been suggested as contributing to the current mortgage market difficulties. Among these are declining home values, incentives for originators to place loan quantity over quality, and inadequate risk management of complex financial instruments. The available evidence to date, however, does not lend any support to the argument that CRA is to blame for causing the subprime loan crisis.''

Mr. Speaker, I submit the November 25, 2008, letter to Senator MENENDEZ for the RECORD.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM,
Washington, DC, November 25, 2008.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR: Thank you for your letter of October 24, 2008, requesting the Board's view on claims that the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) is to blame for the subprime meltdown and current mortgage foreclosure situation. We are aware of such claims but have not seen any empirical evidence presented to support them. Our own experience with CRA over more than 30 years and recent analysis of available data, including data on subprime loan performance, runs counter to the charge that CRA was at the root of, or otherwise contributed in any substantive way to, the current mortgage difficulties.

The CRA was enacted in 1977 in response to widespread concerns that discriminatory and often arbitrary limitations on mortgage credit availability were contributing to the deteriorating condition of America's cities, particularly lower-income neighborhoods. The law directs the four federal banking agencies to use their supervisory authority to encourage insured depository institutions—commercial banks and thrift institutions that take deposits—to help meet the credit needs of their local communities including low- and moderate-income areas. The CRA statute and regulations have always emphasized that these lending activities be ''consistent with safe and sound operation'' of the banking institutions. The Federal Reserve's own research suggests that CRA covered depository institutions have been able to lend profitably to lower-income households and communities and that the performance of these loans is comparable to other loan activity.

Further, a recent Board staff analysis of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and other data sources does not find evidence that CRA caused high default levels in the subprime market. A staff memorandum discussing the results of this analysis is included as an enclosure.

Sincerely,

BEN BERNANKE.

Enclosure.

Yet the myth is perpetuated over and over again by my Republican colleagues.

We appreciate this opportunity, the newly elected Members of the Democratic class, to give an analysis of how we got here in terms of the mortgage crisis, how the mortgage crisis has led to the bank failures in this country, how we are now here to help pick up the pieces.

We were elected in November, along with the President, to work on solutions, to quit turning a blind eye to the economic crisis in this country.

But we know, over and over again, and I certainly saw it as a State legislator, when we asked for Federal intervention in the markets, when we asked for Federal intervention when it came to foreclosures, there was only silence coming from Washington D.C.

On Thursday we have an opportunity. On Thursday we have an opportunity to pass antipredatory lending legislation that will make a difference, that will make a difference for every American family. And it is my hope that finally, in the spring of 2009, the Federal Government will step up to its responsibility and pass antipredatory lending legislation and pass a law that will be signed by this President to protect homeowners across the country.

WE MUST NOT IGNORE CONTINUING THREATS TO ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this House voted to commemorate the 61st anniversary of Israel's independence. However, even as we recognize this historic occasion, we must not ignore the continuing threats to Israel's very survival, the greatest dangers presented by the radical regime in Tehran whose leader, Mr. Ahmadinejad, has repeatedly denied the Holocaust, as all of us know, and has called for Israel to be wiped off the map.

More recently, at last month's Durban II hate-fest in Geneva, Ahmadinejad reminded us of his regime's goals when he savagely attacked Israel, stating that ''world Zionism personifies racism,'' and called Israel the ''most racist'' regime.

These are not mere idle words, Mr. Speaker. Ahmadinejad and his fellow thugs have long sought to make good on their call for Israel's elimination by sponsoring violent Islamic extremist groups and pursuing nuclear, chemical, biological and missile capabilities. In the face of such a menace to our strong, democratic ally, Israel, and to our vital interest in the Middle East, the U.S. and other responsible nations must not stand idly by. We cannot accept the prospect of an emboldened nuclear Iranian regime.

We must close loopholes in U.S. and international sanctions so as to deny the regime all remaining lifelines for their economy and compel it to abandon its destructive policies.

Further, we should realize that the existential threats to Israel, and the obstacles to peace, begin with Iran; but, sadly, they do not end there.

We must learn history's lesson that we will not achieve peace by engaging with these Islamic militant groups like the Iranian proxy, Hamas, or by recognizing a Palestinian Authority government that includes Hamas.

In standing with the Jewish state against those who seek to destroy it, we should above all do no harm. Unfortunately, proposed funding for the Palestinian Authority, the West Bank and Gaza is included in the emergency supplemental, which would be before this floor in a matter of days; and it does not meet that standard of do no harm.

It would provide, in fact, hundreds of millions of dollars of assistance in Gaza, thereby essentially providing a bailout for Hamas, enabling Hamas to divert its funds from reconstruction and put it, instead, to the purchase of arms. It would reward and bankroll a Palestinian Authority that has proven itself unwilling or unable to fulfill its responsibilities.

When considering assistance to the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Speaker, we need to judge their leaders by their words, and by their acts as well. Just last week Palestinian Authority leader Abu Mazen reiterated his refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. He said the same thing last year and the year before that, and there is no reason to think that more U.S. assistance will cause him to have a change of heart in the future.

Indeed, Abu Mazen and other senior Palestinian Authority officials have repeatedly emphasized that they do not expect Hamas or other violent Islamic groups to recognize Israel at all.

Instead, Abu Mazen bragged last year about his many years of leading and supporting violence against Israel, claiming that ''I have the honor to be the one to fire the first bullet in 1965.''

But this should come as no surprise, Mr. Speaker. In 2005, when campaigning for the leadership of the PA, he echoed Arafat and Hamas by referring to Israel as the Zionist enemy. A Palestinian transparency organization reported last month that many forms of favoritism, nepotism, misappropriation of public money and abuse of public position continued to impact many sectors of the Palestinian society.

□ 1745

If Palestinian leaders will not uphold their commitments to uproot violent extremism, to stop corruption, to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish democratic state, they should not receive 1 cent of U.S. taxpayer dollars. The proposed supplemental, however, would provide $200 million in direct cash transfers to the P.A. Let's stop this bill, Mr. Speaker. It does not do justice to the U.S. nor to Israel.

DOMESTIC ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it is great to be down here, and I am going to turn immediately to my colleague, Dr. PAUL BROUN from Georgia, to talk on the cap-and-tax, global climate change, destruction of jobs in America,

a bill that may be coming to the floor soon.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank my dear friend JOHN SHIMKUS for leading this hour, and I congratulate him on his leadership on this extremely important issue on energy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are once again trying to pass off baloney for prime rib. In the last 100-plus days, we have seen nonstimulating stimulus packages, and we are probably going to see some more, secretive bills in an ''open and transparent'' Congress, and trillion dollar commitments to fiscal responsibility. Clearly, liberals have a monopoly on the misnomer. Unfortunately, the disguises are out again today with this tax-and-cap plan.

We must not be fooled by the rhetoric. This is a $646 billion tax that will impact every American family, small business, and family farm. Family energy costs will rise by more than $3,100 a year for every family. This is an outrageous tax on every family that drives a car, buys American products, or flips on their light switch when they come home. So unless your name is Fred Flintstone or you live in a cave, you will be impacted by this tax.

Senior citizens, the poor, and the unemployed will be hit the hardest by this tax as experts agree that they spend a greater portion of their income on energy consumption. This is a time when we should be promoting policies that stimulate our economy and not tear it down. Various studies suggest that anywhere from 1.8 million to 7 million jobs will be lost by this tax-and-cap policy. Make no mistake that the Democrats' airtight cap will suffocate America's small businesses, crippling America's respiratory system, the free economy.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle will claim that this tax-and-cap will help clean up the environment; however, this doesn't seem that it is even about the environment or global warming anymore. This has turned into a revenue generator for NANCY PELOSI and HARRY REID's radical agenda, their steamroller of socialism that is being shoved down the throats of the American people, and that agenda includes socialized medicine. The tax-and-trade will be one of the largest sources of revenue for their new radical socialistic agenda. Mr. Speaker, the cat is out of the bag, and the American people see through the disguises, rhetoric and misnomers. Taxing families during an economic recession is not the only way to clean up the environment.

Fortunately for the American people, Republicans have offered an alternative to this unaffordable new energy tax that no one can afford. We believe that you can clean up the environment and keep jobs at the same time.

Our solutions include American energy produced by American workers to create American jobs. Our all-of-the-above energy plan brings us closer to energy independence, encourages greater efficiency and conservation, promotes the use of alternative fuels, and lowers gas prices.

And don't think Democrats aren't doing any back-scratching when it comes to their new energy tax. The Washington Times reported yesterday that a loophole has been tucked into this legislation written by the congressional liberals that would exempt at least one major energy company from at least one of the many onerous provisions of the Democrats' national energy tax plan, ultimately leaving hard-working families and small businesses to pick up the tab.

I encourage all the non-Fred and Wilma Flintstones in America out there to stand up and demand straightforward answers from your lawmakers about this new energy tax that is being promoted by NANCY PELOSI and company, and encourage your lawmakers instead to support an all-of-the-above energy plan that removes our dependence upon foreign oil, lowers energy costs, and will create more jobs.

I thank the gentleman for yielding. We have got to stop this tax-and-cap plan that is being promoted by the leadership of this House and Senate. It is going to kill the American economy, it is going to cost jobs, and I congratulate my dear friend from Illinois for bringing all this out and being a leader in promoting responsible energy policy for America that the American public can count upon. And I congratulate you.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague, and I appreciate him coming down. I am going to turn quickly to my colleague from Tennessee, Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN, for such time as she may consume.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his leadership on this issue and for hosting this Special Order hour. I am so pleased to come and join with you and discuss the issues that we have before us with the Democrats' national energy tax, or the cap-and-tax legislation as some call it, or cap our growth and trade our jobs, or, Mr. Speaker, many people refer to cap-and-trade as just that, because it is certainly what they are going to do.

Now, we also know that if they don't get their way on cap-and-trade, what they are talking about doing is an end run and coming back around and letting the EPA regulate CO_2 emissions under the Clean Air Act. Indeed, I have a bill, H.R. 391, that I would encourage all colleagues in this House, all Members of this House to sign on and support this bill and keep the EPA from going around against the will of the people and regulating CO_2 emissions under the Clean Air Act.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very interesting that as we are having this hour tonight and as we are looking at the logic of EPA and the logic of some of my colleagues, I wonder if we have considered that if you look at the EPA's threshold of 25,000 tons of CO_2, that would make you a major emitter, if we have considered that the EPA threatens to use that regulation against every business, every farm, every church, or every building in this country. And, of course, before the EPA gets the chance to regulate CO_2, many of our colleagues want to come in and tax it right here so that they can both regulate the air that we breathe and tax the air that we both breathe and then that we exhale.

The debate that we have before us is not about making energy cleaner; it is not about making energy more plentiful. What we would see happen from this debate is that energy would become more and more scarce, and we also would see that the cost to every family would be more and more expense.

So, here we are. We are talking about cap-and-trade; we are talking about the expense of it. And as expensive as energy costs got last year, we are not going to take any action that will make it more plentiful, we are not taking any action that would make it more readily available, we are not taking actions that are going to make it cleaner, and we are not taking actions that are going to make it more affordable. Indeed, the legislation before us would do quite the opposite.

So I join the gentleman from Illinois in being from a State, my State of Tennessee, that would be among the hardest hit by this new energy tax and by the efforts that are coming from the other side, indeed, their efforts to make energy more expensive. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have conveniently forgotten how quickly economic slowdowns follow escalating energy costs. They have forgotten how dramatically high gas prices impacted family budgets last summer. They look upon the increased use of mass transit in the wake of those energy costs as a positive development, forgetting that in many rural districts like mine in Tennessee there is no mass transit, there is no bus service that goes from Waynesboro to Adamsville to Selmer. There is no mass transit in these rural communities. And in picking winners and losers—which they do in this legislation; they pick lots of winners and decide who is going to be the losers—they are asking the American people in their bill to make a choice between very expensive energy or no energy at all. All their scheme will cap is American productivity and trade American jobs.

Now, I think, Mr. Speaker, that if you were to ask each and every Member of this House, we would all say that we believe in clean air, clean water, and clean energy. We believe in conserving our environment for future generations.

Certainly, I grew up in a household with a mother who dedicated much of her life to conservation and beautification and preservation and historic preservation efforts, so much so that in 1997 Keep America Beautiful gave her

their lifetime achievement award. We grew up doing the things that helped clean this planet, looking for ways for energy to be more affordable and more accessible.

Now, Republicans as a whole believe in that type conservation for future generations. We do not believe that you need to tax the American people out of their house and home to pay for it, a house, by the way, which under a cap-and-trade system is going to be hotter during the summer and colder during the winter.

Republicans believe that we have more alternatives than wind and solar as sources for clean, secure energy. We know that we can safely exploit American oil resources to provide for a less expensive transition to alternative fuels. We know that we can power a next-generation electricity grid with safe nuclear power that will allow for practical electric cars and reliable transmission, rather than forcing the costs of energy to explode so that Washington might fund yet another expansion of the Federal Government.

Tennesseans know that hydroelectric power is safe and reliable. It is clean. It has powered our State for two generations. What bewilders me is that these kinds of innovative solutions are discouraged under the Democrat cap-and-tax system. It reinforces my belief that this bill is more about revenue than it is about revolutionary energy.

We should be doing things to encourage our innovators. We should be doing things that will incentivize exploration and transition to new types of energy, rather than making it more expensive, making it more scarce, and cutting off energy and innovation.

Republicans have proposals for safer, cleaner, cheaper domestic energy that will conserve our resources, secure our energy sources, and expand our economy. We do it without picking losers but, rather, by inspiring that innovative spirit that has solved problem after problem after problem in this Nation. We do it without making energy more expensive and more burdensome to the family budget. We do it without making power more scarce, but by making it more abundant.

I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his leadership on this issue, and I encourage all of our colleagues to join us in making certain that we stand against cap-and-trade and also that we support H.R. 391, which will prohibit the EPA from regulating CO_2 emissions under the Clean Air Act.

□ 1800

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague for coming down and making the time. We have already had a colleague from Georgia and now from Tennessee. I'm now going to be followed by Dr. FLEMING of Louisiana, a new Member, and I think this shows the diversity of representation in this country.

I appreciate your coming down and you're free to open with your comments.

Mr. FLEMING. Well, I thank the gentleman from Illinois. I also thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for her remarks. I certainly agree with everything she has said this evening. And perhaps I have a couple more things to add.

Mr. Speaker, there are no two ways about it: this is a revenue-boosting or a net tax system by any way you look at it. The experts have looked at it, economists and energy people. I guess you could call it cap-and-trade with a little C for the ''cap'' and a big T for ''tax.'' What do I mean by that? Well, what is the cap-and-trade or what we call the ''cap-and-tax?'' Basically, it says that there are factories out there that can burn coal or emit CO_2 into the atmosphere as long as they can find somebody else by way of allotments who are perhaps under the threshold by taking that burden from them. And in the process, there is some sort of exchange of currency.

Now what kind of currency are we talking about? Well, it is estimated, at least at this point, and we don't have details as often we don't get on these things, of $646 billion of net taxation to our economy. So again, let there be no mistake about it. This is a tax.

Now, what effect will it have on us Americans? Well, first of all, we know it is going to increase unemployment because as the tax burden is put on the factories and as it is put on power plants, there will have to be a movement of factories and other things offshore or to other countries who are not part of this program. We also know that it hits the poor. And it is also going to lower the overall standard of living.

Well, here is just a couple of facts that I would like to share with you, Mr. Speaker. A recent MIT study shows that cap-and-tax will cost the average American household $3,100 a year. Now, I know there has been some controversy about this. And it is my understanding that the MIT people went back and said, we were wrong on that; it is more than $3,100.

Another study shows that we are likely to lose three to four million American jobs if this is enacted. Companies who are looking to invest in our economy will simply move overseas, as I said. There is also a debate about whether it will create a stimulus. For the last few months, we have been talking about how important stimulus is to our economy. Well, this will definitely stimulate an economy. It will stimulate other countries' economies while hurting our economy.

Now all of this perhaps would be a theoretical and perhaps a hypothetical discussion except for the fact that cap-and-trade is not really a new concept. They have had it in Europe for years. This morning I heard Dr. Gabriel Calzada talk about this. This gentleman is from Spain and an expert in this area. So what is the Spanish experience in this, Mr. Speaker? What Spain found was that for every green job that was added, and again, I'm not exactly sure what a ''green job'' is, but for every green job, there was a loss of 2.2 jobs. In the so-called ''green jobs'' it was found that 90 percent of these jobs were in the implementation or construction. And these jobs were quickly dissipated as soon as the construction was ended. So what is the current unemployment rate of Spain? Seventeen and a half percent.

Now there was also a discussion by a very interesting expert in microeconomics. Aparna Mathur is her name. And I would like to read some very interesting facts into the RECORD: ''These higher costs of production by cap-and-trade will translate to higher energy and product prices. In a paper that I co-authored with my colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute, we estimate that a cap-and-trade system, with a $15 permit price, will increase the cost of everything, from food, clothing, shoes and home furnishings by 1 percent, of gasoline 7.7 percent, electricity 12.5 percent, and natural gas 12.3 percent. Of course, as previous experience with cap-and-trade programs has shown, permit prices are likely to be extremely volatile and rising over time, and our $15 price estimate is likely to be conservative. Other studies suggest that the price could be above $50 in 2015, close to $100 in 2030 and $200 in 2050. We can safely project that our estimates will be some multiple of these higher prices.''

Now, also she points out something else, and that is this: as a percent of the total home budget for poor people, electricity is 4 percent, whereas for richer, more wealthy people, upper middle class perhaps, it is only 1 percent. Therefore, the burden to a low-income person is going to be four times that of someone of higher income. So what does this do in net effect? What it does is it hits the poor first and worst. How else does it hit the poor and how else does it hit everyone else? Well, we know that all the costs have to be passed along to the consumer. So as Dr. Mathur pointed out, we are going to see inflation in the cost of everything we do because everything we have today in terms of products, and even services to some extent, are dependent upon energy cost. And certainly it is going to create unemployment, because if this system were implemented worldwide, perhaps it would be an even playing field. But that is not the case. We know that for everything we do, we have China and India that is reversing that tremendously in terms of the impact on the environment. And while their economies are growing rapidly, ours will be diminishing related to this.

So the net effect of that, Mr. Speaker, is that if we move forward with this crazy plan, we are going to see both middle class and lower-income people hurt the worst. We are going to see an overall lowering of life styles. We are going to see ourselves less productive and less competitive around the world.

And that is going to relegate to actually a net loss in jobs.

So I call upon my colleagues in our discussion this evening—and hopefully this bill won't even come to the floor. But if it does, I ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to vote ''no'' on this wasteful bill that is really, in my opinion, just another Trojan horse, a way of generating revenue to pay for new social programs and perhaps even newer social programs that are yet to be determined.

And with that, I thank you, Mr. SHIMKUS, and I yield back to you.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Thank you, Dr. FLEMING, for joining us. Now I'm pleased to be joined by the ranking member of our Agriculture Committee from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Ranking Member GOODLATTE, thanks for joining us.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Well, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for holding this Special Order to talk about the cap-and-tax proposal that has been offered by Chairman WAXMAN of the Energy and Commerce Committee and subcommittee Chairman MARKEY of the subcommittee dealing with energy on that committee. And it concerns me greatly as it should concern all Americans.

When you look at the sources of energy that we have in our country today, this legislation is going to drive up energy costs for the average American. It is going to drive up the costs of a whole lot of other things than simply their electric bills and the cost of other energy they receive. It is also going to drive up the cost of virtually every good that they receive and a lot of services that they receive as well. It concerns me greatly.

I have served as the ranking member and previously the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. Today I serve as the ranking member on the subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee that deals with energy. And quite frankly, it is a situation where this is a solution in search of a problem. And quite frankly, the solution is going to create great problems for the American people.

What we really need to have in this country in this time of very severe economic turmoil when people are losing their jobs and the economy is suffering is we need to be looking at producing more domestic sources of energy of all kinds. And yet this legislation is going to discourage the production of most of the principal sources of energy that we utilize in our country today, including coal production and nuclear power.

The gentleman may correct me if I'm wrong, but my understanding is that nuclear power, which is completely CO_2 gas emission-free, is going to not receive any credit for the availability of electricity that is produced from this source which today produces about 20 percent of all of our electricity in the country. And it seems to me that if you're truly dedicated to solving our problems of energy sources, you would want to be encouraging increased production of all different sorts of energy.

Now nuclear power is very capital intensive. But once you have a new nuclear power plant, it is the cheapest source of electric generation that exists in the country, even far cheaper than coal as a source of energy. And yet the fact that it is CO_2-free doesn't seem to make any difference, because there are those in the environmental community who are very hostile to nuclear power production, even though we have—and countries like France which now produces more than 75 percent of its electricity from nuclear power—have addressed in new and innovative ways the waste disposal issue and other safety issues that make nuclear power very, very attractive.

And then when it comes to coal, do you know that more than half of our electricity in this country is generated by coal? It is a very, very important source of energy. And yet it is treated like the lost step-child in this legislation because no effort is really made here to help coal address the serious concerns that have been raised by some about the amount of CO_2 that is emitted from coal production. That to me does not make any sense. We are the Saudi Arabia of the world in terms of coal production. We have more coal reserves than any other country in the world. And we have tremendous capabilities in terms of long-term ability to generate cheap, low-cost power.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Would the gentleman yield on coal just for a second? I think this is an important issue, of course, for me. But a couple of recent occurrences highlight the fact that this bill really is an assault on coal. And however they try to clean it up, it is not working. Yesterday in the local paper, what did Speaker PELOSI do? She said the coal-fire power plant here in the Capitol is now switching to natural gas, that coal is gone. At a news conference briefing held last week at the United States Energy Association, FERC Chairman Wellinghoff told reporters that nuclear and coal power was too expensive. He estimated the cost of building a nuclear plant at about $7,000 per kilowatt and discouraged investors from undertaking such ventures.

So the signals are no nuclear and no coal.

Mr. GOODLATTE. So what are they going to replace it with?

Mr. SHIMKUS. They don't like coal. They don't like hydro. But don't like nuclear. But they like electricity.

Mr. GOODLATTE. They like electricity? I like electricity. You like electricity. But you have to produce it with something.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Here is the President's comments.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Seventy-five percent of our electricity—people who are paying attention to this issue should know that 75 percent of the electricity produced in our country today is produced from coal and nuclear.

Mr. SHIMKUS. And here is the President's statement during the campaign: ''What I have said is that we would put a cap-and-trade system in place that is as aggressive, if not more aggressive, than anybody else's out there. So if somebody wants to build a coal-fired power plant, they can. It is just that it will bankrupt them because they are going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that is being emitted.''

So the signals are ''no'' in a venue when the demand for electricity is going to go up by 30 percent. But we want to limit the ability to produce electricity which is why we fear the real price escalations.

I just want to tie this in with the leadership of this House in Washington and down at the White House and through the Federal agencies. They are saying ''no'' to coal and ''no'' to nuclear when we have all these challenges that face us.

□ 1815

Mr. GOODLATTE. And they have no good answer in terms of what to replace it with. Wind power and solar, two that are very commonly cited, produce just a tiny percentage of the electricity in our country today. I think wind power and solar are great and they have great potential and we should encourage more of them, but there is no way that they are going to replace our traditional sources of generating electricity any time in the near future.

So the natural result is going to be that if you write legislation that heavily penalizes other sources of energy, particularly coal, what you are going to have as a result is much higher energy costs. And it will affect people all across the country in very dramatic ways, and they will see it when they open their bill for their electricity. But they are also going to see it in ways that may surprise them in terms of the cost of goods and services and in terms of their very livelihood because many jobs will go outside of the country to other countries like Russia and China and India that have no intention of complying with the same type of a cap-and-tax system that is being proposed right here in this Congress. Therefore, they are going to have cheaper sources of energy.

China and India, right now, are building one new coal-fired power plant a week. Are they going to comply with cap-and-tax? Are they going to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions? No, they are going to dramatically increase those greenhouse gas emissions, and the end result is they will produce electricity cheaper. Therefore, they will be able to produce goods cheaper in those countries. They will be a magnet to draw jobs to those countries, to become manufacturing bases, as they are already growing to be. It is just going to get worse.

Even though China has grown so much in terms of its manufacturing in

recent years, the United States is still the world's largest manufacturing country. We are going to lose that when this bill takes effect if we don't get the American people to speak out about it and let the Members of Congress know that this kind of damaging legislation will cost jobs and raise the cost of living in this country if it is not brought to a halt.

Every source of energy that we have, whether it is coal or nuclear power or oil or natural gas or solar or wind power or geothermal or renewable biofuels, all of them have environmental issues attached to them. You can't name a one that doesn't.

Wind power has all kinds of environmental issues attached to it. People have attempted to build wind power facilities in my district and have gotten great push back on the effect about birds and bats and noise.

Solar generating facilities that have been proposed for the southwest of this country have had lawsuits brought against them to prevent them from building these solar facilities because of the impact it will have on desert vegetation and desert wildlife and so on.

Ethanol and other renewable fuels have environmental opponents to them as well.

So it seems to me that the all-of-the-above approach of the Republican Conference, of promoting the development of new sources of energy, of promoting energy conservation and efficiency, and of promoting the development of all of our sources of energy, including our traditional sources, and producing them domestically to reduce our foreign trade deficit problems and to create more jobs in this country is the way to go here. That ought to be the alternative that this Congress turns to instead of a cap-and-tax government planning scheme that stifles private sector innovation, that causes higher consumer energy prices and causes job losses and lower wages and stock devaluation.

Its potential for abuse and corruption is great. It is a windfall for certain people who didn't do anything to deserve the benefits that they will get when they suddenly find that they have something to sell or trade under this system. And it is not likely to actually reduce any emissions significantly.

This idea that somehow we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent that we can turn down the thermostat of the world when other countries are going to increase their CO_2 emissions around the world is folly. That is what this legislation is, and it has no guarantee that it will solve the global warming issue that many have focused on. Instead, we do have a guarantee that it will have a devastating impact on our economy.

I thank the gentleman for allowing me to speak during this Special Order.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate the gentleman coming down, and I would like to now recognize the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman and I am delighted to be here with Mr. SHIMKUS.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. SHIMKUS has done so much on energy for so long in the Energy and Commerce Committee and has really brought to the forefront so many innovations and ideas on how we can solve our problems, and also making sure that we do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about our national energy and environmental future. I am really worried that Congress may soon consider the cap-and-trade legislation in an attempt to move America toward a clean energy economy and decrease our reliance on foreign oil sources.

That sounds good, doesn't it, and the act in its current form will do that, but it will do much worse, and I cannot support a cap-and-trade program that will unfairly penalize small business, industry and taxpayers across the country.

A lot of my constituents get this. I would like to read a short quote from one of my constituents. The gentleman is from Darien, Illinois, and he says: ''I am writing to ask you to vote ''no'' on any cap-and-trade bill that comes up for a vote this congressional session. Cap-and-trade is a huge tax on every American who flips on a light switch or puts gas in their car. Cap-and-trade would do nothing to affect global climate change, but would harm our economy and lead to job losses and higher taxes for all Americans.''

Many estimates exist on job losses and rising electricity prices under a cap-and-trade program. One recent and very conservative estimate suggests that Illinois would lose 48,000 manufacturing jobs by 2020 and see a $1.47 per kilowatt increase in their utility bills. Illinois is 50 percent reliant on nuclear power followed by coal.

For this reason, I think with record unemployment and foreclosures, how can we ask the American people to swallow a huge cost of living increase when they are already struggling to live?

In an apparent trend, the recently passed budget resolution slashed Yucca Mountain funding. This disturbs me. It effectively signaled lack of support for expanded nuclear production, closing the window of opportunity for a waste solution. Taxpayers have already put $16 billion into this mountain to take care of our waste. So this is welcome back to the Carter years when the reprocessing plants that were built here in the United States, six of them, were shut down before they even opened. I think one opened.

Mr. Speaker, there is no silver bullet solution for the future of our national energy supply, but we would be irresponsible to incentivize emission reductions without including supply increase solutions. I think that the U.S. can lead in the environmental performance and production with this policy. I just don't believe that cap-and-trade is an appropriate means of doing that.

We need a combination of technology and increased production of nuclear renewables and fossil fuels. Each have to be a part of the long-term plan for America's energy and environmental security.

I want to focus for a moment on the nuclear. As I said, Illinois is 50 percent nuclear, 20 percent in our country, and there are a lot of permits pending out there for increased nuclear plants. But we need reprocessing to deal with the waste. If you thought of nuclear energy as a log, and you cut 3 percent off this side and 3 percent off of that side of the log, and you put that log, the 3 percent plus the 3 percent and burned it, and then take the other part of the log, which is 94 percent, and put that into the ground as waste, that is what we are doing right now. So we can really increase the capabilities of nuclear and we can reduce the toxicity and we can reduce the longevity of the radioactivity. So this is a no-brainer. I can't understand the Secretary of Energy and the administration suddenly deciding that we put a hold on the recycling process when we have worked so hard and come so far on the research to be ready to do that without nuclear proliferation.

So I think we really have to look at doubling the amount of power generated from zero emission nuclear power by 2030; and, more importantly, we need to begin nuclear fuel recycling and incentivize interim storage to get us there. Recycling reduces the volume of that, and it is clean and it is safe. And then utilizing technology to transition to a low carbon transportation system is another way we can dramatically decrease petroleum use and reduce emissions.

Lithium batteries in fuel-cell technology, like those being developed in Illinois at Argonne National Lab in my district, will transform both the auto manufacturing sector and help America recapture the domestic battery manufacturing base.

I currently serve as the co-Chair of the High Performance Building Caucus, and each month we hear from a business or an association about the technology, a service that offers a solution for improving commercial and residential building efficiency. Forty percent of the emissions in this country come from existing building infrastructure. So retrofitting existing buildings or utilizing technology in new building construction can serve a variety of things. There are so many things that we can do. We need everything to cut out the CO_2 and the other gas emissions that cause so many problems.

Illinois is almost exclusively dependent on nuclear power followed by coal, so we cannot afford the price spikes that would follow a cap-and-trade plan, especially without the increased power production.

I hope that leadership on both sides of the aisle remember to put their constituents first when it comes to considering climate legislation and allow

technology and the market to pave the way for emission reductions.

I thank the gentleman for holding this Special Order. I think it is a great benefit that we continue to discuss this issue. I hope that we can all work together to really solve this. Cap-and-trade will not do it.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague.

It is very important that we continue this discussion, this dialogue, and help inform the American public.

The reality is the 686-page bill, so it is $1 billion a page, but the reality is that there are large portions that are to be written later. Part of our challenge to really debate this bill is to call my friends out and say, okay, you promised transparency. You promised openness and regular order. What are the scores so we can figure out the winners and losers? But it is crafted behind closed doors.

In fact, I heard today that this bill will now bypass the subcommittee and hopefully go to the full committee, which is really a shame for individuals who have promised regular order to continue to disregard it.

In fact, Chairman WAXMAN, Chairman MARKEY, and Chairman Emeritus DINGELL all sent a letter making sure that this would not be done in reconciliation, and pushing for regular order. They sent a letter to President Obama.

And it is now these very same people who sent a letter begging for regular order who are not going to allow regular order to occur on this bill. That is sad because it hurts our ability to educate our constituents, our voters, and let them make a decision. And they do that every 2 years.

With that, I am pleased to be joined by a new Member from Pennsylvania, Mr. GLENN THOMPSON.

□ 1830

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Thank you, sir. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue because this is, as I was preparing to come to Congress, the fact that we had a complete lack of a national energy plan and that our energy situation we were in was just not facing us from our energy needs, but our economy and our national defense.

Mr. Speaker, I come from an energy-intensive part of the country in rural Pennsylvania. I can say that the cap-and-tax plan is nothing more than a national energy tax. The devastating impacts of creating such a program are obvious and alarming—while the benefits remain entirely unclear.

A cap-and-trade program will not just raise the price of gas at the pumps and increase our home heating and cooling bills, but it will increase the cost of all goods and services that we rely on.

The truth behind the cap-and-tax plan is that it will lead to more taxes, fewer jobs, and more government intrusion in our lives.

The President's energy plan is a $646 billion tax that will hit almost every American family, small business, and family farm. Family energy costs will rise on average by more than $3,100 a year. That makes no sense, considering the current economic crisis we find ourselves in.

Those hardest hit by this massive tax will be the poor, who, experts agree, spend a greater portion of their income on energy consumption. Cap-and-trade—cap-and-tax—amounts to, literally, a war on the poor.

In my district, many folks depend on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to make energy costs more affordable just to make ends meet. It makes zero sense to impose what are essentially new taxes on energy when we have programs like this to make it cheaper for those who need it most.

Now, we believe that there are better solutions—better solutions than more taxes and few jobs and more government intrusion. And while I strongly favor diversifying our energy portfolio and increasing our renewable sources, we have to be realistic about how we go about this.

We talk a lot about renewable energy sources, but the fact remains that wind and solar still make up less than 1 percent of our total energy consumption in needs that it meets. Even with heavy government investment and involvement, it's obvious that these sources will continue to be minor contributors in the coming decades to our energy needs. A cap-and-trade system equates to enormous new taxes on fossil fuels, which currently accounts for 85 percent of our overall energy consumption.

What do we know about the experience with cap-and-tax? Well, Spain is a country that has been identified as a success story for cap-and-trade by President Obama. Now I agree that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. That has been something I have led my life by as I have made my decisions. So what has been Spain's experience over the past 7 years with cap-and-trade?

Earlier today, at the Republican Energy Solutions hearing, we heard testimony from Dr. Gabriel Calzada Alvarez from a university in Madrid, Spain. Dr. Alvarez reported on the failure of cap-and-trade in Spain. What are the outcomes that he saw of cap-and-trade—the real past performance of cap-and-trade?

First, unemployment. There were 2.2 jobs lost for every 1 job created in Spain. For every 10 green jobs that were created, only 1 survived. The rest require continuous massive government subsidy and funding.

The second outcome we saw was unaffordable energy costs. The price of energy in Spain has gone up 31 percent during those 7 years of this grand experiment with cap-and-trade.

The third outcome has been unreliable energy. Spain's power grid system has been unreliable, with blackouts that he reported, leading some producers to move their manufacturing plants to other countries.

Dr. Alvarez reported that just last week, British Petroleum closed two solar plants in Spain, and said that the wind and solar industries are losing thousands of jobs.

Interestingly enough, a number of these manufacturers in Spain moved to our country to escape Spain's cap-and-tax. I'm absolutely confident today they may be packing their bags, getting ready to move again, along with our own United States manufacturers, because of the crushing impact and the discussions we are having of imposing this proposed cap-and-tax in our country today.

Mr. Speaker, the best predictor of future performance is past performance. The only measurable outcomes of this proposed national energy tax is, based upon past performance, higher unemployment, higher energy costs, and unreliable energy sources. Frankly, Americans deserve better.

I really appreciate the gentleman yielding time, and I appreciate your leadership on this very important and critical issue.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for joining us. I look forward to working with him as we move to defeat this, wherever we get a chance to.

Now, just for my colleagues to know, I think there are about 10 minutes remaining. I would like to now give the time to Dr. PHIL GINGREY, a colleague of mine from Georgia on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank Representative SHIMKUS for leading not just this hour, Mr. Speaker, not just this hour tonight, but he has been in a leadership role on an all-of-the-above approach to solving our energy problem and our dependence on a lot of countries that don't like us very much for our sources of oil and natural gas.

This goes back, Mr. Speaker, to the August recess of last year, where so many of us on this side of the aisle just spent literally the entire month with the lights down low and the microphones off and the C–SPAN cameras not running, but just bringing people on the floor of this House that were visiting the people's House on summer vacation and talking to them about an all-of-the-above approach to solving our energy problems.

So I thank Representative SHIMKUS for that, and my colleague from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), and Representative G.T. THOMPSON. I think about the person he replaced in Pennsylvania, a long-serving member in this body, who retired—John Peterson—and the work that he did in regard to clean coal and his efforts. Of course, that is a signature issue that Representative SHIMKUS is trying to rally us behind—clean coal technology, carbon sequestration, and things that are part of this total package of all-of-the-above.

Just real quickly let me say this. I heard Representative BIGGERT talk

about the situation in Illinois. I wasn't really aware of the dependence on nuclear for electricity in Illinois and its relationship to how much energy is generated by coal. So you have got that one-two punch in Illinois.

It's just the opposite in Georgia. It's mostly coal. Some hydro and a little bit of nuclear. We are very likely to get the next two nuclear power generators come online pretty soon at Plant Vogel in my great State of Georgia.

But there is no question that this cap-and-trade or cap-and-tax—you know, the word scheme can be a pejorative. And I honestly believe, as I stand here and tell my colleagues, that I think this is a scheme. It is a scheme to get jobs that have long ago located in the South and Southeast because of the low cost of labor, to get them back into Massachusetts or out in California. And this is the way they do it. They are not willing to cut the cost of labor, for obvious reasons, so they jack up the price of energy in the Southeast and in Illinois and other States of the breadbasket of the country and the Rust Belt.

I think if you go around your district and you talk to people, every manufacturer will tell you, ''For goodness sake, Congressman, do something about stopping this cap-and-tax situation.''

That's what we are all about here tonight. I know time is limited so I want to yield back and let some of my other colleagues have a little time. But, JOHN SHIMKUS, thank you for the opportunity. We will continue to be with you on this effort. We have got to stop this scheme.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate my colleague from Georgia. Georgia has some significant challenges on the renewable electricity standard that they are trying to cram down, which will definitely increase rates in the Southeast. We need you in the fight—and we are glad you are here.

I would now like to turn to my other colleague and friend, also from the Energy and Commerce Committee, Congressman STEVE SCALISE from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. I want to thank my friend from Illinois on his leadership on this issue as well. As my other colleague said, this is one of those big battles that happens up here in Congress not too often, but at a time when we are facing very difficult times in our economy.

We are talking about different things that we can do to get our economy back on track. But for the last few years, a lot of us have been talking about what we need to do to really achieve energy independence, to reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil, stop sending billions of dollars to countries that don't like us, but also to really promote those alternatives in our own country so that we can get to that next level of generation of new energy sources.

So this bill, this cap-and-trade energy tax, comes before us. If you look at President Obama's own budget, President Obama's budget estimates that a cap-and-trade energy tax would generate $646 billion in new taxes on American families—something that would have a devastating impact.

The National Association of Manufacturers estimates 3 million to 4 million jobs would be lost. The President's own budget director says average American families would pay thousands of dollars more on their home utility bills. So I think as people look at this, they realize this is the wrong approach.

The good news is there is a better way to do this. We filed last year the American Energy Act, a bill to actually promote a comprehensive energy plan to get energy independence in America, but to get it by using our own natural resources; to explore our oil, our natural gas, which we keep finding more reserves throughout the country. Up in Shreveport, Louisiana, we found the largest natural gas reserve in the country's history.

So we have got those natural resources in our own country. Unfortunately, a lot of policies here stop us from using them. That could create hundreds of thousands of jobs, generate billions of dollars for our economy, and then you would use that money to promote and find and explore those alternative sources of energy like wind, like solar, to get those online; to encourage more conservation, as people are already doing.

But we also need to include clean coal technology and nuclear power. Nuclear is a source that emits no carbon. And so as we have heard from some of these studies, the Spain study is a really good indicator, a country that has gone down this cap-and-trade energy tax road and has realized how devastating it is to their economy.

That study that just came out in Spain that said for every green job they created, every permanent green job, they lost over 20 full-time jobs, because even the bulk of the jobs they created were temporary jobs. So for every job they created that was a permanent job, they lost 20 jobs in their economy. And they have realized it was a failure.

America surely shouldn't go down that road. That's why we are proposing these alternatives. There is a much better way—a way that we can achieve American energy independence by promoting the alternatives and using our natural resources that we have in this country to create good jobs, keep those jobs here, promote the alternative sources of energy, and reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate my colleagues—all my colleagues—for coming down here tonight. In fact, I didn't have to spend much time, we had so many people involved. I think it shows the concern of this debate.

One of our new Members recently elected—and when you are elected out of cycle, you get a chance to get sworn in and speak here. And he actually had one of the best speeches I have ever heard. In fact, I wrote it down to a point that I wanted to highlight his comments.

He said, ''It is a humbling experience to take a job when people back home are losing theirs, and become a member of this House when people are losing theirs.''

It made me appreciate the great honor that the people of southern Illinois have bestowed on me to come here and represent them. How dare I come here and cast votes that would cause them to lose their jobs in even greater numbers. I am here to protect their jobs.

Why am I so impassioned? In the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, this mine, Peabody No. 10 in Kincaid, Illinois, closed. Twelve hundred jobs were lost in just one mine. Fourteen thousand in southern Illinois.

The Special Order before this had a lot of members from Ohio, and one of them mentioned Bob and Betty Buckeye, which I thought was cute. Ohio lost 35,000 coal mine jobs. Ohio. About 92 percent of their energy portfolio is coal.

If you follow President Obama's quotes and you follow the FERC chairman and you follow the bill, this is an assault on every State that relies on coal-fired power and the miners that get that coal from the ground.

We will have a chance to talk, debate, offer amendments to make sure that these jobs are protected, and then when my colleague makes a comment, ''it is humbling to be given a job when people are losing theirs,'' we best be about the business of protecting the jobs of our constituents.

□ 1845

And this cap-and-tax, this national energy tax, will destroy jobs; and that is what we are here to fight.

I see my colleague is here. I have 1 minute left, and I recognize the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I appreciate all the work the gentleman has done, and I know we will be doing this in the future.

Obviously, this cap-and-tax Special Order that you are talking about tonight points out the fact that we are looking at higher energy costs, what you were just talking about here, fewer jobs, and of course more government interference and intrusions into private lives. When we come to the floor next time to address this issue, I want to address the issue of ''not in my back yard,'' or NIMBY, and the fact that you are running at cross purposes here. And that is that, in order to do some of the good things that they want to do—which is to get to some alternatives, renewables, and the like—we cannot do it in the structure that is in the bill before us, or what have you, because new electricity demands will be graded, spikes in energy costs will occur, the

fact that we need new transmission lines—and I will be able to come to the floor to explain in detail how this is not already occurring because of the problems with NIMBY, the fact that people do not want to have this occur in their back yard.

I commend the gentleman on his work here. And I look forward to elaborating on this in future floor remarks.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate my colleague joining me.

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

ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HIMES). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting to sit here on the floor and listen to my colleagues deal with their talking points about climate change, carbon pollution, and what they would like to debate. Sadly, they are a little bit out of phase with what, in fact, we are facing as a Nation. Luckily, the American people understand that there is a serious problem facing us dealing with carbon pollution, and they favor action to do something about it.

The American people know that ice disappearing in our polar regions, birds migrating further and further north because of the change in the temperatures, the weather that is being disruptive with drought and extreme weather events and the consensus of the scientific community all converge. We've got a problem, and it is threatening life as we know it.

The American public is not likely to be somebody who is told by 98 doctors that their child is seriously ill and needs a specific medicine or treatment. The American public would not be inclined to go search for a single doctor that disagrees, to take a chance. If you have engineering experts who tell you that you are living in a building that is likely to collapse, you think about that seriously. And if you get a second opinion and a third opinion and a fourth opinion and a fifth opinion and they all agree that the building is likely to fall down upon you and your family or your customers, you are not likely to keep searching for that one outlier who says don't worry about it.

The public knows that we have a serious problem. There is a consensus in the scientific community that we need to do something about it. And, indeed, everything that we are talking about doing to control carbon pollution and to reduce our dependence, particularly on petroleum, but especially foreign oil, all of these are things that we should be doing anyway, even if we weren't threatened by global warming and serious disruption from the carbon pollution.

Sadly, the last hour demonstrated again that too many on the other side of the aisle have simply lost their ability to have a serious conversation about what the scientific community and the majority of the American public feel is a serious problem; indeed, maybe the greatest single threat to our way of life.

I am reminded of what happened 68 years ago in this Chamber. The world was being slowly engulfed in World War II. The Nazis had taken over most of Europe and Great Britain was at risk. The Japanese had moved throughout the South Pacific. The United States was looking at an international landscape that was increasingly more and more threatening. But 68 years ago, there were some in this Chamber—actually, a majority on the other side of the aisle—that weren't that concerned. They felt that we were still shaking off the events of a Great Depression and we couldn't afford money on a military buildup, that we shouldn't have the human resources in our military.

We were facing the expiration of the conscription, the military draft. There was a vote 68 years ago that by only one vote, 203–202, enabled us to have a military draft and have some semblance of the tools available when the inevitable happened. And on December 7, 1941, the day that President Roosevelt said before us in this Chamber would live in infamy, at least we had those tools available to be able to spring into action and fight to save our country from existential threats.

I feel very strongly that we are facing something similar today, and we are going to have too many people in this Chamber who are not going to be able to answer a question that will be posed by history 68 years from now. They are not going to be able to look their children and grandchildren in the eye 10 or 15 years from now and explain why they weren't part of a process to provide a solution to the threat of global warming.

Listen to the echoes that are still in this Chamber from our colleagues. One gentleman I like was talking about how there was a recent MIT study that showed that there was $3,100 in cost from a program of preventing carbon pollution, a cap-and-trade program. And then he acknowledged, well, there are some controversies surrounding it. Absolutely there is controversy surrounding it. But then he went on to say, well, it appears as though the number is even higher than $3,100. Absolutely false.

The author of that report, in fact, has written to the Republican leadership that has been misusing the study to say that it is wrong in so many ways he doesn't know how to count. It would be a tiny fraction of that amount, and that assumes that we are not giving things back directly from those resources to make a difference for people. It is embarrassing that people are still purposely misstating research like that, but it is typical.

Echoing in the Chamber now, there was somebody who was talking about how important it is to support Republican legislation to prevent the EPA from doing its job under the Clean Air Act to deal with carbon pollution. I find that embarrassing. For the last 8 years, the Bush administration has abrogated its responsibility under the Clean Air Act to take action. Indeed, even this Supreme Court slapped them down for dragging their feet dealing with the auto tailpipe standards. What an outrageous response. Instead of joining in an effort to work to make sure that we are meeting the challenge, instead we are going to introduce legislation to prevent the EPA from doing its job if Congress fails to act.

We heard my friend from Illinois talk about how deeply concerned he was that, under the Speaker's leadership, we have changed the Capitol Hill Power Plant that for the 14 years that I have been in Congress has been belching cold smoke into the air—one of the most serious sources of air pollution here in Washington, D.C.—somehow the fact that the Speaker has acted with legislative leadership in the Senate to solve this problem by cutting the emissions in half and using natural gas instead of coal, that somehow that is bad. Well, as somebody who lives in Washington, D.C. over a third of the time, I am glad that we are not going to be polluting the air with carbon pollution. I think it is the least we should be doing for the millions of people who live in the metropolitan area, in terms of clean air, dealing with the awful substances that are part of the emissions from coal. And to think somehow that that is wrong gives you a sense of the mindset.

The new Representative from Pennsylvania was troubled by ''a complete lack of an energy plan.'' Well, maybe he is so new to Congress that he hasn't noticed that George Bush and the Republicans have been running things here for the last 8 years and, in fact, have passed various pieces of legislation to the benefit of some of the polluting energy industries, but failed to come forward with a comprehensive energy proposal.

The notion somehow that we can't move forward in a thoughtful, comprehensive fashion to be able to design a system to reduce carbon pollution, I think, is, frankly, embarrassing. Luckily, the Democratic leadership is committed to moving forward. This is one of the top priorities of Speaker PELOSI.

We have work that is undertaken in the House Energy and Commerce Committee moving forward with draft legislation which hopefully will be moving on to us in a matter of weeks, if not days. We are poised to work with the House Ways and Means Committee as part of this partnership, and the Obama administration has set down markers and is prepared to act, either administratively or in cooperation with us, with legislation.

This country shook off the Great Depression by mobilizing the economy to fight World War II. We have an opportunity to mobilize against a threat at