

Coffman right to scoff at League of Conservation Voters

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Mike Coffman is understandably miffed with the League of Conservation Voters, which seems as dedicated to boosting the size of government as in protecting the environment. So when the league gave the 6th District congressman a paltry 7 percent rating on its National Environmental Scorecard, Coffman lit into it with righteous gusto.

The league "rewards those who voted for the economically ruinous cap-and-trade bill, for the president's bloated budget and massive debt, and for the wasted billions in so-called stimulus funds," Coffman declared. "I've worked hard on water conservation and forest-health legislation, but if LCV wants to ignore that and remind folks I oppose some of the most economically devastating policy ideas to come out of Washington in generations, then I'm fine with that."

Perhaps you too can't imagine why a group supposedly dedicated to environmental values would craft a litmus test that includes votes on a controversial stimulus package that was debated on the basis of whether it would rescue the economy, not the planet, and a budget bleeding red ink.

Are those really environmental votes — for *or* against?

Anyone who supported the \$787 billion stimulus because it included \$80 billion in yet more subsidies for "clean energy" and for boondoggles such as high-speed rail ought to have his head examined. The proposal required first and foremost an economic judgment: whether such a stimulus was necessary. If you thought it wasn't, then the size of the green goodies was irrelevant.

The conservation league, which seems to function as an unofficial appendage of the Democratic Party, doesn't worry about such logic. And there was little doubt it would support a gargantuan stimulus package once 10 percent of the boodle was showered upon its own pet projects. Never mind, meanwhile, if its longstanding pursuit of larger, more intrusive government alienates fiscal conservatives with strong environmental values (they do exist, you know).

In its recent ratings, the league also says it took "the extraordinary step of double scoring the House vote on final passage of the American Clean Energy and Security Act." It's referring to a cap-and-trade bill that would have raised energy costs, subjected business to an opaque and complex permit trading system, and almost certainly failed to deliver the advertised reductions in greenhouse emissions. Such a deal!

Another vote boosted spending at the Interior Department and environmental agencies by 17 percent. Not 5 or even 10 percent, but 17! Those agencies had been on "starvation budgets," we're supposed to believe, so now is the time for politicians to pig out.

Over in the Senate, meanwhile, a perfect tally on the league's scorecard — which both Colorado senators, to their discredit, managed to earn — required support of a new office in the Central Intelligence Agency "to study the future implications of climate change." You couldn't make this stuff up.

Incidentally, apparently you also need to favor highly restrictive campaign finance laws to be in the league's good graces, since its website excoriates the recent Supreme Court ruling expanding corporate and union free speech. But then why should that surprise us? In 2001, its scorecard included a vote protecting provisions of the McCain-Feingold bill, one of the most comprehensive assaults on free speech in this nation's history.

Why, Coffman never had a chance. But if he was right to be indignant, he shouldn't have been surprised.

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