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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. McCLINTOCK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 22, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM McCLINTOCK 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 3, 2013, 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.

THE FUTURE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. It was exciting to hear the President make climate change a major focus of his inaugural address, and appropriately so. Mr. Obama's first term provided stark evidence of the peril to the planet: record-breaking heat waves, drought, hurricanes, forest fires, disappearing polar ice, all in accord with a prediction of the climate scientists, but the effects were happening faster and more severely than predicted.

The good news is that you don't have to believe the climate scientists to reduce carbon pollution and energy waste while reasserting American global energy leadership. Even balancing the budget could be made easier with this initiative.

Congress and the administration should begin serious conversation about a broad-based carbon tax. This would give the right signals on energy sources and use. It could raise money to reduce the deficit, restore our badly damaged infrastructure, speed and finance conservation while cushioning the impact on lower-income families and small business.

There are a number of other commonsense steps that would make progress on carbon pollution and energy conservation goals much more significant. First, the EPA should stop dragging its feet, permitting old, polluting, inefficient coal plants to continue to spew forth toxic waste harming not just the environment but the health of our citizens. It's past time that the Clean Air Act should be enforced. We should make sure there are proper safeguards for the fracking technology for gas and petroleum and making sure this vast reservoir of inexpensive gas does not undercut the critical addition of renewables to our energy portfolio: solar, wind, geothermal, perhaps even tidal energy.

We need global leadership on these technologies for a balanced energy portfolio and, ultimately, to reduce our carbon footprint. At each step, we should be looking to enhance energy conservation, because the cheapest kilowatt hour is one that you don't have to generate and use.

We should have a 10-year glide path in our support of renewable energy. The wind energy industry has already signaled receptivity to phasing out its subsidy, just giving it enough time to come to scale and then stand on its own. It's such a good idea, we should do

the same thing for the petroleum industry. After 100 years, the most profitable commodity on the planet is mature and will be able to survive and even thrive without additional tax incentives.

Finally, and most important, we should have the Federal Government lead by example. The Department of Energy's management of four large power marketing agencies should be the gold standard for integrating renewables into the grid, upgrading transmission capacity, and leading on conservation. The GSA, with over 300 million square feet of Federal office space should demand that all our facilities, every square foot we lease, buy, or build, should be of the highest energy efficiency.

The Federal fleet should be on the cutting edge of fuel efficiency standards.

Finally, the Department of Defense, the largest consumer of energy in the world, needs to redouble its efforts. The Pentagon is already moving in the right direction. But it's not just about saving money in the long term; it's providing operational flexibility and reducing vulnerability from inefficient and dangerous fossil fuels. Those fuel tanker trucks in Afghanistan and Iraq might as well have had great big bull's eyes on them for terrorists. The military knows this, and we should give maximum support even in a time of gradually reducing Pentagon budgets. This will pay dividends for defense and to our family's budget if the Pentagon gets it right.

It's clear that America is ready and equal to this challenge. The President has signaled his interest and leadership. The question is whether Congress is equal to the challenge, ready with innovation, cooperation, and leadership.

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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