

Mister Speaker, Colstrip, Montana is home to the second-largest coal plant west of the Mississippi. One boxcar-full of coal is burned every five minutes. The burning coal creates sodium, thallium, mercury, boron, aluminum and arsenic which are pumped out of the factory and into the air.

The chemicals that aren't pumped into the air are caught in the factory's scrubbers and then dumped with the coal ash into giant settling ponds. These ponds are shallow, artificial lakes of concentrated toxicity which leach this poison into wells and aquifers. The sludge flows into the surrounding towns and countryside, bubbling up against foundations and floorings, cracking the floor in Colstrip's local grocery store.

Ranchers in Eastern Montana are now suing the plant for damages; noxious water, they cite, is the only liquid that fills their wells and stock ponds. James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist, says Colstrip will cause the extinction of 400 species. But still, Colstrip burns on. Why? Because we have no national energy plan and there are currently no federally enforceable regulations specific to coal ash.

This lack of federally enforceable safeguards is exactly what led to the disaster in Tennessee, where a dam holding more than 1 billion gallons of toxic coal ash failed. The TVA disaster destroyed 300 acres, dozens of homes, killed fish and other wildlife, and poisoned the Emory and Clinch Rivers. From Tennessee to Montana, and across the nation, the story is the same: we have no national conservation plan, no national energy policy, no regulatory enforcement authority.

And, what's worse is today we're faced with a bill – H.R. 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act – which purports to “protect” citizens from taxation. In reality, this bill is a death sentence, not only to our land, air, water, animals and plants, but to humans. This bill overturns proven scientific findings that carbon pollution endangers the health of Americans. It repeals the greenhouse gas

reporting rule and removes the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to require energy efficiency at power plants and refineries.

This bill simply says that science doesn't matter. I stand here today to strongly refute that claim, and further, to protect the integrity of science. It is this science, these facts and figures that have lead hundreds of scientists to confirm that global warming is real. In fact, over 200 peer-review scientific studies have found that global warming is real and that may have contributed to it. To this day, zero peer-review stories have found otherwise.

It is this science that lead the Supreme Court, to rule that the Environmental Protection Agency does in fact have the authority to regulate greenhouse gasses. And, it is this science that lead the Congress to pass the Clean Air Act, the Act which designated the EPA as the body charged with overseeing, adapting and implementing these regulations.

In the coming months, EPA will begin regulating greenhouse gases from certain emitters for the first time. These regulations have become hugely controversial and sadly, political. These rules seek to combat man-made climate change. Man made climate change that is melting our polar ice caps, that is raising the levels of our oceans, and that is modifying our seasonal temperatures. Man made climate change that is altering the duration of our growing season that is flooding part of the worlds and causing multi-year draughts in others. Man made climate change that is allowing particulate matters to infiltrate our children's lungs, making them suffer from lifelong asthma and making us die earlier.

And still, here we are, ignoring cries from health and medical professionals who have asked us, as members of this body, to "fulfill the promise of clean, healthy air for all Americans to breathe. Support full implementation of the Clean Air Act and resist any efforts to weaken, delay or block progress toward a healthier future for all Americans." Ignoring requests from former senior military officers who wrote, just last week, that "America's dependence on oil constitutes a clear and present danger to the security and welfare of the United States". And that, "As former senior military officers, we are concerned about Congressional efforts to undermine the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory authority that is critical to reducing our dependence on oil."

Mister Speaker, we cannot afford the costs of the Energy Tax Prevention Act: lost and devastated ecosystems, lost jobs and lost lives.