

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1977, the 1996 Interior appropriations bill. Last year I supported important legislation, signed into law by President Clinton, increasing payment in lieu of taxes [PILT] by more than 100 percent over 5 years to counties which have Federal land holdings in their jurisdiction. However, the 1996 House Interior appropriations bill does not appropriate the funds necessary to implement the phased-in increase to PILT payments passed by Congress.

The purpose of last year's PILT legislation was to give additional help to counties who suffer lost tax revenue from the presence of Federal lands. The PILT program provides financial stability and opportunities for our counties which would otherwise be left without sufficient tax revenue. However, for many years these payments were not allowed to grow with inflation. In recognizing the importance and success of the PILT program, Congress made a commitment to allow for a substantial increase in these payments, an increase many counties were expecting and relying upon to provide the basic services which they deliver.

Several counties in the 19th Congressional District, which I am proud to represent, rely greatly on the PILT program. Johnson, Hardin, and Pope counties are all home to the Shawnee National Forest, and without an increase in PILT assistance, I am afraid they will be forced to face some very difficult times. It is unfair that these counties should have to suffer financially simply because they are home to one of our national forests. I believe this is a case when Government has a responsibility to provide necessary and fair compensation to counties with federally owned lands.

I have long supported efforts to balance the Federal budget, and I recognize the fact that balancing the budget will require some tough choices. However, I do not agree we should back away from providing much needed financial assistance to our counties and communities in order to pay for a package of tax cuts, many of which affect only upper-income individuals and corporations. The truth is, Congress can balance the budget, but not on the backs of those who sincerely need the help of Government.

In closing, I urge the bill's conferees to include the necessary funding to implement the increase in PILT funding as prescribed by Congress and the President. Without the inclusion of an increase in PILT funding to reflect the promise Congress made to many of our counties across this Nation, I am afraid I will be unable to support the conference report.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this motion. I joined in voting for the patent moratorium when the Interior appropriations bill was on the House floor, and I intend to press for retaining the moratorium when we meet in conference with the other body.

The time has long since come for reforming the obsolete mining law of 1872. Just this week, we had another reminder of how outdated that law is when Secretary Babbitt was forced to give a foreign mining company ownership of 110 acres of Federal lands containing an estimated billion dollars' worth of minerals—for which the company paid just \$275.

Let me repeat: under the mining law of 1872, the Federal Government was forced to sell lands with a billion dollars worth of minerals for the grand total of \$275, with no provision for the taxpayers—the owners of the Fed-

eral lands—to get any royalties, of the kind that are routinely paid in connection when these kinds of minerals are developed on other lands.

So, the current situation is bad. But it would be even worse except for the fact that the Interior appropriation bill for the current fiscal year included a partial patent moratorium—that is, a partial moratorium on land sales under the 1872 Act. The effect of that moratorium is to reduce the number of such unfair, budget-busting sales, and so to protect the taxpayers while Congress works to reform the mining law.

In the last Congress, in addition to the partial moratorium, both the House and the Senate passed bills to replace this obsolete mining law with a modern statute. Unfortunately, however, the conferees were unable to reach agreement on a final version. So, the reform job remains unfinished.

We need to keep working on this. And we need to renew the moratorium, to continue protecting the taxpayers in the meantime. That's why the House was right to adopt the Klug-Rahall amendment—the amendment to renew the moratorium—when the 1996 Interior appropriations bill was on the floor. And that's why we should adopt this motion to instruct, in the interests of protecting the taxpayers and advancing the process of reform.

Mr. YATES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. YATES].

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Messrs. REGULA, MCDADE, KOLBE, SKEEN, and Mrs. VUCANOVICH, and Messrs. TAYLOR of North Carolina, NETHERCUTT, BUNN of Oregon, LIVINGSTON, YATES, DICKS, BEVILL, SKAGGS, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2002, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2002) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies

for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, disagree to the Senate amendments and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES OFFERED BY MR. COLEMAN

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. COLEMAN moves that in resolving the differences between the House and Senate, the managers on the part of the House at the conferees on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 2002, be instructed to provide funding for the Federal-Aid Highways Program at a level which is as close as possible to the level in the House-passed bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] will each be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN].

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My motion to instruct conferees is very straightforward. It simply instructs the House conferees to agree to provide funding for the Federal aid highways program at a level that is as close as possible to the \$18 billion provided in the House-passed bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the motions offered by the gentleman from Texas. As the gentleman already pointed out, the House bill provides \$18 billion for the Federal air highway program, an increase of \$840 million over the previous fiscal year. Under this, most States get more than they did in the past.

□ 1230

The Senate alternatively has elected to reduce highway spending to \$17 billion, \$1 billion below the House level and \$160 million below last year's level. The Federal-Aid Highway Program consists of several programs designed to aid in the construction, rehabilitation, traffic management, and safety of our Nation's highways.

These programs also assist in the improvement of other modes of transportation, so it is my hope that the committee conference can agree to provide the funding for the Federal-Aid Highway Program at a level which is as close as possible to the level of the House-passed bill, realizing the competing needs of the Coast Guard and others.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas. As the gentleman has already pointed out, the House bill provides \$18 billion for the Federal-Aid

Highway Program, an increase of \$840 million over the previous fiscal year.

The Senate, alternatively, has elected to reduce highway spending to \$17 billion, \$1 billion below the House level, and \$160 million below last year's level.

The Federal-Aid Highway Program consists of several programs designed to aid in the construction, rehabilitation, traffic management, and safety of our Nation's highways. These programs also assist in the improvement of other modes of transportation. Infrastructure spending on highways is critical to the efficient movement of goods and people in the United States and has direct effects on the national economy and interstate commerce. In fact, every billion dollars spent on the highway system results in improvements in pavements and bridge conditions and reduced congestion. For example, \$1 billion could fund 2,500 lane miles of pavement improvements, 375 lane miles of increased capacity, and 190 bridge improvements. Highway spending also means jobs: For a billion dollars, as many as 50,000 jobs can be supported.

It is my hope that the conference committee can agree to provide funding for the Federal-Aid Highway Program at a level which is as close as possible to the level in the House-passed bill, recognizing the competing demands of the Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, and other safety programs of the Department of Transportation.

I support the gentleman's motion and urge that the motion be agreed to.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the gentleman is accepting this motion. I think it is the right thing to do.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

(Mr. COLEMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, my motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2002, the fiscal year 1996 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act is very straightforward. My motion would simply instruct the House conferees to agree to provide funding for the Federal-Aid Highway Program at a level that is as close as possible to the \$18 billion provided in the House-passed bill.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most significant areas of difference in the House and Senate transportation appropriations bill is the funding level recommended for the Federal Highways Program. The House bill provides an obligation limitation for this purpose that is \$1 billion more than the \$17 billion level recommended by the Senate. In addition to providing a funding level for the Federal Highway Program that is less than the 1995 level, the Senate has also included \$39.5 million in earmarked highway demonstration projects that benefit only a few, selected areas.

Mr. Speaker, in Texas and in most other States, there is a huge backlog of roads, highways and bridges that are in desperate need of repair and rehabilitation. In 1993, the Federal Highway Administration estimated that the annual cost to maintain and improve highway

conditions was \$59 billion. The House bill squarely recognizes these needs and addresses them by providing the highest ever funding level for the Federal Highway Program, and by providing these funds in a manner such that every State will benefit.

As with the other appropriations bills, the House made some very difficult choices in allocating fiscal year 1996 funding for transportation programs that in total is \$1 billion less than 1995 appropriations. However, in making those choices, the House determined that investing in our Nation's infrastructure should be of the utmost importance, even in austere budgetary times. Such an investment will enhance highway safety, ease congestion, create jobs, and increase our Nation's productivity. For these reasons, I believe that we should insist on making highway infrastructure spending a priority for the conferees on this bill. I urge the adoption of this motion.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material, on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct conferees offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN].

The motion was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Messrs. WOLF, DELAY, REGULA, ROGERS, LIGHTFOOT, PACKARD, CALLAHAN, DICKEY, LIVINGSTON, SABO, DURBIN, COLEMAN, FOGLETTA, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. FAZIO of California, asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me preface my remarks on the schedule for next week by informing all the Members that we have had our final vote for today and for this week. There will be no more votes today.

Mr. Speaker, the House will not be in session on Monday, September 11.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning hour and 12 noon for legislative business to take up H.R. 2150, the Small Business Credit Effi-

ciency Act, which will be considered under suspension of the rules. However, we will not have any recorded votes until 3 p.m.

For Tuesday afternoon and the balance of the week, we plan to consider the following bills, all of which will be subject to rules: H.R. 1594, the Pension Protection Act of 1995; H.R. 1655, the fiscal year 1996 Intelligence reauthorization bill; H.R. 1162, the Deficit Reduction Lockbox Act; and H.R. 1670, the Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1995. Members should also be advised that conference reports may be brought to the floor at any time.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business.

Tuesday it will be our hope to adjourn around 7 or 8 p.m. On Wednesday we may work a little later, and it is our hope to have Members on their way home to their families by 6 p.m. on Thursday.

The House will meet in pro forma session on Friday, September 15. There will be no recorded votes.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, if I could further inquire of the majority leader, let me open by saying that I appreciate the fact that we seem to have returned to a more normal schedule here, and I think this will be conducive to families having an opportunity to have at least a late supper, if not a regular dinner together. I am sure we are all relieved because of the difference that this makes with the last couple of weeks that we had prior to our August recess.

I would like to ask, however, when we would be bringing to the floor the legislation on gifts and lobbying reform. We were chastised roundly earlier in the week because we attempted to use the legislative branch appropriation bill to bring that before the body. I know there are hearings in the Committee on the Judiciary. I am wondering, because of the importance of having time to appreciate and understand the changes it will require of Members and their offices, whether or not we are going to be able to see that law enacted in time to implement the rules and the statute by January 1.

Does the majority have any ability at this time to give us an indication as to when we will bring that to the floor and when it might be effective?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I thank the gentleman for his inquiry. I do appreciate the inquiry. As the gentleman noted, hearings were held this week. We are looking at that. We are talking among ourselves and with the committee, looking for an opportunity to bring that up. I am sorry we have nothing definitive to report at this time.

Mr. FAZIO of California. I would ask the gentleman, is it possible it may be added to our list of "must pass" legislation so it would be considered by the end of this calendar year in order to be effective in January?

Mr. ARMEY. Of course, as the gentleman knows, all things are possible. I