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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR CLEAN ENERGY

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I rise today to reemphasize the economic need for the American Clean Energy and Security Act. I proudly supported the energy bill's recent passage here in the House because I know that in addition to protecting our environment and providing for greater national security, it will also control spiraling energy costs and create American clean energy jobs.

Our friends on the other side have attempted to obfuscate the issue by labeling the landmark legislation as a tax bill. They have even cited a study claiming a precise-sounding figure, and at first their mistake perhaps could be forgiven. Perhaps they simply didn't understand the study they cited.

However, Professor John Reilly of MIT, one of the authors of that very study, sent a letter to minority leader JOHN BOEHNER stating that the Republican citation was simply not correct, given the study's data.

That letter was dated April 1. Yet, our friends on the other side persist in using this inaccurate figure. Madam Speaker, I'm here to set the record straight.

Shall we talk about increasing energy prices? How about a \$700 energy increase on every American household

if we don't take action. This isn't a tax. This is the cost of doing nothing. This is more than a \$700 increase each year that has already occurred in this decade due to rising electricity and gasoline prices.

Of course, the costs could be much higher if we used last year's \$4 a gallon cost during the summer. However, even using the current price of \$2.59, the average yearly per capita increase in gasoline costs this decade has been more than \$400 per household. Excluding last year's \$4 a gallon cost, the price of a gallon of gasoline this decade has doubled—from \$1.26 a gallon in 2000, to \$2.59 currently.

Since 2000, the price of electricity in the United States increased more than 38 percent, thereby pushing the average yearly household bill from \$800 to \$1,100 a year.

We know that we send hundreds of billions of dollars each year to foreign countries to import oil. The U.S. imports roughly 9.4 million barrels of oil every day. That equates to more than \$230 billion every year—\$230 billion we could be reinvesting in our economy—creating American energy jobs—rather than sending it overseas, often to countries that view us as a meal ticket at best, or an enemy at worst.

Madam Speaker, we have also heard from the other side that the American Clean Energy and Security Act would eliminate jobs. Perhaps they don't realize that the current system of energy generation is already costing us thousands of jobs.

For instance, the U.S. Department of Labor states that employment in the mining industry will decline every year through at least 2014. This isn't recession related. This is simply an industry in decline. If we do nothing, more Americans will lose their jobs.

We know the cost of doing nothing—continuing increases in energy costs and continuing job losses—costs American families can no longer afford.

However, with the American Clean Energy and Security Act, we will create jobs—green jobs—here in America. The Act will create incentives for American companies to innovate and to expand their investment in alternative sources of energy.

Madam Speaker, we know we can generate American jobs in the renewable energy sector if we just make the investment. From 2000 to 2008, for example, the wind power industry alone—before the passage of this bill—created 35,000 jobs. Of course, wind energy still makes up only a small percentage of electricity generation—less than 1 percent.

Imagine if we could make a concerted effort for renewable energy. We could greatly expand those gains and create hundreds of thousands of American clean energy jobs.

Madam Speaker, the business community understands the importance of energy reform. Companies like eBay, Nike, Starbucks, Levi Strauss, the Gap, Symantec, and Sun Microsystems have formed the Business for Climate and Innovative Energy Policy Coalition to advocate for these clean energy jobs and for this bill. These businesses support reducing greenhouse gas pollution, establishing a renewable energy standard, and investing in job creation. They know that if we do nothing, the costs associated with continued global warming will reach \$271 billion by 2025.

America has always been the land of innovation. However, as we recently have seen in the automotive industry, we cannot rest on past laurels. There are costs to doing nothing.

I commend my colleagues in the House for the support of the bill. Together, we have made a statement that will address rising energy costs; we will wean America off its dangerous dependence on foreign oil; and we will work to avoid the catastrophic costs of global warming; and create American jobs. I hope the Senate will act swiftly.

□ 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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