

War on Western Jobs Testimony Congressman Devin Nunes (CA-21)

As Americans confront the economic hardship of double digit unemployment and stagnation in many parts of the country, they are viewing their national leaders with growing distrust. And why shouldn't they? The President and the Democrats in Congress have shown a blatant disregard for the economic health of our country.

Last year, tens of thousands of jobs evaporated when the Obama Administration, at the urging of their radical environmental allies, cut-off federally-owned water to family farms in the San Joaquin Valley of California. They decided that a three-inch minnow was much more valuable than the jobs of hardworking Californians.

This misguided policy is turning the great valley that has long produced the bulk of our nation's fruits and vegetables -- and fed our country -- into a barren desert where tumble weeds thrive and famers are themselves now the endangered species.

In exchange for the forced unemployment -- which has reached 40% in some communities -- the Obama Administration claims it has provided \$400 million in government stimulus. Yet a majority of the money went to congressional districts of Democrats who supported cutting off the water.

In fact, today, thousands of Californians are forced to stand in food lines. To add insult to injury, when hungry families reached the front of the line, they were recently given carrots imported from Communist China.

That's right -- our country has been reduced to importing carrots to a region that once produced 89% of our nation's carrot supply -- this, of course, after we borrow the money from China to buy the carrots.

If Democrats were not so blinded by political ideology and support from radical environmentalists, logic might prevail -- it does not take \$400 million in failed stimulus to recover tens of thousands of jobs. Just turn on the water. It's free.

As if the deliberate destruction of the San Joaquin Valley by starving it of water were not enough, my constituents are also worried about the designation of more national monuments; or as I call them -- monuments to the unemployed.

Monument designations have a devastating impact on surrounding communities because such a designation forces out people who use public lands for economic activity. Without logging,

mining, drilling, and other resource management activities, communities in and around these new monuments lose their jobs.

The blunt instrument of environmental politics was behind President Clinton's establishment -- as he was leaving the White House -- of 19 new monuments, including designations in California that decimated the state's timber industry. Since 1989, California has lost 84 wood product mills and factories and job losses representing more than 54,000 nationwide.

In my area, the designation of the Giant Sequoia Monument destroyed hundreds of jobs and many businesses including Sierra Forest Products of Dinuba.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to play a short video testimonial by Kent Duysen, the owner of Sierra Forest Products.

[VIDEO]

I have spoken with Kent on many occasions and his primary fear is the further expansion of the Giant Sequoia Monument. His fear is not unfounded and it looks like it could become reality.

According to a leaked Department of Interior memo, President Obama is considering the establishment of 14 new National Monuments in nine states. Rumors are that the President may expand the boundaries of the Giant Sequoia Monument, sending shudders through local communities in the Sierra foothills.

The West remains at risk of politically motivated land restrictions that not only undermine our economy but increase our nation's dependence on foreign resources.

Mr. Chairman, it is time we end the assault on rural America.

Thank you for raising the profile of this issue and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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