

# Remarks by President Trump on America's Environmental Leadership

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East Room

3:37 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. Great to have you, and I hope you all had a truly wonderful Independence Day weekend. In spite of the heavy rain — and it was really heavy — we had a remarkable Salute to America on the National Mall. It was incredible, actually. (Applause.)

Standing on the steps of the great Lincoln Memorial and looking out at the crowds — these incredible, big, beautiful crowds, braving the weather — all the way back to the Washington Monument, we celebrated freedom in all of its magnificence while saluting our great military. It was something really special. And I will say this: It was a wonderful day for all Americans. And based on its tremendous success, we're just making the decision — and I can think we can say we've made the decision — to do it again next year, and, maybe we can say, for the foreseeable future. (Applause.)

As we celebrate our nation's founding, we're reminded once more of our profound obligation to protect America's extraordinary blessings for the next generation and many generations, frankly, to come. Among the heritage we must preserve is our country's incredible natural splendor — that is the shared obligation that brings us together today. We have some incredibly talented people that know environment and what we're doing probably better than any people on Earth.

From day one, my administration has made it a top priority to ensure that America has among the very cleanest air and cleanest water on the planet. We want the cleanest air. We want crystal-clean water, and that's what we're doing and that's what we're working on so hard.

For this afternoon's event, we are pleased to be joined by Secretary Steve Mnuchin. Steve, thank you very much. David Bernhardt — David, thank you. Secretary Wilbur Ross. Thank you, Wilbur. Secretary Alex Azar. Alex, great job. Drug prices are coming down. I see it. (Laughter.) I'm proud of you. Secretary Elaine Chao. Elaine, thank you. Administrator Andrew Wheeler. Andrew, thank you. And Chair of the Council of Environmental Quality, Mary Neumayr. Thank you, Mary. Thank you very much.

In a few moments, we'll hear an update on some of their very important work.

Also with us are Senators Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, John Barrasso. These are three great senators, I might add. Perhaps I'm a little prejudiced because I like them very much, but they're great senators. Thank you. Thank you, fellas. (Applause.) And

Congressman Bruce Westerman. And thank you, Bruce, for being here. I appreciate it very much. Thank you all for being here. (Applause.)

As the Cabinet Secretaries will tell you, from the very beginning, I have given them clear direction to focus on addressing environmental challenges so we can provide the highest quality of life to all Americans. In addition to clean air and clean water, that means being good stewards of our public lands; prioritizing cleanup of polluted lands that threaten our most vulnerable citizens, and threaten them very dearly; and implementing pro-growth policies to unlock innovation and new technologies which will improve American life and America's environment. So important.

These are incredible goals that everyone in this country should be able to rally behind and they have rallied behind. And they've re- — rallied behind in a very Republican and Democrat way. I really think that's something that is bipartisan.

For years, politicians told Americans that a strong economy and a vibrant energy sector were incompatible with a healthy environment. In other words, one thing doesn't go with the other. And that's wrong because we're proving the exact opposite.

A strong economy is vital to maintaining a healthy environment. When we innovate, produce, and grow, we're able to unleash technologies and processes that make the environment better while reshoring and, so importantly — you look at reshoring production all the way — taking it away from foreign polluters, and back to American soil.

The previous administration waged a relentless war on American energy. We can't do that. They sought to punish our workers, our producers, and manufacturers with ineffective global agreements that allowed the world's worst-polluting countries to continue their practices. These radical plans would not make the world cleaner; they would just make and put Americans out of work, and they put them out of work rapidly. They move production to foreign countries with lower standards — our companies were forced to do that, and they didn't want to do that — and they drive up the price of gas and electricity at home, and drive it to levels that are literally unaffordable.

And, by the way, that's happening to many other countries, but it's not happening here. Other countries — their pricing on electricity is so high, not even to be affordable. At our level, we are doing numbers that nobody has seen before. Nobody believes what we're doing and what we're producing electricity and other things for.

Punishing Americans is never the right way to produce a better environment or a better economy. We've rejected this failed approach, and we're seeing incredible results.

Since the election, we have created more than 6 million new jobs. Nobody would have believed that. I don't think anybody — (applause) — Kevin? Nobody. Nobody. (Applause.) If I would have said that during the campaign, it wouldn't have been a pretty picture the next day, as I read the headlines. (Laughter.) Six million new jobs.

Unemployment has reached the lowest rate in a half a century, and we have more people working today than have ever worked in the history of our country. We're getting very close to 160 million people, which is unthinkable. If you go back three years and you said "160 million people," they would say, "unthinkable."

We're unlocking American energy, and the United States is now a net exporter of clean, affordable, American natural gas. We're exporting all over the world. (Applause.)

And today, the United States is ranked — listen to this — number one in the world for access to clean drinking water — ranked number one in the world. (Applause.)

One of the main messages of air pollution — particulate matter — is six times lower here than the global average. So we hear so much about some countries and what everyone is doing. We're six times lower than the average. That's a tremendous number.

Since 2000, our nation's energy-related carbon emissions have declined more than any other country on Earth. Think of that. Emissions are projected to drop in 2019 and 2020. We're doing a very tough job and not everybody knows it, and that's one of the reasons we're here today to speak to you.

Every single one of the signatories to the Paris Climate Accord lags behind America in overall emissions reductions. Who would think that is possible?

For this reason, in my first year in office, I withdrew the United States from the unfair, ineffective, and very, very expensive Paris Climate Accord. (Applause.) Thank you. Thank you.

My administration is now revising the past administration's misguided regulations to better protect the environment and to protect our American workers, so importantly.

As an example, there is a very good place for solar energy. I'm a believer in solar energy. It hasn't fully developed. It's got a long way to go, but it's really got a tremendous future.

The United States does not have to sacrifice our own jobs to lead the world on the environment. My administration set the new global standard for environmental protections with unprecedented provisions in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, commonly referred to as the "USMCA," which includes the first-ever provisions to take on the challenge of marine litter and debris.

And I'm sure you've all seen, by watching television, by maybe reading about it — it's a tremendous problem: Thousands and thousands of tons of this debris float onto our shores after it's dumped into the oceans by other countries. The tides come to us. Usually, that was a good thing, but this isn't so good. This is a tremendous problem. Thousands and thousands of tons of garbage comes to us.

While we're focused on practical solutions, more than 100 Democrats in Congress now support the so-called Green New Deal. Their plan is estimated to cost our economy nearly \$100 trillion — a number unthinkable; a number not affordable even in the best of times. If you go 150 years from now and we've had great success, that's not a number that's even thought to be affordable. It'll kill millions of jobs, it'll crush the dreams of the poorest Americans, and disproportionately harm minority communities.

I will not stand for it. We will defend the environment, but we will also defend American sovereignty, American prosperity, and we will defend American jobs. (Applause.)

We've refocused the EPA back on its core mission, and, last year, the agency completed more Superfund hazardous waste clean-ups than any year of the previous administrations and set records in almost every year. We have done tremendous work on Superfunds.

To name just two examples, we've made great strides cleaning up damage near a paper plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan — something that was beyond fix-up. They thought it was never going to happen. And also, the West Lake Landfill in Missouri.

This year, we've also directed \$65 million in Brownfields grants to clean up even more contaminated sites in 149 American communities. Think of that — the vast majority home to lower-income citizens. That is some project. (Applause.) That is some project.

And for the first time in nearly 30 years, we're in the process of strengthening national drinking water standards to protect vulnerable children from lead and copper exposure — something that has not been done, and we're doing it. And last month, our EPA took the first major action in nearly two decades to reduce exposure to lead-contaminated dust.

I signed America's Water Infrastructure Act, along with these great gentlemen right here. We worked very hard on that — very, very hard — and it wasn't easy, to further approve and improve drinking water infrastructure and support other critical projects.

Our administration has directed over half a billion dollars to fix Lake Okeechobee — the Herbert Hoover Dike. I was out there three months ago with your new, great governor — and senator, actually — from Florida. We had our two senators. We had Rick Scott and Marco Rubio, and our great, new governor, Ron DeSantis. We were all out and we made a certain commitment, and the commitment has already taken place, and they're fixing Lake Okeechobee. People are very happy about it in the Florida Everglades. We're restoring the ecosystems in the Everglades.

And I also signed legislation authorizing \$100 million to fight red tide — a big problem that some people don't know about but, when you do know about it, that means trouble because it is bad — and other toxic algae that damages coastal areas. It's causing tremendous havoc, and we have a way of straightening it out, and we'll get it done.

We're joined today by Bruce Hrobak, owner of Billy Bones Bait 'N Tackle in Port St. Lucie — a place I know very well — Florida. His business was devastated by toxic algae from Lake Okeechobee.

Bruce, please come up and tell us about what's happened and what we're doing for you. Where is Bruce? (Applause.) Bruce. Hi, Bruce. Please.

MR. HROBAK: I really appreciate it, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

MR. HROBAK: Hello. How are you all today? All right, we have made a big trip up here to make sure we're here. This is very important. This is my family's business, okay? I've owned the Bait 'N Tackle store since 2001 and been in Florida since 2006.

I have my son Tanner over here with me. He means the world to me. He is my best friend and my son. He's actually a brain cancer survivor. You know, he beat it and now he's 21, and — (applause) — thank you. Thank you.

I wanted to say — thank you. I wanted to say that, Mr. President, you're not only doing a tremendous job all the way around, but you jumping into this environment brings my heart to warmth, knowing that what you're doing is going — is the truth. It's going wonderfully.

My business in 2018 was so horrible, we — I own two stores — we closed several days a week because of, you know, the algae and people being frightened, if they were afraid to touch the water and everything. I have a marine mechanic — I just wanted to say really quickly — has a bad infection in his arm from the marine algae and stuff.

But basically, your completion of this Herbert Hoover Dike is going to make a tremendous difference because we can store more water in Lake Okeechobee; safely store it there so the residents that are around there are safe. We care and we're are concerned about them — us, on the coast. Believe me. And that the water does not go into the Caloosahatchee and to the St. Lucie estuary. It's full of contaminants [sic] — contaminants and fertilizers.

And, Mr. President, you mentioned about the red tide. It is a natural occurrence. This fertilizer and all these contaminants is like a super power. And we have seen devastation on the west coast like none other before, in 2018.

So, I mean, I'm just so grateful for all the work you're doing, sir, and everything. And the Everglades restoration. And also, I heard great news that the dike is going to be finished much sooner — '22 than — 2022 — than expected.

So I personally want to thank you because this year they're not dumping; our businesses are doing better. My wife don't yell at me as much. (Laughter.) Well, that always happens.

So, you know, she says to me, "You're going to be by the President talking." And I says, "Oh, I don't need no list or whatever. I've got a big mouth. I talk. I don't care. I'm proud." (Laughter.) I'm proud of who I am, and what I am.

I'm a licensed charter boat captain, and I've done it since 25 — since I'm 25 years old. And I just want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you for everything you are doing, sir. I speak for so many people. You are — you bring my heart to warmth for everything you're doing, and all the way around. (Applause.)

And, sir, my nephew — thank you all. My nephew Kenny Hrobak is like my son. He is in South Korea, right now, in the Army. And he's doing things. And he is so proud of you, and those boys. They all just — I've never seen people that are so proud of our President. And I just — I'm amazed.

I mean, we stayed up to watch you that day when you got elected. We were like, "He's got it! He's got it!" (Laughter.) So — I'm sorry, I'm telling the truth. (Applause.)

Listen, my dad taught me — my dad taught me, "Don't tell no lies." And when you want me to shut up, I will. But I'm telling the truth. And dad always say — he looked a little like Donald Trump; he did a little bit. But you're much handsomer. (Laughter.) Thank you. Thank you very much, sir. (Applause.)

I worked in the towers over there (inaudible). I really appreciate it. Thank you, sir. You have no idea how many people appreciate everything you've done. I mean it. Thank you so much.

THE PRESIDENT: That's really nice . I appreciate it.

MR. HROBAK: I appreciate it.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

MR. HROBAK: And I want to say one final thing. I've got a big mouth. (Laughter.) God bless America and God bless our President! Give him a hand. (Applause.) Trump 2020.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bruce. Wow. Well, that was unexpected. We appreciate it, Bruce. (Laughter.) That's better than any speechwriter I could get, right? (Laughter.) Who am I going to get like that? I appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. HROBAK: (Inaudible.) (Off-mic.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Bruce.

Earlier this year, I also signed the Save Our Seas Act to protect our oceans from waste and pollution.

To improve water access worldwide, we're supporting the development of breakthrough technologies with the Department of Energy's Water Security Grand Challenge.

My administration is strongly promoting bipartisan solutions for conservation. And we're really getting along very well with the Democrats on that one. We're getting things done.

This year, I signed the largest public lands package in a decade, designating 1.3 million acres — that's a lot of land — of new wilderness and expanding recreational access.

In December, I signed a historic executive order promoting much more active forest management to prevent catastrophic wildfires like those that recently devastated California and Oregon. (Applause.)

I went to the fires in California and I said, "It's also management." It's a lot of things happening, but it's management. You can't have dirty floors. You can't have 20 years of leaves and fallen trees. After the first 17 months, they say the tree is like a piece of tinder. You have to be very careful. So you can't have that. That's why you have so many fires.

And I will say this: Spoke with the Governor of California, spoke with many people, and the process of cleaning is now really taking precedent. It — a lot of people are looking at forest management. It's a word that people didn't understand last year. Now they're getting it. And you don't have to have any forest fires. It's interesting.

I spoke to certain countries, and they said, "Sir, we're a forest nation." I never thought of a country — well-known countries: "We're a forest nation." I never heard of the term "forest nation." They live in forests and they don't have problems.

One was telling me that his trees are much more susceptible to fire than what they have in California, but they don't have fires because they manage, they clean, they do what you have to do. There's not so much to burn. And we're going to start doing that. And it's called, remember, "management." It's called "forest management." So it's a very important term.

When I went to California, they sort of scoffed at me for the first two weeks and maybe three weeks, and not so much — four weeks. (Laughter.) And after about five weeks they said, "You know, he's right. He's right."

So I think you're going to see a lot of good things. It's a lot of area. It's a lot of land. But a lot of tremendous things are happening.

We're joined today by Colleen Roberts, a County Commissioner from Jackson County, Oregon. Colleen, please come up and tell us a little bit about your approach on forest management and all of the community work you've done. It's been so successful. Please. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

MS. ROBERTS: So, I want to thank our President Trump and your administration, sir, for this opportunity — this great opportunity to be here today and speak on this very important issue and in support of your executive order to reduce the hazardous fuel loads in our federal forests.

Jackson County, the county I am from — southern Oregon — has — comprises about 50 percent of federal lands to be managed by our federal agencies. And previous administrations have allowed these lands to be mismanaged, and thus are burdened with the heavy fuel loads.

Wildland fire policies also allowing management objectives to be attained through prescribed burning during our fire season is flawed. Our board has studied and successfully shared information with neighboring counties and NACo, the National Association of Counties, in an effort to achieve wildland fire policy changes.

We've suffered through years of hazardous wildfire conditions, enduring toxic smoke events for the past two years that endured not just for a day but three and four months on end. And it has adversely affected the health of our residents and our economy.

Fuels reduction, through the executive order that our President has put forth, and fire policies can work together for healthy forests and public lands that our citizens deserve.

In all of this and more, you, President Trump, have become a friend and the biggest ally to the counties in this great country. And I'm here to say "thank you" and support you. Thank you so much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colleen.

And I also spoke with the governor of California about helping out with the earthquakes. And we'll be doing that. We'll — we're working very closely in California with the various representatives. And we're making a lot of progress. That was something — that was a long time — a lot of shock, lot of shake. And we are helping out. And so we're working with government.

And all across the nation, our policies are ensuring that extreme agendas do not stand in the way of responsible use of public lands. We're getting Washington bureaucrats off of their backs, and we want to make sure that they go out and help our hunters, and our fishers, and farmers, and everyone. And they want to do it. They're going to do it and they want to do it — everybody that enjoys and really loves the great outdoors.

In the proud tradition of conservation that the Republican Party inherits from Teddy Roosevelt, we will preserve this land for our magnificent people. That's what we're doing; we're preserving our land. We're making our land better and cleaner and safer.

Now I'd like to invite Administrator Andrew Wheeler up. He's at the EPA. He's doing a fantastic job. And he's keeping America clean, and we appreciate it very much. Andrew, please come up. (Applause.)

ADMINISTRATOR WHEELER: Thank you, President Trump, for your leadership and the opportunity to share our environmental progress with the American public. When you asked me to take the lead at EPA one year ago, you asked me to do three things:

continue to clean up the air, continue to clean up the water, and continue to provide regulatory relief to keep the economy growing.

The President knows we can do all three at the same time. And here's the evidence: From 1970 to 2018, U.S. criteria air pollution fell 74 percent, while the economy grew by 275 percent. Under your administration, emissions of all the criteria air pollutants continue to decline. For example — (applause) — yes.

For example, the lead and sulfur dioxide have dropped by double-digit percentages over the last two years. Today, we have the cleanest air on record and we are a global leader for access to clean drinking water.

We're making tremendous environmental progress under President Trump, and the public needs to know that. Pollution is on the decline, and our focus is to accelerate its decline, particularly in the most at-risk communities.

There may be no better example than our renewed focus on Superfund — the federal program that cleans up large, hazardous sites. In the past, it wasn't unusual for a site to sit on the "Superfund: National Priorities List" for decades. We believe that a site on the National Priorities List should be just that: a national priority.

Our actions demonstrate that. In fiscal year 2018, we deleted the most sites from the National Priorities List in one year since 2005. This year, we are on track to delete even more, breaking that record.

We're also reinvigorating our Brownfields program, which transforms contaminated sites into community assets. We recently announced nearly \$65 million in Brownfield grants to 149 communities nationwide. Forty percent of these communities are receiving Brownfields funding for the very first time.

And thanks to the President's historic tax reform package, we're prioritizing Opportunity Zones. Of the 149 grant recipients, 108 have identified sites designated as Opportunity Zones, including in cities such as Detroit and Green Bay.

On air quality, we're helping areas across the country reduce air pollution and meet the nation's air quality standards.

On water, we're helping communities modernize their water infrastructure. Since 2017, we've issued eight water infrastructure loans, totaling over \$2 billion. These loans will help finance roughly \$4 billion in water infrastructure projects, and create 6,000 jobs.

We've already invited an additional 42 projects to apply for additional funding. These projects will improve water quality for millions of Americans while creating high-paying jobs.

We're equally committed to improving the health of our oceans. The USMCA contains an historic, first-ever commitment to reduce marine litter. Sixty percent of the world's marine litter comes from six Asian countries. We have the technology and the expertise to help these nations.

The truth is, when other countries need help cleaning up their air, water, or land, they turn to us for assistance — not China, not Russia. We have the environmental laws, we develop the technologies, and we get the job done. America is and will remain the gold standard for environmental protection, and every American should know that our nation is cleaner, safer, and stronger today thanks to the leadership of President Trump. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Fantastic job. Who would've known that, Andrew? I'm glad you finally let people know what we're doing. (Laughter.) We're working hard. I think harder than many previous administrations. Maybe almost all of them.

I'd like to invite Mary Neumayr to the podium. And Mary has some terrific things to say, and I appreciate you being here, Mary. Thank you very much. Please. (Applause.)

MS. NEUMAYR: President Trump, thank you for your leadership in continuing to advance environmental protection.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MS. NEUMAYR: Over the past two and half years, President Trump has taken decisive action to address environmental challenges. At his direction, federal agencies are more efficiently implementing air quality standards; more actively managing our nation's forests to improve their health and reduce wildfire risks; promoting reliable water supplies and deliveries in the western United States; increasing federal coordination in the environmental review and permitting process; and efficiently managing federal operations to save energy and water, reduce waste, and cut costs.

Under the President's leadership, across the federal government, agencies have continued to improve their energy and environmental performance, and to reduce greenhouse emissions from federal operations.

One of the many important areas where President Trump has taken action is with regard to ocean policy. Our country is blessed with some of the most beautiful coastlines in the world. Our beaches are places for our families to enjoy, especially at this time of year. Our oceans provide a way of life, support diverse marine species and habitats, and offer recreational opportunities. Our oceans also support the livelihoods of millions of Americans. Coastal communities depend on clean, healthy waters.

Under President Trump's direction, agencies are improving the management of our ocean and coastal waters for present and future generations of Americans.

A little over a year ago, President Trump signed an executive order directing federal agencies to improve coordination on ocean-related matters; work with state-led and regional ocean partnerships; expand federal — access to federal ocean-related data; and maximize the effectiveness of agency investments in ocean research.

Federal agencies are working with state, regional, and other stakeholders to address coastal and ocean management challenges. The agencies are also prioritizing research to better understand and protect our coastal environment, to improve our knowledge of our vast oceans, and to develop next-generation ocean technologies.

This fall, the administration will convene a summit to promote partnerships in ocean science and technology. And the summit will showcase American leadership and engage the research community and the private sector to explore the unknown ocean, advance marine science, and promote new technologies.

In addition to implementing the Save Our Seas Act, signed by President Trump, our federal agencies have also prioritized addressing the harmful effects of marine debris. This administration has engaged with members of Congress, conservation organizations, the private sector, and other nations.

It is critical that we effectively take action on this issue and improve the health of our oceans.

The administration is committed to ensuring that we are good stewards of our environment, while supporting American prosperity. We look forward to continuing to address our nation's environmental challenges and to improving quality of life for all Americans. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. What a great job you're doing. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

So a man who was very responsible for our tremendous success, Salute to America — Department of Interiors. They kept you very busy. Right, David?

SECRETARY BERNHARDT: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: David Bernhardt. Come on up. Thank you. (Applause.)

SECRETARY BERNHARDT: Good afternoon. It is an honor to serve a President who has been focused on conservation stewardship since day one. The President mentioned that he signed into law the largest public lands legislation in over a decade. Thank you all on your side.

We are aggressively implementing this act, which, among other things, designated 1.3 million acres of public land as wilderness, as you said. To put that into perspective, 1.3 million acres exceeds the entire size of the state of Rhode Island.

Today, the geographic area of our nation's wilderness system is actually larger than every

state in the union except for Texas and Alaska. We are ensuring that future generations receive the benefit of an enduring wilderness system.

Mr. President, throughout your term, Interior has also been focused on strengthening the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, which is the best in the world. The model was originally conceived by American hunters and anglers, who were the first to crusade for wildlife protection, and retain some of today's most important conservation leadership.

The success of this model depends on a strong federal-state partnership and the continued commitment and preserva- — and participation of the hunters and anglers. These important relationships were frayed under the prior administration. In contrast, your administration has fostered stewardship collaboration by working with the states, not unilaterally, on our shared mission to conserve fish and wildlife and preserve their habitats for future generations.

For example, since 2017, at Interior we have released 292 million sportfish, which provide recreational angling opportunities while contributing to species restoration and recovery goals. We have removed 325 barriers opening over 8,000 river miles for native fish through our National Fish Passage Program.

Public access and outdoor recreation opportunities are critical for wildlife conservation. Since January of 2017, across the refuge system, we have devoted more than \$52 million to restore, retain, and enhance access to outdoor recreation sites and support habitat infrastructure. During that time, we've also opened or expanded hunting and fishing access to 385,000 of acres on refuged lands.

And last month, we announced our plan to open or expand an additional 1.4 million acres in several national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries for new hunting, fishing, and recreational activities. America leads — (applause) — it's a big number.

The reality is that America leads the world in wilderness and wildlife conservation efforts. And under President Trump's commonsense leadership, every day at Interior we are increasing access to our public lands, increasing recreational opportunities on those public lands, and enhancing our conservation efforts.

So, thank you. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much, David.

I got to know this one, David. You, I didn't know, but I got to know this one. He's a tough competitor on the campaign trail. He wanted this position. And we fought and we fought, and I said, "You know, I want him someday. If I win, I'm going to get him in some capacity." (Laughter.) And who's better to get than a man who successfully ran Texas for 12 years? Is that what it is? Twelve years, right? A long time. Great state. And you did a great job.

So I said, "I want Rick Perry working for us." And he knows more about energy than anybody. Come on up, Rick. (Applause.)

SECRETARY PERRY: Thank you. Mr. President, I want to tell you that last Thursday was a big day for me. In the morning, I got to welcome my first grandson into the world. (Applause.)

And that afternoon, I got to watch the President of the United States give one of the greatest history lessons that I have ever seen before and to celebrate the American military like I'd never seen it celebrated before. I am proud to be standing with you, proud to be working in this Cabinet with these men and women. This is a great moment for America. It's a great moment for America for a lot of reasons. (Applause.)

And today, I'm really proud to get to stand up here in front of America — and of the world, for that matter — as they watch this, and to recognize how important today is because the chance to tell a story that often doesn't get told in a proper way, and a story about what this administration is doing to clean up the environment; what this administration is doing on policies that are having an effect on our environment.

At the Department of Energy, we have championed both the historic development of our nation's resources and the technological breakthroughs that are just literally cascading across this country in ways to use energy more cleanly, more efficiently, than anyone ever thought possible before.

We know that by investing in innovative solutions — like carbon capture, utilization, sequestration, zero emission works like our nuclear power, exporting those technologies to other countries and — we're being able to share our technologies around the world of cleaner energy without singling — I mean, without surrendering one single fuel, one iota of growth, one iota of opportunity. That's what this President is all about. That's your record, Mr. President.

We're seeing, on your watch, America become the number-one producer of oil and gas in the world. (Applause.) We're seeing emissions being reduced around the world. I was with some of our friends from the European Union, and reminding them about what you're being able to do in this country with the innovation. We're being able to deliver liquefied natural gas to them so they can move away from these dirty or burning old, inefficient plants, and bring a cleaner environment to those countries.

You know, it's our national labs at the Department of Energy. Elaine, we've talked about this, and you've seen this through your years where this technology — this technological revolution that is occurring. And we're not only increasing our energy supply, but we're making it cleaner. We're doing it in a way that the world is enjoying with us.

So — and at your direction, Mr. President, DOE launched, as you mentioned earlier, the Water Security Grand Challenge. Using the power of competition, the Water Security Grand Challenge will spur innovation and advances in transformational technology that are going to meet the global need for safe, affordable, beautiful crystal-clear water.

(Applause.)

And, Mr. President, it's been your policies, it's been your focus, that greater energy security for America while at the same time enhancing our environmental stewardship. I think the world needs to look at your leadership. Look at what you've done.

You know, for too long, there's been this conventional wisdom that you've got to choose between economic growth and environmental protection. That's a false choice, and it's one that you've talked about, Mr. President. It's always been this country, and this country that leads — just like you reminded people last Thursday — the greatness of America, the innovation of America. And the future of this world will rely greatly upon America and this administration.

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SECRETARY PERRY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And what Rick has done with our nuclear supply — nuclear energy, and all forms nuclear — has been absolutely incredible in very a short period of time. I want to thank you. That's fantastic. So important the job you're doing. Thank you very much, Rick.

When I ran for President, I pledged a strong, growing economy and a healthy environment because I believe that we can pursue both at the same time.

We have only one America. We have only one planet. That's why, every day of my presidency, we will fight for a cleaner environment and a better quality of life for every one of our great citizens. Above all, we will remain loyal to the American people and be faithful stewards of God's glorious creation, from sea to shining sea.

Thank you all very much for being here. God bless you. And God bless America. Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you.

END

4:23 P.M. EDT