



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2016

No. 137

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 12, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK MEADOWS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, 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 1:50 p.m.

EPA'S REGULATIONS NEGATIVELY AFFECT JOBS AND THE RURAL COMMUNITY

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, farmers, ranchers, and foresters take great pride in the stewardship of the land. They are the original conservationists. While it may be popular among some to blame farmers and ranchers for any and every environmental concern that crops up, I know that nobody cares more for the environment than those who work the land every day. When a

farm family's livelihood depends on caring for natural resources, there is an undeniable economic incentive to adopt practices to enhance the land's long-term viability.

Unfortunately, the Obama administration has pursued an agenda seemingly absent of any recognition of the consequences for rural America and production agriculture. Obama's EPA is creating regulations that are burdensome, overreaching, and negatively affecting jobs and the rural economy.

Perhaps the most poignant example is the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' recent power grab with the waters of the U.S. rule or, as the EPA calls it, the clean water rule. I will be frank, this rule is not about clean water. Everybody wants and deserves clean water. This rule simply embodies EPA's insatiable appetite for power. When EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy testified before the House Committee on Agriculture in February, members of the committee brought forth many concerns with the WOTUS rule. Numerous times Administrator McCarthy simply brushed off their concerns with statements that were intended to assure us that farmers would have the same longstanding farming exemptions that were originally included in the Clean Water Act.

These verbal assurances give little comfort to farmers and ranchers who will face steep civil fines for any violation. While the Administrator was telling the farming community that they have nothing to fear with the new WOTUS rule, a California farmer was being prosecuted by the Justice Department for simply plowing his field.

The lawsuit brought against this producer claims that by plowing a field, which every farmer I know considers a normal farming practice, this farmer has created, get this, "mini mountain ranges" in his field. These mountain ranges are furrows from normal farming. The suit also claims that this pro-

ducer discharged a pollutant into the waters of the U.S. This so-called pollutant was the soil he was plowing. These perceived violations only came to light when an overzealous court bureaucrat just happened to be driving by the property and discovered perceived WOTUS violations on the land.

Regardless of the degree to which some deem government regulation justifiable, all regulations must be developed in a manner that is based on science and mindful of the economic consequences. This rule clearly was not. Farmers, ranchers, and foresters believe the EPA is attacking them, and it is easy to understand why.

Instead of using the EPA and Corps' preferred strategy of fear and intimidation, coupled with punitive enforcement and overreaching regulatory authority, we should be building on the successful approach taken in the 2014 farm bill and previous farm bills to protect our natural resources through voluntary incentive-based conservation programs.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

□ 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.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5257