only bill that covers off-label uses of drugs. Since most of the cancer patients are over 65, and since many of the cancer treatments involve off label uses of drugs, only our bill provides coverage for most cancer treatments.

So we not only do it in an efficient, cost effective way that will strengthen Medicare in the long run for current seniors and future retirees, but we provide more choices and more health care. We need for the President to weigh in now and get our bill to his desk so every senior in America can have drugs as a part of Medicare now.

Mr. THOMAS. Our bill provides that competition in negotiation, and the only thing I am really pleased about with Governor George W. Bush's plan is he gets it, he understands the need for that competition in negotiation to provide a better product, flexibility and choice, but ultimately at a cheaper price.

My only hope is that as we continue this very important debate, my druthers would be that we do not debate, we show action. We took that action in our hands, we passed a bill off the floor of the House, we would like to deal with legislation moving forward, but if it is apparently the way that the Democrats have chosen to be rhetoric, to talk about the needs, then I think, at the very minimum, what we would hope is that the Vice President, the Democrats' nominee for President, would not play fast and loose with the facts that, in fact, the debate be a truthful one.

This is a serious matter. It is not just partisan rhetoric. It is whether or not a senior gets the kind of lifesaving drugs they deserve at a price they can afford.

The bipartisan Republican plan that passed the House does that. We do not want rhetoric. We do not want debate. We want action. We have taken action. It is now up to the President and others. I thank both of my colleagues for participating and our colleague from Pennsylvania as well.

NIGHTSIDE CHAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues recall, last evening I had an opportunity to address my colleagues and to speak about a number of different subjects. I would like to kind of do a quick summary or at least some additions or amendments to my comments last night based on some of what I saw today.

First of all, as many of my colleagues will recall last night I spoke about Pueblo, Colorado, and the home of heroes. This week is Patriots Week in Pueblo, Colorado, and there we are going to honor over 100 recipients of the Medal of Honor.

These are real heros, as I said last night, and I read the definition of heroes. And we do not have to explain to people what courage is and how courageous and brave these particular individuals were, we know that just because they are recipients of the Medal of Honor, they are amongst the most recognized, courageous and brave people in the history of this country.

I say with some sadness today that we lost one of our heroes who passed away at age 74, and I thought I would just read a brief paragraph or two about this particular hero. Douglas T. Jacobson, Douglas T. Jacobson who received the Medal of Honor was a Marine private, private in the Marine Corps for single handedly storming enemy positions on Iwo Jima, an action that resulted in the deaths of 75 Japanese soldiers, died in August. He had congestive heart failure.

Iwo Jima is often remembered for the photograph of the five Marines and the Navy Combat Medic raising the American flag on February 23, 1945, but the carnage of what occurred there was one, as described, as one of the most savage and most costly battles in the history of the Marine Corps.

This was taken from the obituary out of the New York Times. Unfortunately, obviously, Mr. Jacobson will not be in Pueblo, Colorado, but to his family, we mourn his passing and want them to know in Pueblo this week we will think about him. We will think about the action that he took on behalf of this country.

Moving on to another subject. I talked last night about the entertainment world, specifically I focused in on some of the video games that we can pick up or rent at the store or pick up or go down to the video arcade and play. I showed you a demonstration of some of them, including one which is called the Kingpin. And on the Kingpin, as I mentioned last night, you are actually able to put this video game on your video and focus in on the exit wounds of the person that you shot.

The game itself encourages you to be like a tough gang person and wipe out your opponents. And it is a gross miscarriage of, in my opinion, of responsibility, community responsibility, by some individuals, not all individuals, but by some individuals in the entertainment industry.

Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday in my comments that I felt that I probably represented 1 percent, maybe 2 percent, 3 percent of that entertainment industry that put that kind of trash out. Tonight while I was waiting for my opportunity to address my colleagues, I was back reading the New York Times.

And I noticed a story and I would like to say or comment on a response that was given to our concern in the United States Congress, our concerns as parents, parents who have young children that many of our constituents do, we expressed the concern of a lot of people and a lot of communities across this country.

Here is the response of one of the people of the entertainment industry, a guy named Larry Casinof, he is president of Threshold Entertainment, a company that makes, among other things, movies based on action oriented video games like Mortal Kombat and Duke Nukem.

Here is his comment about what Congress says about these video games, about what parents and communities are saying about these video games. I think it is a bunch of weasels scrambling for votes; that is exactly what this fellow calls my colleagues up here who express concern about the entertainment industry that small portion of the entertainment industry which puts this kind of garbage out there to

be sold to our young people, with the intent of influencing our young people.

Let me tell you it would be interesting to call Larry on the phone and I wish had his phone number because I would call him this evening. In fact, if I could, I would bring a phone on to the floor, it is not allowed, but I would bring it to the floor and let my colleagues hear in the microphone, and I would ask Larry the question, Larry, do you have any children? My guess is he probably does.

Let us see. Larry, how young are they? And I would hope that his children are young. I would say Larry, do you buy these games? Do you buy Mortal Kombat, and do you buy Duke Nukem or do you buy Kingpin games for your own children? Do you allow your children to play the same kinds of games that you are profiting from by marketing to your neighbor's children, to your community's children, to your State's children, to the Nation's children.

My guess if Larry who has got the big mouth and says you are nothing but weasels if you question my integrity on putting this kind of trash out, my bet is he does not allow his kids near this stuff.

□ 2145

I think this guy is a self-righteous guy, and I do not mind saying it on the House floor; and I sure wish he would take a second look at his community responsibilities.

I sure wish he would take a look at some of the tragedies that we have suffered, some of the school shootings, Columbine High School, for example, in Colorado. I think he ought to take a look and say, gosh, are the people that are really worried about this, should we consider them vote-getting weasels or maybe, just maybe, it is somebody who is worried about the communities that they represent. I hope I get an opportunity some day to meet this fellow because I would like to ask him that question.

THE LIBERAL MEDIA BIAS

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, let me move on from there and mention something else. Obviously, we are in the presidential election; and when you get into an election that is as intense as this election is, the question always comes up, does the media favor one candidate over the other. Now, of course, as many of you know, obviously, I am a Republican, and I am concerned. I think that there is a liberal bias to the media in this country, not all of the media, obviously. We have many papers, the Wall Street Journal editorials which I think are outstanding. We have the Washington Times, but on a whole I think most people would agree that the media has a very liberal bent to it; that the media favors AL GORE as the next President of the United States. I think it has been clearly demonstrated in the last few days.

I guess a couple of weeks ago, an advertiser hired by George W. Bush put an ad out that had rats or something on the ad. You could not believe it. Many of you saw it. That became the headlines and the starting news story on the newscasts in the evening. They have played this story over and over and over and over. That word did not come out of George W. Bush's mouth, but they tagged him with it; and they have been tagging him day after day after day.

Well, another big issue that has come up in this presidential election is prescription drugs; and as I said last night, look, do not buy into what the liberal Democrats, not all Democrats because moderate and conservative Democrats do not necessarily agree with the liberal Democrat philosophy, but do not buy into their philosophy that they have the magic answer and that you are going to get something for nothing.

Prescription drugs are a huge problem in this country. Our medical delivery system is a huge problem in this country; but the quick and easy answer, especially for a politician, is to promise all of you that you can get something for nothing; that the government will take all the responsibility; you do not have to worry about individual responsibility anymore; we will do it for you and it will not cost you anything.

Prescription drugs are a big issue, but they have to sell this. Hillary Clinton attempted this about 8 years ago. She attempted, and I will say the polls were way up here, it took a lot of guts to stand up against Hillary Clinton and the national health care plan that GORE and Clinton supported 8 years ago, but the American people did not buy into it. Once they had time to evaluate it, once they understood what the consequences of a national health care plan would be, once they understood how poorly the government managed its current health care delivery system, like veterans benefits, like Medicare, like Medicaid. Once they realized this, they did not buy into that.

Initially, when the Hillary Clinton proposal came out to offer a nationwide socialized health care plan, the polls supported it, the majority of Americans said hey, we are tired of paying the kind of prices, we are tired of getting it stuck to us by insurance companies and frankly in a lot of cases they were. So they supported this plan until they began to look at the details. But during that period of time, until the American people had time to let the details settle out, until they had time to weigh what the consequences were of this nationalized socialized health care plan, there was a lot of propaganda put out there.

Well, you know what? We are seeing the same kind of thing. You know what is happening? The media is giving AL GORE a free ride on it. Let me say exactly what I am talking about. Not all of the media, obviously, because this headline came out of the Washington Times. AL GORE, to try and push his numbers higher against George W. Bush, has gone out and we have seen this history with AL GORE in the past, AL GORE at one point said that the movie Love Story, which my generation remembers, that Love Story was written about him and his wife, Tipper. AL GORE went on later to say that he is the one who invented the Internet, and now in the last couple of days AL GORE has stood in front of senior citizens, and I will say one of the ways that the liberal Democrats are selling their plan and are attacking the conservative or moderate Republican/Democrat plan is by the doctrine of fear, so a couple of days ago AL GORE stood up in front of a group of senior citizens and he said to these senior citizens, he said my mother-in-law, who lives with us, has arthritis and she has to pay, and I think the number was $138 a month for her prescription every month, and he says our dog has arthritis and the same drug that is administered to that dog, why that prescription costs, I think he said $37 a month.

Well, you know what? Afterwards, some people began asking questions, well, what was the price of this drug and what was the price of that drug? And this is the result: GORE made it up. He made up the antidote about the cost of the drugs. His own staff admitted that AL GORE made it up.

In all fairness, and talk about fairness here, do you think that the media has put this out? This came directly from AL GORE's mouth, by the way. Whereas this rats ad, or whatever it was, did not come from George W. Bush; it came from an advertisement authorized by his campaign or whatever. But do you think the media has done much about this?

Frankly, AL GORE has had some problems with credibility with the administration that he is associated with, but he says now he is his own man; but yet he stands in front of the American public and he lied to us about this. He fabricated. That is the word they are using, not the word lie. He fabricated the facts because it sounded good.

Of course, it is alarming that the average person would pay $138 or something a month for prescription drugs and the same drugs used on the dog would be $37 a month. That is unfair. On its face, its outrageous. Of course, we sympathize with the Vice President. Of course, we are drawn in by AL GORE's story. He told that story for a purpose, to get votes, to get your votes, Mr. Speaker. Yet now his staff admits well, he fabricated the story.

At the beginning of my comment in regards to this issue, I said take a look at whether you are a liberal Democrat, whether you are a conservative serving up here, whether you are a moderate, take a look from a nonpartisan point of view and see if there is fair play going on out there with the media. Ask the media, hey, why is not this story being played up like these other stories? I can say if that was not GORE but Bush who made up the antidote about the

cost of drugs, it would be the lead story on every national broadcast in this Nation. It would be the lead story, bold headlines in a lot of newspapers across this country. They would unmercifully attack Bush for this kind of little example. But look what happened. It is a small story in a lot of these newspapers.

My point tonight is to demonstrate to you, as we get in these presidential elections, we do not have a level playing field, in my opinion, with a lot of the media out there on this presidential race. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, most of our constituents, in my opinion, will eventually see through this, and I hope most of our constituents have an opportunity to stand back and make an educated decision on who they want to support for the White House.

Well, let me move off of this subject.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Members are reminded that suggesting dishonesty of the Vice President or questioning his credibility are violations of the rules of the House.

Mr. MCINNIS. Inquiry of the Speaker. That is a headline on a newspaper. Is that what the Speaker is referring to, is an objection to the headline off the Washington Times that says that the Vice President misled?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Rules of the House, quotes from a newspaper read in debate are held to the same standard as if spoken in the Member's own words.

FUN FACTS ABOUT WATER

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I will move on to a new subject now and that is on water. I want to talk this evening about water. Water is a fun subject to talk about. Really, it is kind of boring. In Colorado, we are a State that has critical reliance on water, but I thought before we begin the discussion in earnest about the State of Colorado, I thought I would go through some fun facts that impact all of our colleagues out here, all of our constituents; some neat things, interesting things to learn about water.

As I begin this, most people do not think much about water unless it does not come out of the taps, or they do not think much about the quality of water unless their water is dirty. There are some major issues that evolve around the natural resource of water. Water is the only resource we have that naturally renews itself. It does not expire upon its use.

So I thought we would go over some interesting things that I have found about water. It would be kind of fun for us this evening to take a lighter moment and talk about some of these things.

First of all, I have titled this little chart, which obviously you can tell I have slapped this thing together, but there are some interesting things. Who was the American explorer who compared the western plains to the sandy deserts of Africa? Zebulon Pike, Pikes Peak of Colorado. Another interesting fact, and this pertains mostly to Colorado, but the largest reservoir in the State of Colorado is the reservoir called the Blue Mesa Reservoir.

Next, what percent of water treated by the public water systems is used for drinking and cooking? In other words, all of the water that is treated nationwide by your public treatment system, how much of that is used for drinking and cooking? Less than a percent. That is an interesting fact. I thought it was more than that.

In fact, I thought most of the water that was processed by your treatment facility plant was used for drinking and cooking, but less than 1 percent of it actually is.

What river in Colorado used to be called the Grande River? That is the Colorado River, and we are going to go in later on a little more depth about the Colorado River. It is called the Mother of All Rivers.

Kentucky blue grass, an interesting point here, uses 18 gallons of water per square foot for each year. Tall fescue and wheat grasses use 10 and 7 gallons of water per square foot each year, respectively.

Riparian habitat makes up less than 3 percent of the land in Colorado but is used by over 90 percent of the wildlife in the State, which points out how important riparian habitat is; and our technological advances have shown us over the last 20 or 30 years why these riparian areas are so important for our wildlife.

Eighty-seven percent of the water leaving Colorado flows out of the Colorado River Basin towards the Pacific Ocean. The remaining 13 percent of water that leaves Colorado flows out of the Missouri, the Arkansas, and the Rio Grande River Basins towards the Atlantic Ocean. So 87 percent of water in the State of Colorado, and for a lot of you that are not from Colorado you will see why there are many references to Colorado, not just because I am from there but Colorado is really a critical State in the western States when we talk about the issue of water. As I just said, 87 percent of the water that goes into Colorado flows towards the Pacific Ocean and 13 percent of that water flows towards the Atlantic Ocean.

I might also add that Colorado is the only State in the Union where all of the free-flowing water goes out of the State. There is no water in the Continental United States, in any State in the Continental United States, like Colorado, that flows into Colorado. Colorado does not have any. It is an exception of one.

Producing a typical lunch hamburger, french fries and soft drink, this is hard to believe, uses 1,500 gallons of water; a typical drink, french fries and a hamburger. By the time you are able to grow the resources, produce the resources that are necessary to come up with your final product, you have gone through 1,500 gallons of water. It includes the water needed to raise the potatoes, the grain for the bun and the grain needed to feed the cattle and the production of the soda.

Let me move over here. The natural rotation of the earth, now this is one of the most amazing water facts that I have seen and for 18 years I have studied water, the natural rotation of the earth has been altered slightly by the ten trillion, ten trillion tons of water stored in reservoirs over the last 40 years, according to NASA.

So of the 10 trillion tons of water that is stored, it has actually altered slightly the rotation of the earth.

The Platte River, whose name means flat, was named by French trappers and explorers. The Native Americans in the region called it the Nibraskier, a similar word for flat.

□ 2200

The hottest spring water in the State of Colorado, 82 degrees Celsius, 180 degrees Farenheit is found in Horse Tents Hot Springs in Chaffee County. The largest hot spring in Colorado is the big spring in Glenwood Springs with a maximum discharge greater than 2,200 gallons per minute. I am from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, and I hope that many of you have already been through Glenwood Springs. It is a small town, a beautiful town, located about 40 miles north of Aspen, Colorado. If you have driven to Aspen, especially in the winter, you had to go through Glenwood Springs, and as you go over the bridge, if you go through there again, take a look and you will see that huge hot springs.

In May 1935, 10 miles south of Kiowa, 24 inches of rain fell in 6 hours. Note that the average for Colorado in a year, in a year in Colorado, the average precipitation we get is 16.5 inches, and here in Kiowa County, they actually got 24 inches in 6 hours. Grand Lake is 265 feet deep, the deepest natural lake in Colorado.

From 1820 to 1846, the boundary of the United States with Mexico was the Arkansas River. That was the actual boundary between the United States and Mexico, the Arkansas River. Wolford Reservoir, which is one of our newer reservoirs, located 7 miles north of Kremmling, Colorado, opened to the public over Memorial Day weekend, the 5.5 mile long reservoir covers about 1,400 acres and has a capacity of 26,000 acre feet and costs about $42 million to build.

Now, in our discussion this evening about water, we will be talking about acre feet, so it is a good time to define exactly what I mean by acre feet. An acre foot of water means that the amount of water over a 1-year period of time that would cover 1 acre 1 foot deep. Now, that is what an acre foot of water is. Eighty-nine percent of Colorado's naturally occurring lakes are found at altitudes above 9,000 feet.

Now, let us talk a little bit about Colorado and why this altitude is different or important. Colorado is the highest State in the Union. In fact, the district that I represent, the Third

Congressional District of Colorado, which, geographically, is larger than the State of Florida, is the highest congressional district in the Nation.

In Colorado, we depend very heavily on the precipitation that occurs on those high points at that high elevation. That is what creates 80 some percent, and we will look at that statistic a little later on, but 80 some percent of the water as a result of the snowfall at that high precipitation. So as we point out here, 89 percent, almost 90 percent of our natural lakes are found at altitudes of 9,000 feet or higher.

The average humidity that we have in Colorado is about 38 percent; technically, 37.9 percent. There are more than 9,000 miles of streams and 2000 lakes and reservoirs open to fishing in the State of Colorado. A dry wash, we often hear the term dry wash. What that really means, they are stream flows that occur only for a short period of time after the snow melt or after a rain storm, something like this. That is what they call a dry wash, or gulch, et cetera.

Let me shift over here. The South Platte waters is used in the following ways. This is interesting. The South Platte, which is a major river in the State of Colorado, 10 percent for city and industrial use, 65 percent for irrigation, and 3 percent of the water for reservoir evaporation. Twenty-two percent of the water leaves that State.

Now, let us talk for a moment, leave this and talk just for a moment about water in general. Mr. Speaker, 97 percent, 97 percent of the water in the world is salt water, and of that 97 percent, 75 percent of the balance, so we have 97 percent of the water in the world is salt water, so we have 3 percent of that left, and 75 percent of that 3 percent is water that is tied up in the polar ice caps. So we can see that less than half of a percent is fresh water in this world that we would find in lakes and streams. Mr. Speaker, 73 percent of that stream flow in the United States is claimed by States east of a line drawn north to south along the Kansas-Missouri border. So 73 percent of the stream flow in this Nation is in the eastern United States. And, most of our rainfall occurs in the East, not in the West.

In fact, in many States in the East, their problem is getting rid of water. Our problem in the West is the ability to retain the water. Mr. Speaker, 12.7 percent of the water is claimed by the Pacific Northwest, which means that only 14 percent, about, 14.2 percent to be technical, so approximately 14 percent of the water, of the total stream flow of fresh water is shared by 14 States and these 14 States geographically consume more than one-half of the Nation in land area. Of those 14 States, Colorado sits at the apex. Again, back to the high elevation of the State of Colorado.

In Colorado, our high altitude semi-arid climate, we have 85 million acre feet, of the 100 acre feet we get approximately a year of moisture that falls in the State as precipitation. So we have about 100 million acre feet. Here is an interesting statistic. Of that 100 million acre feet, approximately 85 million acre feet of that goes away in evaporation or goes away in what we would call transpiration through where the plants take the moisture from the soil and it essentially evaporates through the leaves of the plants.

Let us go back here for some other interesting statistics that I think will help give us a good idea of just how critical water is and how critical it is going to be in our future. Mr. Speaker, 48 million people in the United States receive their drinking water from private or household wells. In Colorado, water must be diverted for a purpose and for beneficial use. The reason I put this in there is that Colorado water law is very unique.

Our water law in the West is significantly different than the water law in the East. In the West, water actually is a private property right. One can actually own the water separate from the land. In some States in this Union, the water and the land go together. But in Colorado, they can be separated. In Colorado, it is necessary, and in the West in general, it is necessary for us to divert water.

Basically, in Colorado, we have as much water as we could possibly need during what is called the spring runoff, which lasts from about 60 to 90 days. But once that spring runoff is finished, the States in the West have to rely very heavily upon water storage. If we do not have the water stored, we do not have the ability to use it for the balance of the year that we do not have spring runoff. That is why water storage is so critical in the West.

What is interesting is that a lot of what we would call, I guess, politicians in the East criticize water storage in the West. It is because they are talking about two entirely different systems. It is almost as if we have two entirely different countries based on water differences. In the East, the water comes much heavier and it is treated, even legally is treated differently than the water needs and the water facts of the West, which is very important to remember as we go on here.

In the United States, approximately 500,000 tons of pollutants pour into our lakes and rivers each day. That is why all of us continue towards this effort of clean water and clean lakes. Now, we cannot be so extreme as to say, look, we cannot flush our toilets because there is a pollutant in the toilet. What we have to do is figure out where that balance is with the use of water, without getting too extreme on one side or the other side. It is interesting here that if you spill four quarts of oil, a can, four quarts of oil in a sewer system, by the time it is done, you will have about an eight-acre oil spread, eight acres, as a result of four quarts of oil.

Those are the kinds of things that we have to be very sensitive with about. That is why we have to be careful about the pollutants that are in our water sources and our water supplies. This is interesting. The maximum 24-hour snowfall in the United States is 75 inches which occurred in the mountains of Colorado in 1921. Can we imagine, 75 inches of water in a 24-hour period of time.

Here are some other interesting facts. We will jump down here. Well, right here. Evidence indicates that an ancient irrigation system was found at Mesa Verde and may have been in use by 1000 AD or even earlier. It is interesting, the Anasazi down in the Mesa Verde National Park, down in the four corners of Colorado, and by the way, if you have not been down to the Mesa Verde National Park, you have to go. Take a look at the Anasazi Ruins, they were fabulous. These people that lived in the cliffs, they were called the Cliff People, and that is where we find the first indication of the use of a dam in the United States, and it was by the Anasazi people who would go down by the stream below the cliffs, and the water, as I said, Colorado is an arid State, averages 16½ inches of rain or precipitation in a year. So they would go down and store their water. That is the first indication we found of the use of a dam.

In Colorado, for a dam, we actually have a ditch, the San Luis People's Ditch, which has been in operation since its construction in 1852. That is the oldest irrigation system that we have that is still in continuous operation in Colorado. Fresh, uncompacted snow, and this is important to remember about the snowfall that comes down. In Colorado, we have an arid climate. As I said earlier, our humidity averages about 37 percent. But did we know that those snow flakes, when you are out there skiing in Colorado or just walking in the snow, those snow flakes that you see, 90 to 95 percent of that snowflake is trapped air. Mr. Speaker, 90 to 95 percent of that snowflake that we see at least in Colorado is 90 to 95 percent trapped air and I think that percentage is probably very similar in Washington, D.C., or up in Connecticut, or New Jersey when it snows.

Denver, Colorado has an average snowfall of about 60 inches per year, and the snowiest season occurred in 1908 where they had 118 inches. Avalanches killed 914 people in the United States between 1990 and 1995. On an average year, on an average year, most of the avalanche deaths actually occur in my congressional district out there in Colorado, because the Third Congressional District of Colorado basically has all of the mountains of Colorado. There are some that are outside of it, but for the most part, the mountains in Colorado are in the Third Congressional District, and avalanche is a huge danger that we have to deal with. But I can tell my colleagues this in a little promotion here which I do not think it

is against the rules; I hope my colleagues ski, we have the best skiing snow in the United States. Try some of our resorts, Aspen, Vail, Steamboat, Beaver Creek, Powder Horn, Purgatory.

Let us go back to water. Water usage, this is one of the most interesting charts that I have come across in regards to water. Follow through with me when we talk about water usage. Americans are fortunate. We can turn on the faucet and get at the clean, fresh water that we need. Many of us take water for granted. Have we ever wondered how much water you use each day? Here is an idea. For the average person out there, I say to my colleagues, this will give us an idea of what the average person in America uses, the basic needs for water each day. Direct uses of water, again, this is daily, drinking and cooking, the average person uses about two gallons of water a day to drink and cook with. Flushing the toilet, between five and seven gallons per day, or excuse me, per flush, I am sorry, per flush. Washing machine, 20 gallons per load. The dishwasher, 25 gallons per load. Taking a shower, seven to nine gallons of water per minute while you are in that shower.

Now, growing foods takes most of the water. In this country, a lot of people, if you ask what consumes most water, one, they will not think of evaporation and maybe it is a misleading question, because evaporation really zaps up our biggest amount of water, but right behind it, the number one use of water in this Nation is the growing of food.

It is in agriculture. Every day in the super market we take for granted how much water is necessary to grow that food. Well, here is a good example of what is necessary. If we have one loaf of bread, by the time we grow the grain and so on and so forth to produce that one loaf of bread, we have used 150 gallons of water, 150 gallons of water. To give us an idea, I am sure many of my colleagues drink bottled water like I do. I stop at the convenience store. I am trying to get away from a pop and buy a bottle of water. Multiply, think of what you have in that container, see how many of those containers it takes to make a gallon and then multiply that times 150, and that is how much of the water you are holding in your hands is going to be required for one loaf of bread.

Mr. Speaker, one egg, one egg is 120 gallons of water; 120 gallons of water is necessary to produce 1 egg. A quart of milk, one quart of milk requires 223 gallons of water. These are numbers we cannot even imagine. If you would have given me this chart, given me just to you the right-hand side of the chart, colleagues, and ask me to fill in the gallons, I would not have even come close to these numbers. One pound of tomatoes, 125 gallons of water for a pound of tomatoes; 1 pound of oranges, 47 gallons; 1 pound of potatoes, 23 gallons of water. As we go down here, it takes more than 1,000 gallons of water to produce three balanced meals a day for one person.

□ 2215

So for every person, every one of my colleagues, if we have three balanced meals in a day, it has taken over 1,000 gallons of water to produce that food for us.

What happens to 50 glasses of water? If we had 50 glasses of water, very interesting, now, remember that evaporation is considered a portion in this, but what happens to our 50 glasses of water, if we had 50 glasses of water lined up, 44 glasses, as demonstrated right here, 44 of these glasses would be used for agriculture, for growing the food products that we eat; three glasses would be used by industry; two glasses would be used by the cities; and a half a glass would be used in the country.

I think this chart demonstrates just how critical water is. Now, obviously, we all know most of our body is made up of water, so we do not have to educate people about the importance of water. But it is interesting to just see how water interplays with everything that we do in any given day and how the circumstances of water are a lot different in the West than they are in the East.

Let us go back to Colorado. As I mentioned to my colleagues earlier, Colorado is the only State in the continental United States where all of our water flows out. We have no free-flowing water that comes into Colorado for our use. That is a very important issue here. So I thought I would point out particularly, colleagues, why in Colorado water is our lifeblood. It was written by Thomas Hornsby, the poet, and it is inscribed in our State capital that out in the West life is written in water. Life is written in water.

Here is an idea of what flows out of the State of Colorado. It gives us the average annual outflow of major rivers through 1985. So while the statistic is through 1985, it still holds pretty accurate today. Our total that we show here is about 8 million acre feet. The total of all rivers in Colorado is about 10.5 million acre feet.

We have up here, out of the South Platte, about 400,000 acre feet of water that flow out every year. We have the Republican River, about 14,000 acre feet. Over here we have the Arkansas River, which is 133,000 acre feet. Down here on the Rio Grande we have 313,000 acre feet. Over here on the Animas River we have about 663,000 acre feet. Up here on the Yampa River we have 1,500,000 acre feet. And here on the Colorado River, the river that I mentioned earlier in my remarks known as the mother of rivers, the Colorado River, earlier named by the Indians as the Red River and then later changed to the Grand River and then later Colorado, Colorado is the Spanish name for red, is 4,540,000 acre feet; 4,540,000 acre feet out of just the Colorado River.

What is interesting here are our different river basins, and I will go through those very briefly with my colleagues. We have a good map here in color that gives a pretty clear demonstration of what we call the four major river basins. We have four major basins that drain most of Colorado. All of these river basins in this State are at the apex of those 14 States which consume over half the Nation.

Lots of statistics here but, needless to say, Colorado is the critical piece of the puzzle for western water. When we take a look at that, we have four major river basins. We have the South Platte, also known as the Missouri River Basin; we have the Colorado River Basin here in the purple; here in kind of the bland green we have the Rio Grande River Basin; and over here in the lighter green we have the Arkansas River Basin.

I thought I would talk about each of these river basins. First of all, the Missouri, which is up here in the red, and that is up in what I would call the northeastern part of the State of Colorado. Its primary river in the Missouri Basin or the South Platte River Basin is the South Platte River. Now, the South Platte River drains the most populous section of the State and serves the area with the greatest concentration of irrigated agricultural lands. So the greatest concentration of irrigated agricultural lands in Colorado is up in this section of the State.

The main stem of the river flows north, then east, and meets the North Platte in southwestern Nebraska. The South Platte River, which starts here, follow my pointer here, that is the South Platte River, up into Nebraska, is 450 miles long, with 360 miles of that in the Colorado River.

Rivers east of the divide. Now, remember that we have what we call a Continental Divide which runs from Mexico to Canada. And through Colorado it basically goes, following my pointer, basically goes like this. And on the east side, rivers east of the continental divide eventually will flow to the Atlantic Ocean from Colorado. Rivers here on the west side of the Continental Divide eventually flow to the Pacific Ocean and to the Gulf of Mexico. All the way from here to the Gulf of Mexico or to the Pacific Ocean.

The Arkansas River Basin, again down here in this lighter green, begins in the central mountains near Leadville, Colorado. It flows south and east through the southern part of Colorado towards the Kansas border. The Arkansas River, this river right here which I am following here with my pointer, that river is 1,450 miles long, and 315 miles of that river are in the State of Colorado.

We move over here to the Rio Grande River. Again, back to my pointer here, that is the Rio Grande in this kind of bland green here. The Rio Grande drainage basin is located in south central Colorado and it is comparatively small, with less than 10 percent of the State's land area. The Rio Grande River is 1,887 miles long, with 180 miles in Colorado.

And now, let us talk for a moment about the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River Basin, of course, is this area that is located right here in the purple. That is the Colorado River. We can see how many rivers and tributaries come into the Colorado. There is the Gunnison, the Roaring Fork, and in that river basin we also have the Yampa River, the White River, and the Animas River, and we could continually go down, but the Colorado River, the Colorado River system, drains over one-third of the State's area.

Twenty-five million people use water out of this basin for drinking water. Twenty-five million people depend on Colorado, specifically the Colorado River Basin, which is a good portion of western Colorado, 25 million people depend on their drinking water from this area of Colorado. Less than 20 percent of the Colorado River basin lies inside Colorado. So the length of the Colorado River Basin, less than 20 percent of that Colorado River is in that basin. But 75 percent of the water, 75 percent, goes into this basin comes from the State of Colorado.

It provides clean hydropower. We have 2 million acres of agriculture in the Colorado River Basin, and the Colorado River is 1,440 miles long, with just 225 miles of it in Colorado. Although, as I said, Colorado, in that 225 miles, puts 75 percent of the water into that river.

Now, the Colorado River Basin, our native flow, basically is close to 11 million acre feet a year. There are a lot of statistics here, but let me say to my colleagues that what we have become very dependent upon, if we flip this over very briefly, or if we pretended for a moment that this was the United States of America and we divided the country in half and we were to call this the western United States and we would call that the eastern United States, the critical factor to remember about water is that geographically there are two entirely different systems.

Water in the East has many, many different dynamics than water in the West. That is why when I talk with my colleagues, when I talk with them about water issues in the West, it is so important for my colleagues to remember that the water issues my colleagues face here in the East are different. There are different dynamics, there are different geographical constraints, there are even different uses and storage of the water.

Storage in the West is absolutely critical. If these States in the western United States did not have the water storage, for example, like Lake Powell, we would be in a real hurt. We could not exist on these lands, one, if we did not divert water from the streams; and, two, if we were not able to store the water.

I just pulled out Lake Powell. I do not know, I wonder how many of my colleagues have ever been to Lake Powell. It is spectacular. In fact, Lake Powell is so large that it has more shoreline than the entire Pacific West Coast. More shoreline in Lake Powell than the entire Pacific West Coast. It is one of the primary family recreation spots in the western United States. There are not many families in the western United States that do not know about Lake Powell, but there are a lot of families in the eastern United States that are not aware of the importance of Lake Powell, not just for recreation, family recreation, but to the whole western water system, for water storage, for clean hydropower.

The dam will hold about 27 million acre feet. The surface area is about 252 square miles; about 161,000 acres. This dam is so critical for our power. It provides power for millions of people. And needless to say, in the last couple of years we have seen a serious effort by the national Sierra Club to take down Lake Powell; to drain Lake Powell. And this is an example that points out the naivete, in my opinion, and I say that with due respect, but the naivete of an organization out of Washington, D.C. which comes out to the West to dictate what is in our best interest with western water.

There are a lot of physical characteristics, some of which I have mentioned about Colorado, that are important to remember when we talk about western water. First of all, the fact that all of the water in our State runs out of the State; the fact that we have an arid State. We do not get lots of moisture year-round. Out here in the East, in an average year, there is pretty steady moisture. In the West, the primary moisture we get is in winter, and most of that moisture is in the Colorado mountains, the high Colorado Rockies. As I mentioned to my colleagues earlier, for the Colorado River, for example, 75 percent of that River Basin comes off that snow melt that we get in the high Colorado Rockies.

I mentioned earlier as well the different rivers that we have. That is why Colorado, and again we have the four major river basins, and why when we talk about water in the West, when we talk about water in this Nation, Colorado always surfaces. It is kind of a centerpoint.

Now, when this country was first formed, the Federal Government said, just because all the water in the West falls in one State does not mean that one State should own all of that water. We have to have interstate compacts. Let us create agreements between the States so that the States have a way for reasonable use of the water but they share the water as a country instead of keeping all the water as a State. And those interstate compacts, as most of my colleagues on the floor know, are critical for the use of this water.

So, for example, we do not go to war, and I can tell my colleagues that there have been plenty of so-called water wars, not the kind of wars where there are lots of deaths, although there have been deaths, but we had water wars in the past, and the interstate compacts have primarily brought peace to the region by fairly dividing up, or at least what was considered fair at the time, those water resources.

□ 2230

There are a lot of interesting facts about these Federal river compacts. For example, the Colorado River Compact, believe it or not, the country of Mexico is entitled to parts of the Colorado River. In fact, the country of Mexico is entitled to a million and a half acre feet of the surplus water, a million and a half acre feet of the Colorado River.

How did that come about? A very interesting story. In World War II, the United States and Mexico were afraid, that is right, that the Japanese were going to invade Mexico; and Mexico came to the United States and said, would you enter our country and help protect us against the Japanese? And the United States also had a concern. We did not want the Japanese on our border coming through Mexico. So we agreed to enter the country and defend Mexico.

But Mexico understood our superior bargaining power, so they said, now look, if you are going to defend our country of Mexico, you really ought to give us some water for it. So the United States agreed to give about a million and a half acre feet of water every year to Mexico.

Now there is even a dispute where that water comes from. We have under the Colorado River Compact upper States and lower States, and even the dispute is how does that get split. It is supposed to be split evenly, 7.5 million acre feet with the lower States and 7.5 million acre feet with the upper States. But the lower States at times have argued, wait a minute, it comes out of surplus water and since there is no surplus water in the lower States, it all ought to come out of the upper States.

As you can see, the water arguments are intense throughout this Nation. But tonight the purpose of my comments on speaking on water, and as I summarize, my purpose here is that I hope my colleagues in the East understand that in States in the West like Colorado and Wyoming and Montana and California and Arizona and Utah and New Mexico, that these States are unique water States, States with unique water problems.

Colorado, as I said, is right at the apex. We have got the Continental Divide where the water on the east side of the divide flows to the Atlantic Ocean and on the west side of the Divide it flows to the Pacific Ocean.

We have 25 million people that depend on the Colorado River Basin for drinking water. These are issues that should not be downplayed. You know, on the East you do not feel the pain that we have in the West with our water. But I am asking that you understand the pain and I am asking that,

before you agree with legislation and before you sign on the dotted line, for example to take down reservoirs like Lake Powell, that you have a clear understanding of the circumstances that are created when you alter the water system in the West.

In Colorado, we feel that water is for Colorado people; but we understand in Colorado that we have an obligation under the compacts to share that water. At the same time, we think there is a responsibility from neighboring States and from our fellow citizens in the eastern part of the country to understand what the unique needs are of the people of the State of Colorado.

Why multiple use and the protection of that water, whether we keep it there for minimum stream flow or whether we use it for agriculture uses that it has been well thought out over hundreds of years, 150 some years in Colorado, it has matured as we go through time.

It has matured, the uses of this water. And it should not be easily dismissed by political movement coming out of some of my colleagues on this floor.

So, in summary, I know tonight primarily the discussion has been on water. To many of you perhaps it has been somewhat boring because water is not your primary focus in Congress. But I can tell you from those of us in the West, those of us in the Rocky Mountains, water is probably the number one issue when we talk about what can we do for future generations.

So I appreciate your understanding this evening. And, in conclusion, let me tell you some phrases that we take credit for coming out of the waters in the West.

The phrase ''sold down the river.'' We do not want to be sold down the river in the West by those of us in the East. And we do not intend to sell you down the river in the East, either. We want a good cohesive partnership when it comes to water issues.

''Swallowed hook, line, and sinker.'' There are people that want you out there to swallow hook, line, and sinker that Lake Powell should be drained.

''Doesn't hold water.'' They want you to think storage does not hold water or there is a better way to do it.

''Not worth a tinker's damn.'' We think water in the West is an issue that is worth a tinker's damn.

And finally, ''fish in troubled water.'' We in the western United States will be a fish in troubled water if we do not have interests and understanding by our colleagues and our citizens in the East. It is the United States and it does require understanding between these two graphically different areas of the country as to our water issues.

ILLEGAL NARCOTICS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to come before the House again tonight to talk about the issue of illegal narcotics and its impact upon our society.

Tonight I am going to focus on a topic that I have discussed usually on Tuesday nights in the past before my colleagues and the American public, and that is the specific impact of illegal narcotics on our communities and on our population.

Tonight I will bring up again the chart that I did before, the little poster that I have had here on the floor before. And it, basically, says that drugs destroy lives, a large poster background. I think this background is fitting tonight to bring out again. It is a rather large poster. It talks about a rather large problem: drugs destroy lives.

It is a simple message, simple poster. I have had it on the floor before. We have used it in my district to demonstrate that illegal narcotics are, in fact, wreaking havoc upon young people's lives and also all Americans' lives.

Tonight I want to specifically release some data that was given to our Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources today, and that is a startling announcement and a startling revelation that, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, the drug-induced deaths exceed homicides across our land.

These are the figures that we have. Some 16,926 Americans lost their lives to drug-induced deaths in 1998. Murders in that year were 16,914, an incredible milestone in a problem that we are experiencing across the land from the East Coast to the West Coast to the Canadian border down to the Mexican border. And for the first time, again in the statistical compilation of the United States, drug-induced deaths exceed murders.

It is a sad milestone but, again, one reflected in so many communities affecting so many families and destroying so many lives.

This is indeed a sad turn of events for our Nation. And it is sad, too, that the administration under which this has occurred, the Clinton/Gore administration, has not paid attention to this problem and has tried to sweep the problem aside.

What really disturbs me as Chair of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources is the attempt in the last few weeks since I guess we are getting close to election to try to put a happy, smiling face on the problem of drug abuse and illegal narcotics misuse in this country.

There have been some staged events with the Secretary of HHS and other drug officials of this administration to try to come up with anything that puts a happy face on the problem that we face with illegal narcotics.

Unfortunately, this is probably their worst nightmare. We announced these findings today. It will be interesting to see what kind of a spin the media puts on this and also the administration.

The spin they have attempted to put on is that they are making progress. I think we have some facts tonight that dispute that.

The drug-induced mortality rates, and let me read from the National Vital Statistics Report, which is produced just within the last 60 days, talks about this total of death. It says, in 1998, again a total of 16,926 persons died of drug-induced causes in the United States. It says the category of drug-induced causes includes not only deaths from dependent and nondependent use of drugs, but it also excludes accident, homicide, and other causes indirectly related to drug use.

So the figure that we have here, this 1998 figure, which is our last record, is actually a much smaller figure than if we take into account all of the drug-related deaths in this Nation.

Now, the drug czar, Mr. Barry McCaffrey, has testified before our subcommittee that if we take all the drug-related deaths in the United States on an annual basis, we are approaching 52,000, equal to some of the worst casualty figures in any war in which we have been engaged.

This goes on to report that between 1997 and 1998, the age-adjusted death rate for drug-induced causes increased 5 percent from 5.6 deaths, now this is in 1 year, increased 5 percent from 5.6 deaths per 100,000 U.S. standard population to 5.9 percent, the highest it has been recorded since at least 1979.

The rate increased by 35 percent from 1983 to 1988, and that was back in the Reagan administration, the beginning of the Reagan administration, then declined 14 percent between 1988 and 1990, part of the Reagan administration and Bush administration; and it increased every year since 1990, beginning I guess the last part of the Bush administration. Between 1990 and 1998, the age-adjusted death rate for drug-induced causes increased by some startling 64 percent.

In 1998, the age-adjusted death rate for drug-induced causes for males was 2.3 times the rate for females and the rate for the black population was 1.4 times the rate for the white population.

And this also confirms other statistics that have been presented before our drug policy subcommittee that in fact those who are harmed the most by illegal narcotics are the minority population, including the blacks and Hispanics who are suffering right now not only from the problem of drug abuse.

But also, if we looked and examined the deaths here, we would see that the minority population is affected on a disproportionate basis.

□ 2245

In fact, during the Clinton administration, the number of drug-induced deaths has risen by approximately 45 percent in just 6 years. What is interesting, too, in these statistics that we