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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. WEBSTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 20, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER 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 5, 2011, 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 each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

UNCLE SAM—THE GREAT LANDOWNER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we've heard the song:

"This land is your land;

"This land is my land;

"From California to the New York Island;

"This land was made for you and me."

But we need to understand that, in America, the greatest, largest landholder is Uncle Sam—Uncle Sam, the

great landowner. He owns 27 percent of all the land in America.

This poster here shows the holdings of Uncle Sam. All of the red in the United States, including the red in Alaska, is owned by Uncle Sam. Over 50 percent of the land in the West is owned by Uncle Sam.

Now, if we were to transfer all of these acres to the east coast, that's about the size of all of the land east of the Mississippi that is owned by Uncle Sam. Looking at it another way, let's go across the seas, to Europe. If you were to take all of the land that Uncle Sam owns and superimpose it on Europe, it would include the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Germany, and Poland. That would be how much land Uncle Sam would own if he owned that portion of Europe.

So the great landholder is none other than the Federal Government. The Federal Government owns about 27 percent of all the land in America—623 million acres.

We are now talking about how to increase the revenue for this country.

Maybe we should do something that was thought of years ago. Ronald Reagan may not have been the first, but he did mention in the 1980s that the Federal Government ought to sell some of that land to Americans to help—get this—pay down the debt. This has even been talked about in the White House. President Obama, a couple of weeks ago, discussed selling just one little 300-portion acre in Los Angeles that was worth approximately \$2 billion.

Maybe we should sell some of that.

So I introduced the American Land Act, which will do this:

It will require that the Bureau of Land Management and the Forestry Service sell a portion of their land for the next 5 years, and that will be a 26 percent decrease in total land in the United States owned by Uncle Sam. Now, bear in mind—I'm going to make

this clear—this does not include the national parks; this does not include the Fish and Wildlife Service, the marshes, the coastal plains, the environmentally sensitive areas. The Federal Government would make the decision as to what would be sold. In 2005, the landholdings of the United States, according to OMB, was worth about \$1.1 trillion. So I think, if we sold a portion of this land, it would raise revenue for the United States, approximately \$200 billion or less.

Plus, it would do other things.

It would put the land in the hands of Americans. Americans would own the land, and they would pay taxes. They could pay taxes not only to local and State governments, but when they build a business or make a business, they would bring in more Federal income tax. It will save the Federal Government the cost of maintaining ownership, and it will raise revenue and pay down the debt.

Real property in the hands of real Americans.

What a thought.

It will create productivity.

Sell American land to Americans. Let Americans own more of America.

Uncle Sam shouldn't prevent Americans from having a stake, or a share, in America. The United States owns most of the grand estate of our great country, and it's time to let more Americans own it—because this land was made for you and me.

And that's just the way it is.

THE DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHU. In less than 2 weeks, on August 2, we must raise the debt limit or the American Government will go into financial default. If we don't, it will be a disaster for the economy, and real American families will pay the price.

☐ 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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