

HONORING MELANIE BARKER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Melanie Barker as the outgoing President of the Yosemite Gateway Association of Realtors. Ms. Barker will be recognized at the annual installation luncheon for the Yosemite Gateway Association of Realtors on November 21, 2008 in Oakhurst, California.

The Yosemite Gateway Association of Realtors (YGAOR) was first known as the Mountain Co-Op in 1998 with a group of eight volunteers. Today, the group has paid professional staff and ownership of the Association's building. YGAOR was responsible for developing one of the first computerized Multiple Listing Systems, which continues to operate with the latest technology. They work very closely with the California Association of Realtors by providing leadership at regional and statewide levels. YGAOR provides educational opportunities for members and fundraising activities that benefit local non-profit organizations and scholarship programs.

Under Ms. Barker's leadership, YGAOR had a very successful year. The 8th Annual Monster Rummage Sale was held earlier this year and raised over \$70,000, the highest since its establishment. The proceeds were donated to local non-profit charities. Over the years, the YGAOR Scholarship Golf Tournament has raised over \$84,000 for college scholarships for high school seniors from local high schools. Ms. Barker has been instrumental in the establishment of the Women's Council of Realtors. She was able to establish an "Affiliate Committee" to give the Association direct communication to the Office of the President. The committee structure within YGAOR has become stronger with her leadership by prioritizing structure and establishing goals to be discussed at biannual meetings. Ms. Barker has successfully brought the Senior Real Estate Specialist designation to the area through the efforts of the Education Committee.

With Ms. Barker's role at YGAOR, she has been a strong leader by providing a voice of optimism for local real estate. She has involved herself with many speaking engagements and editorial opportunities. Her goal was to provide a positive realtor image in the community and has accomplished this through her leadership during one of the toughest housing markets this nation has ever seen. She has been able to develop and build upon relationships with fellow realtors throughout the region and the state. She has also committed three weeks a year to further her education on the real estate industry and in turn, teach other members of YGAOR. Ms. Barker, the committee chairs and all of the volunteers have made 2008 a very successful year.

In 2008, Ms. Barker was also elected as Assistant Region 12 Chair for the California Association of Realtors and will become the Region 12 Chair in 2010. Prior to being named as President of YGAOR, she was the first Local Government Relations Chair and Government Affairs Director for YGAOR. In 2006, Ms. Barker became a California Golden R.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Melanie Barker upon her

achievements. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Ms. Barker and the Yosemite Gateway Association of Realtors many years of continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF
THOSE WHO SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES
ON MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 43—Recognizing the efforts of those who serve their communities on Martin Luther King Day. Of the many legacies left behind by this great leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of community building is one that resonates with us today.

Martin Luther King Jr. recognized that in striving toward equality, the true work begins in the neighborhoods and streets of our communities. King demonstrated power of service through his work spreading his message across the United States. We not only pause on January 19, 2009, Martin Luther King Day to remember his legacy, but we use this as a day to promote his message of service. Volunteers across this great nation are working on service projects to commemorate his vision and teachings. In addition to asking Americans to serve, President-elect Obama, Vice President-elect BIDEN, and their families will participate in service activities. President-elect Barack Obama leads by example as a former Chicago community organizer, helping people one at a time. When he calls for progress and change he asks the American people to participate in that change. Martin Luther King Day should inspire us all to participate in serving our communities throughout the year.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in commemoration and celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In addition, in the coming days and beyond, I encourage my fellow Americans to both celebrate great change that has come and strive to be the change that we need as we progress towards King's vision of the "beloved community."

COAL ASH RECLAMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY ACT OF 2009

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, years ago a coal miner from West Virginia wrote a letter to me noting that every single federal law regulating coal was penned in blood. He was referring to the fact that it took an explosion claiming 78 souls in 1968 at a mine in Farmington, West Virginia, to give rise to the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. And that it took the failure of a coal slurry impoundment at Buffalo Creek, in Logan County, West Virginia, that killed 125 people, for the Congress to finally pass the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

Just a few weeks ago, in December, a facility owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) gave way, unleashing an avalanche of coal ash sludge that covered more than 300 acres. This time Heaven intervened, and thankfully no lives were lost.

This disaster—which could have been avoided if TVA had exercised appropriate engineering and monitoring regimes at its Kingston facility in Harriman, Tennessee—was a clarion call for action. Now is the time to take that action, before any lives are lost to a similar disaster.

Simply put, there are no federal standards for coal ash impoundments. They are constructed and maintained under a patchwork of State requirements, or on a voluntary basis.

Today I am introducing legislation to impose uniform federal design, engineering, and performance standards on coal ash impoundments. These standards are aimed at ensuring the structural stability of these impoundments, and requiring adequate monitoring and inspection regimes to avoid a repeat of what happened at Kingston, Tennessee, and what almost happened just last week at another TVA facility in Alabama.

Coal ash is a byproduct of the combustion of coal at electric utility powerplants. Some of the coal ash produced is recycled, usually as construction materials like concrete, Portland cement, and wallboard. However, the majority of coal ash is deposited in impoundments, landfills, or mines.

The larger issue here is how to regulate coal ash, and, in this respect, the track record is woefully inadequate. Back in 1980, former Representative Tom Bevill of Alabama and this gentleman from West Virginia successfully offered an amendment to what became the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1980 requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine how to regulate coal ash.

I am sorry to say that after 29 years the EPA has yet to do so. Over the years, I have cajoled the agency to move forward. It came close to making a decision under the Clinton Administration, then retrenched under the Bush Administration. I called for a study by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences on this issue, which was completed in 2006. Following up on that study, last year our colleague, Rep. JIM COSTA, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Energy and Minerals Subcommittee of the Natural Resources Committee, held a hearing on coal ash. The study, and the hearing, all pointed to the pressing need for a federal regulatory regime governing the disposal of coal ash, whether in impoundments, landfills, or in mines.

I have no doubt that the Obama Administration will finally take action on this issue. In the meantime, however, the purpose of my legislation is to address the engineering aspects of the impoundments themselves.

For its part, the electric utility industry says it complies with voluntary guidelines in this matter. And some States claim they have adequate requirements. Yet, as it stands, one State might require strict standards for the construction of a coal ash pond, while the State next door largely ignores how coal ash ponds are constructed. Pennsylvania, for example, requires a solid waste permit for all surface impoundments that receive coal ash, while Illinois and Indiana are among the states that regulate surface impoundments as water