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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 3, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

NATIONAL OZONE POLLUTION STANDARDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, since the Clean Air Act was enacted into law more than 40 years ago, we have seen tremendous progress in cleaning up our air and in protecting thousands of communities around the country.

Unfortunately, many Americans are still living in communities where poor air quality puts them and their loved ones' health at risk. That is why I am proud to support the EPA's new standard for ground level ozone pollution.

Whether we work outdoors or simply want our children to be able to play outside, the EPA's recent national ozone pollution standards bring us one step closer to cleaner, healthier communities for everyone to enjoy. This proposal would lower the current standard of 75 parts per billion to a standard in the range of 65 to 70 parts per billion, while taking public comments on a level as low as 60.

Despite what many of my colleagues seem to believe, successful public health protection depends on the latest scientific data, and as many Members have been so eager to point out, we are not scientists. All we can do is rely on the best data out there from experts in the field, and in this case the data is quite clear.

A significantly expanded body of scientific evidence, including more than 1,000 new studies since the last review of the standards, show that ozone can cause harmful effects to health and the environment. Health experts, epidemiologists, and numerous medical organizations have clearly stated that the existing EPA smog standard of 75 parts per billion is not adequate to protect public health, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, outdoor workers, and those with chronic medical conditions like asthma. In all, 147 million people in the U.S., almost half of the country, are breathing unhealthy air.

Earlier this year the American Lung Association's State of the Air 2014 ranked Chicago as the 14th most polluted city in the Nation for short-term particle pollution. The city also ranked 20th for most ozone-polluted and for year-round particle pollution. In fact, nearly half of all Americans live in counties where ozone or particle pollution levels make the air unhealthy to breathe.

Studies have linked breathing ozone to an increased risk of premature deaths and difficulty breathing, as well

as other serious illnesses. In the U.S. today, one child in 10 already suffers from asthma, and ozone pollution only makes things worse.

When asked what steps need to be taken to reduce the air pollution, the American Lung Association said that Federal action, including the EPA setting strong, health-based standards to limit ozone pollution, is one of the most important action steps we can take.

When we update our national ozone pollution standards, we are not only cleaning up our air but also protecting those most at risk. These changes would have a lasting and positive impact on my home State of Illinois, where 1.2 million adults and 13 percent of children suffer from smog-related asthma, well above the national average.

President Theodore Roosevelt once said, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing." Knowing the tremendous impact ozone pollution has on our environment and community health, the decision to do nothing is not a viable option.

Per usual, there are those here attacking this new proposal with claims of job loss and economic harm. According to science deniers and special interests, this proposal will cause the sky to fall. The facts, however, state otherwise.

Since 1970 we have cut harmful air pollution by almost 70 percent while the U.S. economy has more than tripled. An ozone standard in the proposed range of 65 to 70 parts per billion has public health benefits worth billions of dollars. Reducing ozone and particle pollution nationwide will avoid countless premature deaths and thousands of asthma-related emergency room visits, not to mention fewer missed school and work days.

The impact of ozone on agricultural workers is also important in its own

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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