

I, too, want to pay tribute to the work that our colleague from Oregon has done under the umbrella of livability, having to do with transportation, housing, I mean, even such things as the location of post offices in town.

There are so many things over the years that Mr. *Blumenhauer* has worked on to try to make communities livable and sustainable--sustainable in the way they produce and use energy, and livable in the sense of getting the best quality of life through our transportation decisions, our housing decisions.

What is so heartbreaking about the catastrophe that is under way in the Gulf of Mexico right now is that it did not have to be.

As I left to join you here on the floor, they were showing on one of the news networks fish flopping sadly, trying to get air, trying to get out of the oil, clearly doomed. We have seen the birds washing ashore.

It did not have to happen.

The oil spill is unprecedented in scale, but it is not unprecedented in kind, in our experience. In fact, I was talking with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency yesterday, and she said, do you know how many oil spills we're dealing with essentially daily? Not on this scale, but it should be expected, it can be expected, in fact it must be expected that, if you drill, you will spill.

As our colleague from Oregon was saying, for BP to go into this with no preparation whatsoever--I mean, they talk about they are a company that manages risk. Well, if they manage risk, they know, by definition, things can go wrong. That's what risk means: There is a down side. Well, what preparations, what plans, what studies, what research did they do for the down side? None.

Now, we are in the process of not only extending the liability limit--and today we removed the per-incident limit so that the Coast Guard is not constrained by the \$150 million limit, which they are already pushing up against--but we also must make sure that there is an enforcement of standards within the Minerals Management Agency separating those who grant the leases from those who collect the royalties on the leases from those who enforce the standards. We haven't done that. So we must do that, and we must do that soon, so that if any oil drilling is going to continue, that preparations are made for the down side.

I hope, in fact, that we wean ourselves from this archaic fuel as soon as possible. I mean, what does the word "fossil" mean to most people? That means out of date. What we are talking about here, what these companies have been developing ever-more-sophisticated technologies to do is to bind ourselves more strongly to an archaic way of powering our society and our economy. It is archaic. We should be moving away from it as rapidly as possible so that this won't happen again, because it need not happen again.

I thank my friend for drawing our colleagues' attention to this and talking about those things that we will be doing over the next couple of weeks, lifting the liability limits to put in place research programs and regulatory programs for the future.