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Floor Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman on H.R. 3893 October 7, 2005

Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership has done it. They have turned the House of Representatives into a Banana Republic. We have a bill on the floor today that had no hearings. It had no subcommittee markup. It was rushed to the committee without any attempt to find a compromise.

A few hours ago in the dark of night, the bill was rewritten. There isn't one member who really understands everything that is in this bill or understands what this bill will really do. But there are dozens of cronies and special interest lobbyists smiling this morning because they know the fix is in. The Republican leadership is so scared of open debate and the democratic process that they won't allow the bill's provisions to be debated or amended. They only will permit one amendment to one of the most anti-environmental, backward and intellectually dishonest bills that has ever come before the House.

And that may not be the worst of it. Because a Republican leadership is trying to do all of this in the name of Katrina. America watched with horror as this hurricane struck. The damage was immense and so was our responsibility in Congress to do all we can to help those who have been displaced rebuild their lives. But that's what makes this legislation so shameful. At a time of desperate need and profound responsibility, the response of Washington Republicans is crass opportunism. The bill will not help a single victim of Katrina. It will do nothing to lower gas prices. Instead, Washington Republicans are using the devastation to stampede Congress into undermining our environmental laws. Exploitation is an ugly word, but that is what this is.

I would urge members to vote against the rule. But more importantly, vote against this bill. It is a shameful piece of legislation. It is a legislative equivalent of price gouging and the American people deserve better, and we can do better. I yield back the balance of my time.