

I know local law enforcement is really interested in doing this. But it has been a hands-off approach by some of our Federal officials who have either not wanted to put the resources together or haven't had the wherewithal to put enough of the resources together to go out and enforce on these foreign nationals doing these devastating things to our lands and the danger they cause.

What good are these Federal laws and statutes if we do not properly enforce the law to protect our public lands?

We are protecting, on one hand, again, the wrong people by inaction; and we are criminalizing normal activity, people farming, ranching, mining, et cetera. The priorities have been backwards. I hope to see a big change in that with the new direction of the new administration.

As if the environmental effects are not disturbing enough, the safety of the general public is at risk. Heavily armed drug cartels are using our National Forest to engage in large-scale illegal grow operations. You can see the haul on some of the weapons that have been taken from some of the raids that have been successfully done. This is pretty dangerous stuff.

Somewhere in the picture are people who have grenade-launching devices, if I am not mistaken.

So what kind of situation do we have going on where this kind of heavy armament is coming into our forests?

And on the other hand, law-abiding, Second Amendment-loving Americans are subject to confiscation, threatening high cost of ammunition, multitudes of anti-gun rhetoric that, again, makes you ask the questions: Who are we protecting and who are we criminalizing?

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for example, has been forced to temporarily close refuge units during hunting season to protect the public from stumbling on to an illegal grow that might be guarded heavily by these criminals with these weapons.

In 2012, the DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Report indicated more than 10,000 or more illegal firearms seized nationwide in raids. This is the people's property. The public should be able to hunt, fish, camp, recreate with their families on it as they wish, safe from this criminal activity.

Unfortunately, the number of illegal grow sites on Federal lands continues to rise at an alarming rate. Even in States that have legalized marijuana for recreational use, like California—regrettably—and Colorado, they still are doing the illegal grows in lands that are in States that have so far legalized marijuana.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, in 2016, the Pacific Southwest region saw a 52 percent increase in marijuana production on Forest Service lands compared to a previous year.

So maybe the answer hasn't been in legalizing marijuana grows. The activity is still going on. It is still a sought-

after market for those people who want to be using it.

While the statistics seem staggering, it is believed that the true number of illegal grows on Federal lands is actually much higher than that 10,000 figure, much higher than what has been documented, much higher than the 52 percent increase that we are talking about.

So with the heavy rainfall that the Western States saw this winter—thankfully, we have gotten the rain—the regions are expecting an even higher surge of illegal marijuana production on the people's public lands.

The law enforcement capabilities of the U.S. Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management are not currently equipped to handle an issue of this high magnitude. These law enforcement officers are doing what they can with the resources allotted and the permission they are allowed by their higher-ups, but we need much more additional means and support to develop a coordinated approach to enforce against these foreign nationals and others that are doing these illegal grows, despite what the public might be wanting with legalized marijuana in their own grows.

While confronting the challenges of illegal marijuana cultivation in our National Forests is a large undertaking, it is important that we face this head on. Strong enforcement needs to come from the Federal Government that is supposed to be overseeing these lands. So we are talking about scenes like this right here. This is what is allowed to happen.

That is why criminalizing people doing legal activities, such as farming, ranching, mining, what have you, for tiny, very narrow occasional violations, this is what is being fostered out there. Look at this. The trash that is allowed to happen; empty chemical containers; everything else involved in the grow; people camping up there illegally, because the Federal Government, until recently, does not seem to have an interest in enforcing against these illegal grows.

Protecting our public lands from these destructive environmental threats, making sure our National Forests are safe for the public's use, for the habitat, for the wildlife, these are of key importance. This is what the public demands that we do. It is our job to keep the public safe and the lands, as well, in good stewardship. Much more needs to be done.

The Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, they have immediate jurisdiction over these. They need to allow and partner with local law enforcement as well, who knows the lands better than anybody in Washington, D.C., ever would.

And I don't need to remind you once again that marijuana is still classified, Federally, as an illegal drug. So these States—no matter how the voters have been duped, coerced, overwhelmed with dollars at the ballot box and on cam-

paigns, this is still an illegal drug. It is an illegal activity that has been going on.

So I hope what we are hearing from the Department of Justice—they will be looking really hard at whether this is even a legal activity in States that have been legalizing marijuana, and the harmful effects it is going to have on society as this stuff gets more powerful, more potent, and more available to kids.

We have a job to do. It all starts right here: taking care of these lands, the habitat and environment for wildlife that we all care about, the habitat for people, and the water quality.

What is going to come out of here as the water runs downstream through this stuff? What is that going to mean for our streams, rivers, lakes, to the water supplies that the people draw from here, that the animals draw from here?

It is not good. So the Federal Government needs to take a stronger approach, whether it is DOJ, in concert with the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and that input from local law enforcement in local communities. This could be a very good team operation if we are allowed to do it and we aggressively go after that.

I am seeing the seeds of that in the conversations that are coming out of our agencies here in Washington, D.C. Let's push forward on that and let's hear from the American public on making this happen as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, July 3, 2017, at 11 a.m.

OATH FOR ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Under clause 13 of rule XXIII, the following Members executed the oath for access to classified information:

KAREN C. HANDEL
RALPH NORMAN

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1805. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Vice Admiral Joseph W. Rixey, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1370(c)(1); Public Law 96-513, Sec. 112 (as amended by Public Law 104-106, Sec. 502(b)); (110 Stat. 293); to the Committee on Armed Services.