safer way to transport products than trucks or other methods and the current bill increases that safety factor.

I have also been working with several of my Texas colleagues and colleagues in the southwestern United States to secure Federal approval of a project called the Longhorn Pipeline. The Longhorn Pipeline begins at Galena Park, Texas, in east Harris County in the district I represent and goes across Texas for approximately 700 miles to El Paso, Texas.

This pipeline is intended to carry refined petroleum production from Houston to southwest markets of the United States in El Paso and Midland/Odessa and hopefully beyond. After much delay, the Federal Government now seems to be willing to move forward in the process. George Frampton, chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, has recommended the EPA and the Department of Transportation to include the analysis of the Longhorn Pipeline project by finishing the environmental assessment.

The many studies and analyses conducted by the Federal Government indicate that the extensive mitigation plan supports this action. The Longhorn Mitigation Plan protects the environment and all the people along the pipeline route and is of a scope and rigor unprecedented in the pipeline industry. It includes measures designed to reduce the probability of a spill as well as measures designed to provide greater protection to the more sensitive areas, including areas where communities and drinking water could be affected.

The Longhorn Pipeline meets or exceeds current statutory, regulatory and industry standards. The pipeline would be the safest in the history of the United States. I do not make this statement lightly. For instance, the mitigation measures are adjusted along the route of the pipeline based on the sensitivity of the area. The route was divided into approximately 8,000 segments, and the relative sensitivity at each segment was determined based on factors including the proximity to population centers, drinking water supplies, and protected species habitat.

I cannot begin to understand why the Federal Government has taken this long, and to have made such a difficult process in the regulatory lag is amazing. We still have time to salvage the good intentions and still have the success that was started with this process. But we need to act now. I say we, the Federal Government. Since Longhorn filed for the pipeline conversion in 1997, two other previous crude-oil-conversion-to-refined-products pipelines are up and running. I repeat, they are up and running with not the mitigation measures that are part of this Longhorn Pipeline.

If we are interested in pipeline safety, we need to encourage pipeline companies to establish mitigation measures such as these. Working together, we can ensure that pipelines remain a viable transportation means while maintaining and improving public safety.

SERVING THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 86 years of service given to the San Diego community by the Neighborhood House Association and at the same time the 35th anniversary of Head Start, both nationwide and at this location.

Neighborhood House is a multipurpose social service agency whose goal is to improve the quality of life of the people served. It is one of the largest nonprofit organizations in San Diego, reaching more than 300,000 San Diego residents with its programs. Since Dr. Howard Carey assumed leadership as president and chief executive officer in 1972, Neighborhood House has grown from a budget of $400,000 and a staff of 35 to the current budget of approximately $50 million with 800 employees. Among the most important of the services of Neighborhood House is Head Start, and the 35th anniversary of Head Start is being recognized at a Gala 2000 event by the Neighborhood House Association on November 17, 2000.

As we all know, Head Start is the most successful federally funded program for children that has been created. It has touched the lives of tens of thousands of low-income preschool children and their families. The Neighborhood House Head Start serves 7,000 preschoolers and their families in 77 centers, the largest San Diego Head Start program. And plans are in place to provide for over 11,000 children to be reached in over 130 centers.

Mr. Speaker, Head Start and the Neighborhood House are in the business of helping people to help themselves. They strive for permanent changes, and long-term self-sufficiency is their goal. On the occasion of the Neighborhood House Association's Gala 2000, I am honored to congratulate both Head Start and the Neighborhood House for their many contributions to the children and families of San Diego.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed last night the first of the presidential debates between the candidates of the two major parties. After a great deal of wrangling, I was pleased to see that Governor Bush agreed to the debate commission's recommendations and has agreed to share the platform. I think it is important that we are now turning to issues that confront the American public. Unfortunately, sometimes with the barrage of issue ads that we see and at times conflicting claims, I can understand how the American public can be confused about what the actual truth may be in a particular area. But I will tell you in the areas that relate to the environment, there is really no excuse for confusion. The differences could not be clearer between the two political parties and the two major candidates.

We wanted to take a few minutes this afternoon to address those issues of the environment, where people stand and what difference it makes for the American public. I am honored to be joined in this discussion this afternoon by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the ranking member of the Committee on Resources, a gentleman whose legacy in terms of protecting the environment, dealing with natural resources, fighting against pollution, leadership on a wide variety of issues is unparalleled.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman very much for yielding, and I thank him for taking this time that we might have an opportunity to discuss both the environmental challenges that are presented in this election season and by this Congress and by the differences between Governor Bush and Vice President GORE.

I, as many Americans last night, was shocked when, although I guess we should not have been surprised but shocked when Governor Bush suggested that the way out of our energy crisis was to simply drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and that would in fact solve the problem.

□ 1415

As was correctly pointed out by Vice President GORE, if you simply do that, you do nothing but add a couple of months of oil supply to the total consumption of the United States, but you have done nothing on the other side, which is consumption, conservation, new technologies, all of which are necessary if we are going to use these oil resources in a wise fashion.

It is unfortunate that the first thing that Governor Bush would suggest to the American public is that we ought to, in fact, treat the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge much as we would an oil field in East Texas. There is a world of difference between those two, and perhaps Governor Bush does not understand that.

But the Arctic Wildlife Refuge is not just that. It is a refuge for wildlife, of caribou and other species, that are greatly threatened by additional development in the Arctic, and it is important that we understand that, because I think, again, as Vice President GORE pointed out, you need not destroy our environment to improve the energy situation in this country.

We know that there are all kinds of additional energy efficiencies, whether it is the insulation of our home, whether it is the improved efficiency of the generators of electricity around this country, as we are replacing old and worn out generators, whether it is the improvement of the gas mileage of our automobiles.

This Congress, the Republican Congress, has stalled year after year the consideration of improving the gas mileage of automobiles. So now where do we find ourselves? We find ourselves, essentially, where the fleet averages are going backwards to where they were in the 1970s, and now we see once again we are threatened with competition by foreign auto makers introducing hybrid cars, racing ahead on fuel cells.

We know that 70 percent of all the energy that is imported into this country is used for transportation, so to continue to waste it on the highways is a tragedy, and especially when people now are forced into paying, because of the cartel in the Middle East and the big oil companies in this country, are forced to pay in excess of $2 a gallon. I bet most Americans wish that this Republican Congress had not kept us from reviewing those mileage standards, so that if they are going to have to pay $2 a gallon, they might get 30 or 40 miles a gallon, as opposed to 19 or 20 miles per gallon.

I think it is an important distinction, because I think it highlights the rather cavalier attitude of Governor Bush toward the environment. It is out of step with the American public. It is clearly out of step with the American public's desire to protect the environment, to clean up the environment where it has been polluted, and to keep it from being polluted where it has not happened.

Clearly an overwhelming majority of Americans want to expand our National Park System and to protect the National Park System. They want to increase the public lands that are available to them and their families and their communities, whether those are neighborhood parks, city parks, regional parks or State park systems.

In the State of California, where I come from, the State park system is oversubscribed on every holiday, on every weekend, by people who want to take their families out and enjoy that kind of experience. They want to protect the farmlands in our growing communities so there will be open space, so there will be an opportunity to protect the habitat of endangered species, so that they can use open lands to buffer the dramatic growth that has taken place in so many of our suburban communities.

That is what the American public has said they want, and they have said that over and over and over again. Yet what we have seen in the agenda of the Republicans on the Committee on Resources on which I sit and in this House is to constantly attack the underlying basic national laws in this country that provide for the protection of the environment, the laws of the Clean Water Act, of the Clean Air Act, of the Superfund law, of the Endangered Species Act.

Time and again in the Committee on Resources, the gentleman does not sit on the Committee on Resources, he sits on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and I think he has some similar actions that take place there, but we see constant attempts to try to override the Endangered Species Act, to try to approve projects without the consideration of the impact on the species. Yet we know that in all of the polling data, which is an indication of the American public's attitude, that 80 percent of Americans agree that protecting land, water and wildlife and other natural resources is extremely important to them and two-thirds of them believe that the Federal Government, the Federal Government, should in fact be doing more to protect our forest resources, to protect our wilderness resources, to protect the national parks and the public lands of this Nation. In fact, they go so far as to suggest they would like the Federal Government to create more of these opportunities within our society.

The gentleman from Oregon has been a leader in trying to explain that. As the Vice President pointed out last night, this is not about having to ruin one value in America to achieve another value. We would like energy independence, we would like energy efficiency, we want to make sure that we can meet the demands of our economy, but we do not have to destroy the environment in the process.

So I thank the gentleman at this time for taking this time, and I want to yield back to him so he can participate. I see we have been joined by our colleague from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

But I want to point out that last night, to hear that that was the single strategy of Governor Bush to answer the energy question, was simply drill more, and to suggest that somehow we have not been drilling in the past, the hottest drilling area in the world is not in Russia, it is not in China, it is not in Indonesia; it is in deep water off of the coast of the Gulf Coast of the United States of America. People have been drilling here.

But it is the manner in which we have been wasting the resources. We have been wasting the resources, and we now say we are going to invade the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in some desperate attempt to achieve energy independence. We ought to achieve energy independence, and the gentleman knows more about this and I would hope he comments on this. If 70 percent of the imported oil in this country is going into transport, that tells you that maybe where you want to start thinking about the problem is with the automobile, to make it more efficient, to do some of the things the gentleman has talked about that have not come to pass, unfortunately, in this Congress, in terms of mass transit, in terms of the design of our communities, in terms of making them transportation-friendly to various options, whether they are trains or mass transit or buses or car pooling, these kinds of arrangements. Then you really send a message to the sheiks in the Middle East, if you will, who are running the cartel, that their market is not going to be as great because we are going to stop the waste of that energy.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and will ask him to yield later in this special order.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments, and I think he hit the nail right on the head. What Vice President Gore and the Democrats in Congress have been advocating is giving the American public choices. We right now have 3 or 4 percent of the world's oil reserves. We are consuming currently 25 percent.

The gentleman rightly catalogued the efforts on the part of this Congress, Republicans, to stop us from moving forward; cutting back on energy conservation, avoiding opportunities to reinstate and even study the impact of energy efficiency in vehicles across the fleet. As the gentleman points out, it goes in the wrong direction.

It is important that we give the American public choices. If the American public had realistic choices two times a week to take mass transit, to car pool, to be able to telecommute, having the opportunity, other than just being in their own car commuting by themselves, we would not have to import any oil. But, again, Governor Bush has no initiatives in this area, and our friends in Congress have been cutting back on solid initiatives that have been advanced in the past.

I appreciate the gentleman focusing on this notion of just simply drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve. This, of course, is opposed by the overwhelming majority of the American public, even in these times of scarce energy availability. They know that opening this portion is not only an environmental threat, but it just prolongs the ultimate solution that we have. It is, at most, a 6-month supply of oil, and it would take up to 10 years for us to be able to bring that oil to market. Threatening the Arctic Reserve for something that is not going to make a difference in this crisis or the next crisis is an example of a failed one-dimensional approach from Governor Bush.

We are going to talk more, because in fact that is not unlike some of the problems that he has with his own environmental legacy in Texas.

Before elaborating on that, I did want to be able to turn, if I could, to our colleague, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN), from the other Portland. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) has developed legislation, for instance, to help clean up pollution from aging power plants. He has introduced two bills to curb air pollution,

the Clean Power Plant Act and the Omnibus Mercury Emissions Reduction Act. He has been a leader as a local official, the mayor of Portland, Maine, and in his work here in Congress, not just for dealing with things like prescription drugs, but working to make sure that Americans have the quality of life that they want and they deserve.

It is my great honor to yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have to say I am pleased we are doing this special order, because watching the debate last night, there was a striking and clear difference between AL GORE and George W. Bush on these environmental issues. In fact, just to turn for a moment back to the energy issues that the gentleman and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) were discussing, if you pay attention to what has been in the news over the last several months, we had the news that the North Pole was open water, a dramatic development. The ice cap there had melted temporarily during the summer. The North Pole was no longer ice, it was water. We have also in the last few days seen news that the hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic is now as big as it has ever been. Yet when it comes to deciding how to deal with this energy crisis, the first thing out of Governor Bush's mouth is we need to do more drilling, which means we need to have more oil, burn more oil.

Though we do, as AL GORE pointed out last night, we should bring more marginal wells into production. That is a short-term solution. There is also no reason not to proceed to make sure that we are doing energy conservation, that we are doing renewable technologies. We are looking at solar and other technologies like that, and are really moving ahead on that front.

Mr. Speaker, the basic point is this: What makes good sense for an energy policy is what makes good sense for an anti-pollution policy. As the gentleman mentioned, and I want to thank him for his leadership on these issues, I do have legislation, H.R. 2980, the Clean Power Plant Act of 1999, that would bring all of these old grandfathered plants, grandfathered under the Clean Air Act and the Clean Air Act amendments, it would bring them up to new source emission standards.

Well, what does all that mean? It turns out that these old coal- and oil-fired power plants are still major polluters in this country, and they produce nitrogen oxides, which contribute to ozone depletion and produce smog; they produce sulfur dioxide, which is a component of acid rain; they produce mercury, which poisons our waters and gets into the food chain in our lakes and streams and has led to warnings in 40 States across the country that pregnant women and children should not be eating fresh water fish; and it produces the major greenhouse gas, which is carbon dioxide. In fact, 33 to 40 percent of all the man-made carbon dioxide emissions in this country come from these old coal- and oil-fired power plants.

What we need to do is, and the technology is there, this is relatively easy stuff if you have the political will to do it, what we need to do is make sure that we are taking steps toward bringing all these power plants and other industrial plants, which I will speak about in a moment, up to new source emissions standards. Let us use the latest technology. Let us have cleaner air and let us burn less fuel.

If you turn to Texas, the record there for Governor Bush is a very different record. In fact, the Texas Air Crisis Campaign has just put out a press release indicating that in the 1999 session of the Texas legislature, an effort to mandate reductions from grandfathered industrial plants in Texas was headed off when the Governor's office asked industry representatives to draft a voluntary plan in which these grandfathered facilities could come up with voluntary cleanup plans. But now the data shows that in the past year the actual reduction in pollution is three-tenths of one percent of the total emissions from the plant.

□ 1430

There is a dispute with a Texas natural resources conservation commission. They say it is all the way up to 3 percent, but they are taking into account future reductions. The bottom line is this: the record that Governor Bush has in Texas on controlling pollution is appalling. It is appalling. And the data is here for anyone who wants to look at that record.

If it is any indication of what he would do in Texas is what he would do for this country, we all have reason to be worried when it comes to the environment.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we have been joined by our colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), an admitted expert in this area. Perhaps if the gentleman would like to comment on it since this has been an area of his expertise for years.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to this discussion, and it occurred to me that if we just go back over the last 6 years, that is from the moment of which the Republican party took over the United States Congress, there has not been a discussion about what more can be done for the environment. The real issue was how can we do less?

I mean, their goal was to turn EPA from standing for the Environmental Protection Agency into Ever Polluters Ally. I mean they wanted to change Superfund so we played the polluters, rather than the polluters playing the American people for spoiling our natural resources.

And now as we hit this campaign year, the year 2000, GOP it used to stand for Grand Old Party; but now it stands for the Gas and Oil Party. They do not propose to first ensure that we have more efficient society, that we bring out the waste that exists within the United States and the world in terms of our consumption of oil. Their first idea is let us go to the most pristine part of the entire country, the Arctic natural refuge area and to begin drilling, even though they still have not even begun to tap all the rest of Alaska in terms of its oil production capacity.

It is a ruse, in other words. They take every crisis not as an opportunity to explain to America how we can use these natural resources more efficiently, but rather how can we now take the most precious part of the natural resources we have in the country, in the Arctic, in these refuge areas, and begin drilling there as well? They say, well, all we will leave is human footprints there.

I do not know why these environmentalists are concerned. But the truth is that they have left a footprint over in Prudhoe Bay, and it is a human footprint indeed; but it is an industrial footprint of despoliation of the environment in that area. There has been no real protection given to the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for bringing this issue up at this point, because I think it is central to the consideration of the American people, in terms of which direction they want our country to go in at this central point in our country's history.

I think last night we learned that the first thing the oil industry wants to do is go to the Arctic and to take this precious land and to begin the same process that they have already undertaken in Prudoe Bay, and I think that would be a historic mistake.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) talking about the shift that has taken place. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) was concerned about being able to move forward in dealing with these power plants that have not been complying with the Clean Air Act.

In Texas, they are proud of a voluntary approach. They have hundreds of these old plants that are not in compliance, and this voluntary approach has resulted in a few dozen coming into compliance. It is an abject failure, and I think it would be absolutely a disaster were that approach applied here on a national level.

Mr. Speaker, we have been joined by my colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), a leader in areas that range from bicycles to energy conservation. The gentleman from Maryland is a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means. I am privileged to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CARDIN. First, let me thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr.

BLUMENAUER) for holding this special order. I think this is an extremely important subject.

We are proud in Maryland that we believe that a good energy policy is a good environmental policy, and they go hand in hand. We are very proud of our environment. We cherish our life-style in the Chesapeake Bay and other great resources. We have great bike paths, and we have great greenways. We want to make sure that we are energy sufficient and we are not today.

I was struck last night in listening to the debate of just the dramatic difference between the two candidates on energy. It could not be more dramatically different. George Bush basically says that we can go into the pristine areas of this Nation and continue to use more and more energy and oil in this country, and we do not have a problem. Whereas AL GORE made it very clear that we do have an energy problem in this country and, yes, it means trying to obtain as much energy as we can among ourselves, particularly with alternative fuels.

But it also means good conservation and good energy practices and dealing with the energy problems that are out there so that we can conserve energy in this country and we can be more sensitive to our environment.

During these past 6 years, we in Congress have been fighting the Republican leadership, basically trying to stop some bad things from happening. We have not had the opportunity to move forward on an energy policy, because the Republican leadership has blocked it every step of the way. They are certainly in concert with George W. Bush in that regard.

In 1995, you saw the energy efficiency programs cut by 26 percent by the Republican leadership. I am sure George W. Bush would be pleased with that; the weatherization assistance cut by 50 percent.

Then in 1997, the Committee on the Budget recommended the abolishing of the Department of Energy and that energy conservation be cut by another 62 percent over 5 years. Once again, I think the Republican candidate for President would be very pleased with those suggestions, because he certainly does not believe in an aggressive Department of Energy here to try to find solutions to our energy problems, to develop alternative energy sources.

Then in 1999, the energy department proposed that we purchase an additional hundred million barrels of crude oil for our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We are 115 billion barrels short. Mr. Speaker, in the next few months, people in the Northeast, including in my district, are going to be very vulnerable to heating oil prices; and we have not done what we should have done in this body in order to help my constituents and those in the Northeast who are going to be suffering from the high costs of home heating oil.

Quite frankly, as I listened last night to the debate, it is an important reason why I hope my constituents and the voters around the Nation are very much in tune to the energy issue as we go into this fall election. There is a major difference between the two candidates.

What should we be doing? And I particularly appreciate the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) taking this special order, because he has been the leader in this Congress on livable communities. When I first came to Congress, we were working on aspects of livable communities that came to a screeching halt under this Republican leadership. The gentleman has spoken out to the fact that we want to have a better quality of life here. We do not want to sit in traffic jams all day. We do not want to waste a lot of energy and waste a lot of our useful life by sitting in a traffic jam for hours, as many times I do between Baltimore and Washington.

Once we get that high-speed rail in, we do not have that problem. We need that desperately. We do need more intelligent transportation systems. Mass transit makes sense, and we should be looking at ways to improve the livable communities agenda.

I am proud of Vice President GORE and his leadership on these issues to talk about how we want our communities to be. We, in Maryland, as the gentleman knows, have the smart growth policy. Governor Glendening has been the leader on that. It makes sense for us to develop smart growth and livable communities. It is good for energy, good for the environment, and also good for quality of life for our people.

We should be doing that. We are not doing that. We also should be talking about being more self-sufficient in energy in this Nation, and we are not talking about that because we need a comprehensive policy. The Vice President is talking about that; the governor from Texas is not.

Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the gentleman taking the time here this afternoon so that we can underscore some issues that we hope this Nation will focus on as we move into the November elections. These are extremely important subjects.

This Congress, this body, should be doing more on improving livable communities and improving our energy issues and hope that we can focus the Nation in on these issues as we move on to the campaign. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the input of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN). We have had a number of references to the debate last night. One of the more interesting debates that is going on is to listen to our Republican colleagues debate with themselves on these issues of the environment and energy.

I found it greatly amazing actually when we had the Republican Whip, TOM DELAY, barely a week ago calling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve a national security asset and concerned about somehow it being played politics with.

Yet this was the same TOM DELAY who introduced legislation a year earlier that, along with abolishing the Department of Energy, would have sold off the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, or when we hear TOM DELAY accusing the administration of playing politics with an intervention in the market that actually drove down the price. At the same time the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the Committee on International Relations, said that we welcome the President's announcement that he will release 30 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

My colleagues will recall the same day the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, was saying that he was going to look at legislation potentially that would block this release. What happened?

He spiked oil prices back up again; the next day backing away from his plan saying it is time.

Well, I appreciate my colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), for talking about the question that we have to try and deal with putting the pieces together, promoting more livable communities, giving people more choices.

Mr. Speaker, one of the leaders in Congress doing this is the gentlewoman from Orange County, California (Ms. SANCHEZ), our colleague who has lectured at Harvard, who has toured various parts of the country, and who has one of the most challenging districts in the country but has been active with her local officials, with her citizens to help them from the government sector to be able to give them more choices and more resources.

I am pleased that the gentlewoman would be willing to join us in this discussion. I yield to her.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who truly heads the livable communities task force here in the Congress, a bipartisan measure to really try to do something about planning. In the area that I represent, we have a lot of natural beauty. We have the coastline of California.

And one of the things that really concerned me last night that Governor Bush said was this whole thing about drilling in the Arctic natural wildlife refuge. Why? Because I have seen so many attacks by the Republicans here to try to drill off the shore of California, something that we as Californians really do not want.

We really want to make sure that we are not going to our natural preserves to go after oil in that manner.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to this whole issue of livable communities. The communities that I represent are pretty built out, and it really is this point about planning, planning how we do transportation, planning how we do

affordable housing, how we do the housing and job mix there, how we have urban parks, where our children go and play.

The most striking thing about Governor Bush's record in Texas, 6 years of being a governor there, and he has, the last time I checked, never visited an area along the southern border to Mexico that is called Los Colinas. This area in Texas has no planning. These are lots that are sold to individuals where there is no infrastructure. There is no sanitation. There is no water line. Nothing. No highways, no arterial highways, no local roads. Nothing. And what you get is really a shanty, not even a shanty town, but one shanty home after the other, where raw sewage is being spilled out there, where water needs to be trucked in, where people are very, very poor. There are probably about 300,000 people living in Los Colinas, this area along the border.

Mr. Speaker, a medium income of a family in a household, if you can call their house a house, is less than $8,000 a year.

□ 1445

This guy has been Governor of Texas for 6 years and he has not ever bothered to even go down and see what is in his own backyard? I have been to Las Colonias more often than Governor Bush has. If this is the Governor's idea of livable communities, his idea of planning, his idea of how we pay for infrastructure, of how we place urban parks, there are no urban parks in Las Colonias, there is nothing. It is destitute. It is a lot.

There are not even roads decent enough to make sure that children who live in a shanty in Las Colonias can get to the schools, which are probably miles away from where the children are living. This is the record? This is what he has to go on?

This is what people have to understand. America should really understand what kind of a Governor this is, someone who really does not understand about planning, about quality of life, about looking at how we raise our children, and that environment is just not how pristine something is or how we put a monument someplace, but more importantly, it is about our lives, and it is about our children's future.

I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Oregon, for giving me some time to talk about Las Colonias.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's focusing in for us on the concern that we should have in terms of what the Bush administration would represent based on what has happened in two terms now of the Governor of the State of Texas.

Texas, if it were a country, would have the world's seventh largest emission of carbon dioxide. Texas, under the leadership of Governor Bush, has now seen that Houston has now emerged as the number one city in the country in terms of pollution, air pollution, surpassing Los Angeles. We will be talking more about that.

I am privileged to have join us for a discussion of these issues the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), a valuable member of the Committee on Appropriations and someone who has been a leader in environmental protection in this Congress.

I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) very much. I thank him particularly for organizing this special order today and giving us all an opportunity to talk about an issue that is important to the gentleman, important to me, important to many of the Members of this House, and I think important to all Americans.

That is, the quality of our natural environment, and particularly the convergence of that issue with another one that is also critically important, the issue of energy, the issue of the availability and the use of energy in the United States currently, and as we foresee the availability of energy here in our country and the use of those energy resources on into the future.

The convergence of these two issues is more than coincidental. They are inextricably intertwined, the issue of protecting the environment and the issue of the way we produce energy for our critical energy needs.

I watched the debate last night, also. I heard in response to a question on the energy issue the Governor of Texas respond that he felt that it was important for us to deal with the energy issue by expanding drilling and searching for new sources of oil.

I would simply point out that that is not going to solve our energy problem. He went on to say that we ought to be drilling in the Arctic Wildlife National Refuge, and that is a place where we would obtain significant amounts of oil for our energy future.

There are two aspects of that suggestion which deserve attention; first of all, the fragility of that environment. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is in fact one of the most fragile environments on the planet. It is important for us to protect it. In fact, it is an essential obligation on our part to protect that fragile environment.

We have here a photograph which I hope the camera would take an opportunity to focus upon so that those of us here in the room, as well as people watching this, can get an idea of what the Arctic Wildlife National Refuge looks like. We can see from the presence of wildlife and the presence of these huge and dramatic mountains and also the presence of the landscape, we can get an impression of the fragility of that landscape.

It is important for us to protect fragile environments. It is also important for us to be realistic about our energy needs and where we are going to obtain the energy that we are going to need, both now and in the future.

If we were to accept the Texas Governor's, Governor Bush's, recommendation that we drill to the extent that he would like to in the Arctic Wildlife National Refuge, what would be the results of that from an energy point of view?

The results would be this. The maximum amount of oil that we could draw from the Arctic Wildlife National Refuge would supply the energy needs of the United States for approximately 6 months. So what he is suggesting is ravishing this very sensitive, critical, irreplaceable environment for a 6-months supply of energy needs in our country. Obviously, it is a very foolish notion.

Furthermore, the implication that somehow this 6-months supply of oil would in some way supply our energy needs for any significant period into the future is obviously on its face just absurd.

So it is important for us to point out the factual circumstances surrounding these issues so that the American people begin to get an understanding of what this issue is all about and the dimensions of this particular debate: a 6-months supply in exchange for the ravishing of this environment. It simply makes no sense.

On the other hand, Vice President GORE laid out in some detail an energy plan that will take us where we need to be. Any energy plan that is worthy of the name must have among its components major provisions for energy conservation. We need to conserve more energy. We are simply expending too much energy in our country. We are using it, and much of the way we use it is wasteful.

For example, we need to have CAFE standards for vehicles such as the SUVs that are finding their way increasingly on the streets and highways of America. Sometimes I get the impression that people who are driving these vehicles think they are going to be taking a trip across the Kalahari Desert instead of driving around the urban area of Washington, D.C., just as an example.

These vehicles, that get about 12 miles to a gallon, are part of the problem, frankly. They are part of the problem because they are consuming precious resources in a very flagrant and sort of careless and unthinking way.

So we need to have improved standards for our transportation needs. We need to have improved standards for appliances. We need to have improved standards for energy production facilities.

If we do that, we will find that the greatest source of new energy for the United States, both now and in the future, but particularly in the future, the greatest source of our new energy needs, will be from conservation. We will have reduced the amount of fossil fuels that we are producing and thereby extended the life of the known available fossil fuels for our future energy needs.

So energy conservation is the principal component of any rational energy

plan. In fact, it is the one absolutely essential ingredient of any energy conservation or energy provision plan. We have to conserve. We have to use our energy, the energy that is available to us, much more intelligently and much more carefully than we have in the past.

I would also like to call attention to some of the issues that the gentleman was talking about a moment ago with regard to the environmental legacy in Texas.

Let me just read them here, because I think they are very illustrative of the way in which this particular Governor has husbanded the resources of this particular State of Texas. The Governor has had two terms down there. He has had an opportunity to establish the record. Let us take a look at the record and see what it looks like.

We see first of all that Houston is ranked number one for the second year as America's smoggiest city. That is an honor that I think not many cities would like to have. Houston is the worst city in America for smog. Texas ranks number one in the number of chemicals polluting its air, and the effect of that on the people of Texas is, I am sure, not very welcome. We certainly do not want to see that kind of thing happen across the country.

Texas ranks number one for the amount of toxins released into its atmosphere; again, not an enviable record. In 1997, Texas released over 260 million, 260 million pounds of toxic pollutants into the atmosphere, the number one State in the Nation in that regard, seventh biggest. If Texas were a country, it would be the world's seventh largest national emitter of carbon dioxide; again, not an enviable record.

We have here what we are calling double trouble. Since Governor Bush took office, the number of days when Texas cities exceeded Federal ozone standards has doubled. So the record of this particular Governor with regard to his husbanding of the environment in the state of Texas is a very poor one, indeed, and one that I think we would not want to see inflicted upon the American people all across the country.

I thank the gentleman very much for the opportunity to participate in this special order on an issue that is of critical importance to the future of our country.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's contribution to this discussion. I would just make two comments before turning to another of our colleagues.

First, as bad as this Texas environmental legacy is, and it is, as the gentleman pointed out, awful, what concerns me more than anything is somehow Governor Bush's lack of urgency about this. Where is his outrage about what has happened to his State in the last 6 years that he has been Governor? Where are his initiatives to try and do something about it?

I find the lack of passion on the environment inexplicable, and it is something that I think ought to be of grave concern to every American.

I do appreciate the gentleman putting up the picture of what we are talking about with the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This, after all, was something that was recognized as a national treasure by that radical Republican Governor, Dwight Eisenhower, in 1960, when he started setting aside these unique lands for protected status, America's Serengeti.

The gentleman has pictured on that beautiful scene of the plain some of the large caribou herds, 130,000 of them, that calve and rear their young on that coastal plain, that provide subsistence to indigenous people that have a right to rely on that, and could be destroyed by the disruption of the herd.

The gentleman has pointed out, as has our colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), that this refuge is much more sensitive than Prudhoe Bay, and that the American public, we have talked about 70 percent of the American public opposes drilling here, as advocated by Governor Bush.

I find even more interesting that Alaskans, who would stand to benefit from the oil drilling, even Alaskans have a slight majority, according to the public opinion polls, that oppose drilling in this precious area. It is obviously shortsighted and dangerous. I appreciate the gentleman focusing on it for us this afternoon.

Now it is my pleasure to yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), another of the environmental champions in Congress, a woman who has perhaps one of the most challenging urban districts in urban America, the one that is keenly environmentally sensitive and concerned about livable communities.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I especially want to thank him for his great leadership on protecting the environment. It is an issue about conservation and it is an issue about health. His championship of the livable communities initiative is one that will serve our children well, and their children and their children. It is about the future. That is what elections are about, especially presidential elections.

So I was very disappointed to hear last night that Governor Bush was offering old suggestions, last century proposals, to challenges that we have into this new millennium.

Livable communities, those are two words that the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) has championed.

Community, that is what America is about: where we live, how we educate our children, where we go to work, how we get there, the air we breath, the water we drink, how we take care of our families in a community.

Described by the word ''livable,'' what could be more basic and more commonsensical than that?

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That is what this discussion is about. Vice President GORE, along with House and Senate Democrats, favor long-term solutions about our livable communities. They propose solutions which reduce our reliance on imported oil and ensure a cleaner environment by supporting investments in renewable energy and energy efficiencies.

We House Democrats support that as well. We support tax credits for producing electricity for renewable sources, expanded exploration of cleaner burning natural gas, consumer incentives to purchase energy efficient cars, trucks and homes by offering tax breaks.

In addition to investments in renewable energy, we need to expand America's transportation choices by investing in alternatives such as light rail, high-speed rail, and cleaner, safer buses and other forms of mass transit. These are real solutions that benefit the consumer and the environment and not the cycle of corporate welfare.

I think it is important to note that the Republican-led House appropriation of $650 million for energy conservation is $201 million less than the President's request and $95 million below the current year funding.

We are going backward in our funding. In fact, since 1995, Republicans have slashed funding for solar renewable and conservation programs by a total of $1.3 billion below the Clinton administration request.

I had much more to say about the Bush proposal, but he spoke for himself last night, as I say, in an old way about how we should go into the future, and I know there are other speakers here.

I just want to say that this issue about how we take up this initiative of livable communities under the leadership of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), this issue about energy and the environment are not just conservation environmental issues.

Where I live, the environment is not an issue in California. It is an ethic, it is a value. It is about our children's health. In other special orders, we can talk about environmental health and how we are impacted by the air we breathe, the water we drink, and what that means to our children's health and the rate of asthma among young children in African-American communities and breast cancer among so many women across the board in our community.

I want to on behalf of my constituents thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for his outstanding leadership on this issue and thank him for giving this opportunity to point out the difference between Vice President GORE and Governor Bush as far as the future is concerned.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I must say that I appreciate the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) tying these pieces together, because as she mentioned, under the notion of livable communities, which the Republican leadership has attempted to sort of pass off as somehow a war against the suburbs or citizens, trying to pry

citizens from their cars, she pointed out that it is, instead, a broader concept of how we tie the pieces together, how we make our families safe, healthy and more economically secure. I could not agree with the gentlewoman more.

This administration, the Clinton-Gore administration has done more than any administration in history for the Federal Government to be a better partner, whether it is the environmental ethic, as the gentlewoman from California mentioned, that is being instilled in the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, to the statements that the Vice President himself has made that indicates that, really, the best is yet to come if we have an opportunity for him to serve as President building on this legacy. I appreciate the gentlewoman's comments and her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER). There are a number of issues that impact people in urban areas. The gentleman from New York represents one of the most urbanized areas in the country and has been a champion of neighborhood livability, metropolitan livability, and Congress being a better partner.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my colleagues it was almost before I learned the name of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) that I had learned to associate him with the idea and concept of livable communities. I want to thank him for taking this time.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a community that one might think would embrace the idea of exploring any sources of energy that we can find, perhaps even including the Alaska Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I represent an area in Brooklyn and Queens that has one of the largest urban national parks in the Nation. We have come to appreciate it. It is not all that we would like it to be, but we do see it as our little corner of the national park system.

One would also think that, being from the Northeast where the demand for oil has been so difficult in that high prices have caused so much harm to many of the senior citizens and those on fixed incomes, one would think that any proposal to produce more oil might meet with favorable consideration.

But, in fact, Governor Bush's proposal last night to take one of our most beautiful natural resources and drill for a few weeks' worth of oil and do irreparable harm to our environment is not being met with very much responsiveness.

I will tell my colleagues one thing the Republicans should be credited for is the diversity of their ticket. They should be commended. The President and Vice Presidential nominees come from two completely different oil companies. I think that diversity of oil companies should not be confused with a real outlook and diverse outlook on the way we should deal with our environment.

One does not have to look very far to see how Governor Bush would serve as President. In 1997, in Texas, there was a wide-scale review of the environmental laws and the protections for consumers in that State.

So who did Governor Bush appoint to be on the panel to provide recommendations? Representatives from the oil and gas industry. They came back with proposals that might stun some in this Chamber. They said that the environmental protections in Texas should be optional for many of the largest polluters in Texas.

Well, perhaps, that is why over 230,000 Texas children are exposed to pollutants every day because there is over 295,000 tons of air pollution each year just in the 2-mile radius around schools in Texas. So it is not at all unusual to hear a proposal that would say let us soil the environment in Alaska. He has been willing to do it in his home State of Texas as well.

But this debate is not one that is just going on on the Presidential level. We here in Congress have been fighting it and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for longer than I have.

There were calls in this Chamber over and over again to reduce the amount that we fund for renewable energy. In fact, George W. Bush on September 22 said that we should spend more for energy conservation. He would not have probably voted yes on any of his Republican colleagues' budgets that pass through here because conservation programs have been funded by over $1.3 billion under the President's request since 1995.

In 1995, Republicans cut energy efficiency programs by 26 percent. For those who say we should see around the corner a little bit to see these problems coming, it is clear that that was not going on in this Chamber. If Republicans did not cut the weatherization programs in this country, over 250,000 more households today would have the benefit of those programs, reducing our dependency on oil and, frankly, energy of all kinds and increasing conservation.

Repeatedly around here we have heard calls by Republicans that say do not do anything to support domestic producers when prices are low. It was almost comical to listen to the Republicans grind their teeth and gnash their teeth and wring their hands about the release of petroleum from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Putting aside that George Bush, Sr. did a similar thing, and at the time he said it was to stabilize economic pressures, the idea that we have tried to encourage, especially those of us in the Northeast as a time when oil was inexpensive, was cheap, we did not seize the opportunity to increase the amount that we had in reserve. Why did we not do that? Because Democrats were proposing it and the Republicans were continually shooting it down.

So as we watch this debate go on on the Presidential level, we have to remember that, in each and every one of our congressional districts, this debate should be happening on a smaller level.

It is often said, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, every 4 years we hear our constituents say, ''You know what, every 4 years it seems like the candidates are getting closer and closer, and it seems like one giant party in this country. It seems like we are choosing the lesser of two evils.''

This year, even the most creative thinker cannot say that about these two candidates. They are very far apart. There are extraordinary differences. The issues that affect livable communities and choosing between having a picture like this of pristine mountains in Alaska or having an oil rig pulling into this part of the country, that is clearly what is at stake in this election. I commend the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for calling attention to it.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER) adding his voice and his concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I yield again to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, just quickly, because I want to follow on a point that the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER) made, and that is that this is not an abstract discussion. As he has pointed out and as other speakers have pointed out, when Governor Bush says that his answer is to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, that is a matter that has been proposed and has been reported out of committee by the Republicans in the United States Senate.

The reason it will not happen this year is because of the veto threat of the Clinton-Gore administration not to do it. But that is what stopped it the last couple of years. This is not something that people are thinking about later on. They are actively trying to do it. We have seen it in our committee, in the Committee on Resources.

We have seen effort after effort reported out by the Republicans in the Congress to undermine clean water, to undermine clean air, to undermine the Endangered Species Act, to undermine the Superfund Act. The reason they have not become law is because of the Clinton-Gore administration because they say they will not accept it, that they will veto those bills, and the Republicans have to back down.

Just in the bill we passed yesterday, there were over 20 damaging environmental riders on that bill. This is not abstract. That was yesterday on a vote. The reason those riders did not end up on that bill is because the President and the Vice President said they would not accept them.

Now think, now think of Washington, D.C. and we have President George W.

Bush. No threat of a veto. Agreement on this policy. What do we end up with? We end up with, like the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER) pointed out, we end up looking like Texas. We end up looking like Texas.

That is not what America wants. It is completely out of step, not with the Democrats, but with America. American people do not want this kind of environmental wrecking crew ranging across the very bedrock laws of this Nation that protect our environment, that protect our quality of life, that protect our communities, and just throwing them out because the timber industry, the mining industry, the oil industry, the chemical industry are not happy with these laws.

It does not matter if one lives in New York City, if one lives in the San Francisco Bay area or Portland or lives in Upstate New York or one lives in the South or one lives in Florida. It does not matter. If one is going to drill in the Arctic, what is it that keeps Mr. Bush from drilling off the coast of California where the citizens have said no, off the coast of Florida, off the coast of the Carolinas, where people have said no we do not want our areas spoiled. If he is prepared to go into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, what keeps him from going off the coast of Florida and California?

What keeps those places from being drilled today? The Clinton-Gore administration, because they are the ones, they are the ones that have continued to fight for those moratoriums.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I do hope that this will be an opportunity over the course of the remaining month of this election for the American public to focus keenly on these issues. I think the record is clear. I think that goals that the American public want are available to us, and I am hopeful that they will figure largely in the result next November.

H–1B VISA LEGISLATION PASSES IN DARK OF NIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, obviously we are having the opportunity to have vigorous discussions on the floor of the House. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw my colleagues' attention to the time. It is 3:15 Eastern Standard Time, and we are now engaged in what we call special orders, an opportunity to speak to our colleagues and others on very important issues.

I raise this point of time because yesterday in the dark of evening, with barely a 10-minute to 15-minute notice, it was found necessary to bring to the floor of the House a major piece of legislation disallowing any debate by the procedure of suspension which disallows debate and amendments to improve on the status of the legislation, and it passed in the dark of night with no official rollcall vote. That legislation is H–1B nonimmigrant visas.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I realize that there is a great need to deal with the necessity of employment in our high-tech industry. In fact, as I look at the cap, the number of H–1B visas that would have been allowed, 195,000, I am sure if we would have been allowed to debate this legislation, we might have seen a consensus of increasing the number.

But yesterday, our Republican majority saw fit in the dark of night to bring it up when many Members were not noticed about it. What we find that has occurred, Mr. Speaker, is that American workers go longing.

American workers are not protected by ensuring that those who come into this country have the minimum salary being paid to them so that they do not come in and be underpaid what American workers can have. There is nothing in the bill that requires employers to recruit or hire or train American workers.

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It is known that African American workers are only 11 percent of the high-tech industry, and they continue to be underemployed. There is nothing in the bill that requires the high-tech industry to file their EEO–1 forms just to ensure us that they are hiring Hispanics, African Americans and women and other minorities. There is nothing in the bill that requires employers to take constructive steps to recruit qualified American workers and to cross-train and to work with Hispanic-serving institutions and historically black colleges. There is nothing in the bill which requires the employers to comply with the Department of Labor regulations, and there is nothing in the bill that provides fairness and amnesty for certain of those who are requiring such.

But my point, Mr. Speaker, is this. This bill was worthy of a vigorous discussion. There is nothing in the bill that deals with how do we help rural Americans. Even though the economy is booming, there are certain pockets of our Nation where there is double-digit unemployment. I believe the high-tech industry has a lot to offer, so it would have been prudent for us to be on the floor of the House to tell the American worker we are not forgetting them; that as we bring in necessary immigrant workers on nonimmigrant visas from other countries that we value their contributions.

This is not an effort to start a bashing of those who serve well in this industry, but it is a disappointment to me that those of us who had other viewpoints, among the many pieces of legislation that could have been offered in amendments, we were not given the opportunity. Therefore, our constituents are left in the dark, holding the bag of unemployment because this Congress refused to discuss major legislation impacting Americans in the broadness of light.

Interestingly enough, there was a legislative, a particular initiative, that included in that the employer would undertake an obligation not to displace United States workers, obligation of petitioning employers. So there was language in another bill that did not get discussed that would require those high-tech industries to at least document that they were not displacing an American worker. Can we do any less?

And then, Mr. Speaker, I would like to cite Mr. John William Templeton, a co-convener of the Coalition for Fair Employment in Silicon Valley: ''It is asserted that the digital divide has become a convenient excuse for some firms to avoid training and hiring hispanic and black workers. Instead, these companies prefer to hire foreign workers, such as those brought in under the H–1B program, who often command lower salaries.'' That is unfair to them as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I offer my enormous disappointment and my commitment to continue working until the last day of this session to make sure that Americans as well as those who are needed by the industry are treated fairly; that our institutions of higher learning, who voluntarily want to participate in the high-tech industry, can get involved and that we can close the digital divide and ensure that those who are here, who want to be trained, our children in schools in both urban and rural areas, Mr. Speaker, can be the kind of skilled workers that will provide the employment base for the high-tech industry.

Good Evening, Mr. Speaker. I approach the debate on the H1–B visa program with a very heavy heart. Why? Because I have spent a considerable amount of time this year in my capacity as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims in trying to come up with a reasonable H–1B bill that would protect American workers and meet the needs of the business community.

I have said on numerous occasions, that I support the Hi-tech industry but I also support our American workforce. I worked very hard in the House Judiciary Committee to come up with a bill that would protect American workers, and I am saddened that the bill that passed yesterday evening falls short of that requirement. The bill that passed out of the Judiciary Committee contained provisions that compelled employers to take certain steps that would protect American workers. However, what is most glaring for me are the lack of any provisions that protect minority American workers who are grossly under represented in the High-tech industry. Nothing in the bill establishes an opportunity for the hi-tech industry to work with HBCU's and Hispanic-Serving institutions and recruit minority workers.

African Americans are especially impacted by discriminatory hiring practices in the information technology field. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the hiring of African Americans in high technology has improved only slightly during the past decade. According to a 1999 report, Silicon Ceiling: