

the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2202) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve deterrence of illegal immigration to the United States by increasing border patrol and investigative personnel, by increasing penalties for alien smuggling and for document fraud, by reforming exclusion and deportation law and procedures, by improving the verification system for eligibility for employment, and through other measures, to reform the legal immigration system and facilitate legal entries into the United States, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 2115

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 165, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996, AND WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 4(b) OF RULE XI WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. DREIER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-489) on the resolution (H. Res. 386) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 165) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes, and waiving a requirement of clause 4(b) of rule XI with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises to recognize the millions of men and women who comprise the agriculture community. I will remind my colleagues that this week we celebrate National Agriculture Week, and thus it is certainly appropriate to take some time to recognize the importance of U.S. agriculture and agribusiness. This year's theme of "Growing Better Everyday, Generation to Generation," truly captures the forward-looking spirit of agriculture today.

This Nation's farmers and food processors have continued to make tremendous strides in recent decades in producing and distributing food in an efficient manner. This efficiency is reflected by the fact that today 1 American farmer produces enough food for 129 people.

In addition to providing for the needs of today, farmers also have the responsibility of serving as stewards of our land and water resources for future

generations and most are excellent stewards. Clearly, the American agriculture community is producing what the world needs to survive while preserving and enhancing our natural resources for the future. This Member commends the many individuals in the agricultural community for their hard work, perseverance, vision, and dedication.

The following is an excellent editorial from the Norfolk (Nebraska) Daily News relevant to these remarks.

AGRICULTURAL LINKS PAST AND FUTURE

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT CONTINUES TO BE A GUIDING FORCE FOR FARMERS AND RANCHERS

As one drives through the countryside in Northeast and North Central Nebraska, the sight of those familiar farms may seem to be unchanged from years and decades past.

But appearances can be deceiving. Farming is anything but a static enterprise.

Changes in technology and mechanization have profoundly changed family farming operations. In 1900, for example, the average farm size was 147 acres. Today, the average farm has almost 500 acres. Technology is helping farmers to track weather conditions through satellites and gain access to information and research through the Internet computer network. Computers are also helping farmers to maintain detailed records, thereby boosting efficiency and profitability.

The Agriculture Council of America also points out that farming is also changing in response to consumer demands. Farmers and ranchers are producing meat lower in fat and cholesterol to fit with today's health-conscious consumers.

Today's hog, for example, is bred to be 50 percent leaner than those produced 20 years ago. That results in retail cuts at the grocery store that are 15 percent leaner. Leaner beef cuts are also being produced. Meat with 27 percent less fat reaches the retail case than in 1985. Farmers have also met consumer demand for ethnic foods, such as corn chips and tortillas, by increasing production of food-grade corn. And through biotechnology, consumers can now enjoy a fresh tomato that is tasty—even when out of season.

This week marks National Agriculture Week—a yearly occurrence that, for some, prompts memories of how it used to be in agriculture. We're all for that. The history of farming and ranching in this nation and elsewhere is an integral part of where we are today.

But National Agriculture Week is also an opportunity to realize just how much farming and ranching is changing—thanks to the foresight, flexibility and entrepreneurial spirit of those involved in production agriculture.

This year's theme for the week is "Growing Better Everyday, Generation to Generation." It's so appropriate because it links the past with the future, which is what agriculture is all about.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOODLING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 60 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. CHRISTENSEN] is recognized for 60 minutes.

[Mr. CHRISTENSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CUTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to talk about the environment and my concern over cuts that the Republican leadership has made in environmental programs and in the various agencies of the Federal Government that are involved in environmental protection.

I should point out that just a couple weeks ago, our environmental task force, within the Democratic Caucus, issued a report on the impact of Republican budget cuts on the environment. What this report points out very vividly is that the House Republican leadership so far in this Congress, with particular attention to 1995, basically from a budget point of view and in terms of authorization bills and various amendments that came to the floor, was involved in a systematic effort to turn back the clock on the last 25 years of environmental protection.

This is affecting every State and the various Government shutdowns and the level of funding cuts for continuing resolutions that fund the Environmental Protection Agency, the Interior Department, and other departments and

agencies that are involved in environmental protection have had a cumulative effect on the environment so that in effect right now, even though we have many laws on the books that seemingly protect the environment, we do not have the investigators, the enforcers and the people that will go out and, if you will, nab the polluters so that our environmental laws are effectively enforced. Our report points out that this process continues.

As many of you know, just a week or two ago this House passed a continuing resolution that would take us in terms of our spending until the end of this fiscal year. And once again the funding levels that were in that continuing resolution for the environment are essentially 22 percent for the EPA below the President's fiscal 1996 request. The bill, the continuing resolution, also includes a number of antienvironment riders that affect both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Speaker, we know that if this process continues, either through this long-term continuing resolution or through the stopgap measures that we are seeing now pass every week—last week we had a continuing resolution for 1 week. My understanding is that by the end of this week, this Friday when funding runs out again, we may pass or the Republican leadership may bring to the floor another continuing resolution for another week. The level of funds in those continuing resolutions, those stopgap measures, continue to provide the EPA, the Interior Department and other agencies that protect the environment with such woefully low amounts of funding that they simply cannot do their job.

I wanted to go through some of the points more specifically that our report on the environment makes. We had a hearing a few weeks ago, and testimony at that hearing provided incontrovertible evidence of the impact of policies promoted by the Republican leadership and supported by an overwhelming majority of Republican legislators. We found first that Republicans have targeted environmental programs for particularly deep budget cuts.

Just as an example, the Republican-passed interior appropriations bill vetoed earlier this year by President Clinton funded overall operations of the Department of the Interior 12 percent below the President's fiscal 1996 request. Funding for the Endangered Species Act was set at 38 percent below the President's request. Land acquisition for parks and other public uses was funded at 42 percent below the President's request.

In the VA-HUD appropriations bill passed with a slim Republican majority and also vetoed by President Clinton, EPA's overall funding was cut by 21 percent but pollution enforcement functions received a 25 percent cut. Again, it is very nice to have environmental laws on the books, but if you do

not have the people, the environmental cops on the beat, so to speak, to go out there and find the polluters, then you might as well not have the environmental protection laws.

In addition, what our report concludes is that antienvironment legislative riders have caused appropriations gridlock. Republicans have delayed the timely completion of the appropriations process by almost 6 months by including on funding bills a host of highly controversial legislative riders having little to do with cutting spending. The policy changes rendered by these riders are normally handled by the authorizing committees, not the appropriation committees. But the riders were included in the appropriations bill and typically are barred from amendment on the House floor in an effort to exhort the President to accept antienvironmental policies that could not survive in legislative debate on their merit.

For example, on the Department of the Interior appropriations, the Republican riders would accelerate logging of the old-growth rain forest by 40 percent in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, remove funding for the National Park Service operation of the Mojave desert national preserve, terminate the Columbia basin ecosystem's management project and continue an irresponsible moratorium on the listing of endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Numerous legislative riders affecting EPA include provisions to bar oversight of wetlands policy and limit EPA's authority to list new hazardous waste sites for cleanup under the superfund law.

Now, one of the points that we have been trying to make in our report on the environment, our task force report, is that these Republican cuts in environmental enforcement do not save money, and I repeat, do not save money. The EPA Administrator, Carol Browner, stated at our hearing that the environmental cop is absolutely not on the beat. Because of funding cuts in the continuing resolutions and the two Government shutdowns in late 1995, EPA was unable to perform 40 percent of planned health and safety inspections of industrial facilities in the first quarter of fiscal year 1996.

In addition, the Department of Justice's environmental division had its budget cut down to \$83 million, 12 percent less than requested by the President and nearly 10 percent less than the fiscal 1995 budget. Now, again, cutting funds for enforcement makes no fiscal sense. Assistant Attorney General Lois Schiffer stated or testified that since civil enforcement litigation in fiscal 1995 resulted in fines and costs recoveries totalling over \$300 million. But in a sense what we are seeing here in that the amount of money coming back to the Treasury for fines because polluters are violating the law decreased because we can not go out and find the polluters.

I would like to continue to talk about our report, but I know that I have some other Members here tonight who wanted to join with me in talking about these environmental cuts and what they mean. If we would like to at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. BARRETT].

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman, and I think that the Members of this body know, and if they do not know, they should know, the tremendous work that you have done on this issue. I think you have certainly been our leader on this side of the aisle in talking about the short-sightedness approach that is being used by the Republicans in their attacks on the environment this session.

I rise tonight because I, as you do, oppose the Republican's Party's attack on our Nation's environmental laws. I find it somewhat ironic and sad when you think President Teddy Roosevelt as being the leader of the environmental movement basically in this century that his party now is ending the century by trying to undo a lot of the progress that he made when he first became a leader in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is instructive for us to talk a little bit about how this has come about. We do not hear much on this floor anymore about the Contract with America, but I think the Contract With America is a good starting point to discuss why we have this attack on the environment. As we have heard over the last several months, the Contract With America was put together in large part on the basis of focus groups, of going out to the American people and trying to use sort of a slick procedure to find out what was on the American people's mind and what was their highest priority, what issues were their highest priorities.

It is no accident, I think, that the word environment does not even appear in the Contract With America. The environment is not a priority for those people who put together the Contract With America. The reason it is not a high priority is I think frankly, that they had some very flawed polling and flawed approach to their focus groups in deciding that the environment was not an issue that the American people care about. I think the American people care very much about the environment. But in putting together their focus groups and trying to decide whether this was an issue, they probably—and I do not know, I do not have access to their data—but they probably asked the American people to list what they thought were their highest priorities. I would imagine that there were a lot of people who said increased environmental protection was one of their higher priorities.

Now that might strike you as a surprise, but the reason I do not think most Americans prior to January of 1995 thought the environmental laws were a high priority is because the environmental laws were working. In the

past 25 years, this Congress and the Presidents, under both parties, I think have done a pretty credible job in cleaning up our Nation's rivers, in cleaning up our Nation's lakes, in cleaning up our air.

□ 2130

As a result of that, the American people think that this is an area that the Government actually was acting responsibly to make sure that you did not have polluters that were making it more difficult for people to have a clean environment.

So, just as if you asked any ordinary American whether the roof on their house was a high priority, nobody would say yes, unless, of course, the roof was leaking, and now you have a situation where the roof is leaking in terms of environmental policy because the American people recognize that all the progress that we have made in the last generation on cleaning up our lakes and rivers and air is under attack under the current leadership in Congress. It is almost as though the Speaker and his followers have said, "Yes, those environmental laws have worked for many, many years, so let's repeal them, let's move backward." And that is not the message that the American people want, and that is not the message that I have heard.

I will tell you that one of the interesting things for me and one of the surprises that I first started seeing early last year was the increased number of pieces of mail and calls that I got from people in my district who raised environmental concerns as an issue, and this was happening far before any of these polls that we now see many leaders on the other side talking about where they are saying, "Oh-oh, the American people think that the Republican Party has gone too far in dismantling the environmental laws." Now I think that the people in the Republican Party recognize that they have gone too far in trying to dismantle the environmental laws.

Mr. Speaker, they have tried to do it in a number of ways. Obviously, they tried to do it in the Clean Water Act here in the House of Representatives, and that bill was so bad the U.S. Senate would not even take it up. They said, "We're not going to consider that; that's too extreme." So they said, "Well, let's try to dismantle these agencies piecemeal, and let's do it through the appropriations process."

And that is why you saw attempt after attempt after attempt to attach riders, to attach lower levels of funding, to go after a lot of these agencies to make sure that they could not get their job done.

The Republican budget has cut funding, as you indicated, for pollution enforcement by the EPA and the Department of Justice by 25 percent so it is going to make it easier for companies that want to go out and pollute to do it. It lowers the cost of polluting in our country. Is that the direction the

American people want us to go? Absolutely not.

It funds the Endangered Species Act at a level 38 percent below what the President requested. Is that where the American people want us to go? Absolutely not; that is not where we should be going.

In my State of Wisconsin we also have seen some of the ramifications of this. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources relies on EPA funds authorized under the Clean Water Act for its surface water and groundwater protection programs. Any reduction in these funds will result in a proportional reduction in staff responsible for water quality monitoring, inspection, and enforcement. It will make it more difficult for my home State, which cherishes its fishing, which cherishes its clean lakes, to make sure that you have that for tourism, for people who want to fish, for the people who live in our State.

The EPA has also joined forces with the State in an effort to reduce the discharge of mercury into the surface waters of Wisconsin. Mercury contamination is a serious problem in Wisconsin, where 246 rivers and lakes are so contaminated that fishing is restricted. The EPA provides both the State and private sector with experience necessary to measure mercury levels, but reduced budgets again will threaten the agency's ability to help.

I think the sum product of what we are seeing here again is an attack on the progress that we have made over the last generation, and it is not an attack that I think the American people deserve, it is not an attack that the American people support.

So again I just wanted to stop by tonight to applaud you on the fine work that you have done because I truly think you have been a leader on this, and I want to encourage you to continue your fine work.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate that, and I particularly wanted to mention how you highlighted clean water, and I think that is a very good example of what the Republican leadership has done in this Congress.

My district in New Jersey, a large part of it is on the water, either on the Raritan River, the Raritan Bay or the Atlantic Ocean, and we were the part of the State that was most severely impacted in the late 1980's when the medical waste and other debris washed up on our shores and basically put an end to our tourism season in the summer. The beaches were closed. The people did not come down. It took about, I would say, 4 or 5 years before the Jersey shore recovered and people were back in full force and the water was clean. And basically that was because of the efforts in this Congress and on a bipartisan basis then, Democrats and Republicans, to try to pass some very strong laws that forbade ocean dumping that put medical waste tracking systems in place and essentially made it more difficult for polluters to drop;

you know, to discharge items into the rivers, harbors and bays that would eventually come down to the Jersey shore.

I would hate to see, and I know that my constituents would hate to see, a situation where, because of the relaxation of these laws or the improper enforcement of these laws, that we went back to the beach closings that we had in some cases now 7, 8 years ago.

In addition, I would point out that you could take really any State in the country and see the impact of these budget cuts. I have some information just about my own State of New Jersey, for example, and what the Republican budget cuts have meant in New Jersey. Just as an example, to cite some of the areas that are impacted under the Superfund program, the Federal program to clean up hazardous waste sites, which is particularly important to New Jersey because we have more sites than any other State, 12 sites slated for significant new construction would be shut down by these budget cuts and 30 other sites in New Jersey with ongoing work will also experience shutdowns or slowdowns as a result of the Republican budget cuts with various impacts.

Projected impacts are severe also on leaking underground storage tanks. There is a program to basically fix those which is impacted.

The safe drinking water program, which is very important to New Jersey; the EPA estimates that more than 6 million residents of New Jersey are served by drinking water systems that have violated public health standards last year. But Republican budget cuts would reduce the funding available to these communities to improve their drinking water systems by about \$5 million.

With regard to the Clean Water Act, which Mr. BARRETT mentioned, according to the EPA, about 85 percent of New Jersey's rivers and streams are too polluted for basic uses like swimming. And under the fiscal year 1996 conference report, again the Republican Conference report, New Jersey stands to lose \$52 million in clean water funding that would help stop pollution from getting into the State's rivers, lakes and streams as well as the Atlantic Ocean. This is basically a 53 percent cut from the fiscal year 1995 enacted funding level.

Also huge cuts in New York's wastewater treatment loans and other clean water funding would threaten New Jersey's beaches through washups of untreated sewage and wastewater, again repeating the unfortunate situation that we had along the Jersey shore in the late 1980's.

As far as enforcement is concerned, in New Jersey the environmental cop will be off the beat as inspections and enforcement efforts will be severely curtailed under the Republican budget proposal, which represents a cut of 25 percent, as we mentioned, below the President's budget request.

Decreased inspections due to cuts create public health threats that would have to be addressed by a staff made smaller by the budget cuts. Essentially in Region II, which is the EPA region that New Jersey is part of, because of these ongoing Republican budget problems there is a growing backlog of permits which they have been unable to process.

So, as I said, I can cite New Jersey, which is my home State, but we could get into almost really every State in the Nation to highlight what these Republican budget cuts mean for environmental protection.

I was very happy that in order to highlight some of these concerns in my home State of New Jersey President Clinton came to the State, was in Bergen County just about a week or so ago, and he, of course, was there to highlight the problems with the Superfund program and the cuts in the Superfund program and what those would mean to the State of New Jersey if these Republican budget cuts in the Superfund program were allowed to continue.

Now again, I wanted to go back, if I could, to the report that our Democratic task force put together that shows the impact of Republican budget cuts on the environment and stress again that these cuts in enforcement do not save money. In a sense, what these cuts do for both the EPA and the Department of the Interior is they undercut the Department of Justice's ability to recover funds, prosecute criminal violations, and prevent the degradation of the environment.

It is, I guess, obvious, I would think, from anyone who thinks about it from a preventive point of view, that it is much less costly to the taxpayers to prevent problems from occurring than it is to fix environmental disasters after they occur. Slashing the budget and essentially preventing or making it impossible to do the preventive measures that the EPA and Department of Interior have been doing all along in the long run is only going to make it most costly when the Federal Government or the taxpayers have to pay the bill for the pollution that occurs.

The other thing that the Republican leaders have been trying to get across, and I think is again a false premise, is that somehow the States can do all this on their own; in other words, that statements were made on the floor that in the past 10 years or the past 20 years, "Yeah, we have passed some good environmental laws, but now each State has its own department of environmental protection, or something like that, and they do a good enough job, and so we don't need the Federal EPA to intervene and do a lot of the things that the Federal EPA has been doing."

In reality, the reality is just the opposite, and we had testimony at our hearing from Assistant Attorney General Schiffer who explained again that,

without the minimum environmental standards set by Federal law and the Federal enforcement actions, the health of our communities, the environment and economy, would be compromised; in other words, that the States rely on the Federal Government both in terms of dollars and in terms of minimum enforcement standards that are set to essentially do a good job with environmental protection at the State level and at the local level. And she gave an example that before the creation of the EPA in Federal statutes, the 6 States in the Chesapeake Bay watershed allowed the waters to become very severely polluted. Without a strong environmental presence, citizens in States like Virginia, which has cut its environmental budget by 26 percent, would have little recourse against pollution originating from other States.

Pollution knows no boundaries. Although States, in many cases, do a good job, it makes sense to the Federal Government to have strong anti-pollution laws and strong enforcement because air, water, and many other things that we talk about when we talk about the environment basically cross State boundaries. So it makes sense to have Federal laws and good Federal enforcement.

The other myth, if you will, that is out there that our report, I think, successfully rebuffs is the notion that enough progress has been made on the environment; in other words, that somehow we have been at this now for 20, 25 years, we have made a lot of progress in terms of environmental protection, and we really do not need to do much more. And again, nothing could be further from the truth. Although there has been significant progress, there still obviously is a lot more to be done.

I could just use the example of the Superfund sites in my home State where progress has been made in cleaning up quite a few of them, but there is still a tremendous amount more that needs to be done, and certainly when we talk about clean water and the ultimate goal of the Clean Water Act of safe and swimmable waters, we still have a long way to go before all the waters, or a significant portion of the waters in the country, are safe and swimmable.

The other thing that we bring out in our report, and I think is very important, is, and again contradicting the notion that somehow protecting the environment or strong regulations against polluters hurts the economy, our report makes the case that a healthy environment contributes to a growing economy and that basically pollution control and proper management in natural resources ultimately results in the creation of more jobs, creates more income.

Obviously, the best example of that, again, if I could use it, is my own district, the Jersey shore. The tourism is now in New Jersey the No. 1 or No. 2

industry in the State in terms of job creations and income coming to the State of New Jersey. During the summer, the summers of 1988 and after that, when the beaches were actually closed in most of the shore area of New Jersey, billions of dollars were lost in tourism, people were laid off, businesses almost had to close.

□ 2145

I think that shows dramatically how there is a direct impact that a healthy environment contributes to a good economy.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make the case as we proceed in this Congress how important it is, how important it is for the Democrats to continue to prioritize the environment in terms of the budget, because even though it is true that we have good laws on the books in terms of environmental protection, if we do not have the money to adequately do investigations and enforcement to protect the environment, enforce those laws, the laws might as well not be on the books.

Tomorrow again, I believe, or at the end of this week, we are going to face another one of these stop-gap continuing resolutions that the Republicans are going to bring forward. Again, if that continuing resolution is similar to the one we passed last week, that it means severe cuts, and constant effort on the part of the Republican leadership to cut back on the amount of money for environmental enforcement, we as Democrats will continue to oppose that and make the case that the Republican leadership is continuing this assault and this effort to turn back the clock on 20 or 25 years of progress on environmental enforcement in this Congress.

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support of strong environmental legislation and funding for those programs. Our progress to date has been immense in improvements in public health and restoration of clean air and water. Our people and our natural resources must be protected for future generations. Recently in a fervor to reduce the budget, some majority Members have lost sight of our responsibility for the health and welfare of the people of this country. This ill-advised and short-sighted approach hits hardest at the segments of our population which are minorities and poor. The Republican majority of the Congress has lost touch with the needs of the population as a whole. They are concerned only with the interests of the wealthy and large industry. This is reflected in the reductions in environmental programs; thereby, benefitting those who pollute our world the most.

Budget cuts of one-fourth in EPA enforcement programs will leave polluters at liberty to violate communities without the ability to defend themselves. Reductions have further caused the cessation of cleanup in 68 hazardous waste sites and slowed hundreds of others. The health of our children and elderly are endangered by the pollution and further compounded our inability to stop it. In my own state of California, 41 percent of rivers and streams and 52 percent of our lakes are too

polluted for people to use for swimming. Who will be responsible for ensuring that the pollution does not continue? We, the Members of Congress, will be held accountable to the people who have entrusted us with their welfare.

Drinking water quality may not be an issue if you can afford to buy bottled water. However, many cannot afford this luxury; they are struggling just to feed their families. Safe drinking water is a right that the citizens of the United States deserve and demand. The cost of the human damage that may be incurred by drinking contaminated water is not worth near term savings from the EPA budget cuts. The most impacted groups are the most vulnerable segments: the young, elderly, and the poor. Moreover, there is evidence that living areas of the minority populations are subjected more to pollution than other segments of the populace. Unable to battle the air and water pollution or to afford alternatives, they succumb to the worst of the hazards. The cost of human illness and life is too high a stake in this gamble. We must use prevention to curtail any problems with our water sources, such as heavy metals, toxic chemicals, and dangerous microorganisms. The majority party must be able to understand the most cost-effective solution is pollution prevention. We have seen the cost of environmental cleanup and the health care expenses resulting from hazardous exposures and poor quality air and water.

Not only is health of people endangered, but so is the health and diversity of our wildlife and the stability of our forests. We now face a 38-percent cut in funding for the Endangered Species Act. The cuts and the moratorium on placing new species on the endangered species list will not cause the problem to subside. It will only cause a festering of the problem. We have a responsibility to ensure that the environment is examined in its totality. The decrease in species is a result of poor environmental management and will lead to subsequent compounded environmental imbalances.

Additionally, we must preserve our public lands for their environmental role, such as watershed capacity, as well as their scenic and recreational value. Tagging important legislation with amendments which, directly and indirectly, attack these treasured resources is not responsible. We must have comprehensive legislation to address the whole issue, not just a single Member's narrow interest. We must use a logical and scientifically sound approach. And as such, we must keep our research in ecological and environmental topics at a robust level. Recent efforts have stripped the EPA, and specifically Superfund, research by devastating amounts.

Overall, we cannot allow our environmental progress to fade and return to prior conditions. We should not take steps away from environmental improvement, but toward it. I urge support and passage of budgets which will allow Federal agencies to complete this important work without the impediment of restrictive language.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. SMITH of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on my special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening, as I have year after year at this time, to honor the heritage of freedom and democracy which reintroduced itself in Greece 175 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, March 25 is Greek Independence Day. On that date in 1821, after more than 400 years of Ottoman Turk domination, Greek freedom fighters returned sovereignty to Greece, and in so doing, reconnected themselves and their Greek brothers and sisters to their heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], who is a wonderful friend and has always been very much interested in the affairs of the Hellenes.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak on this occasion which marks a day of tremendous historical significance for Americans and all who revere the blessings which a democratic way of life have afforded us. I thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. BILIRAKIS] for organizing this special order, and I want him to know how much we appreciate all his efforts in the House to keep Hellenic issues before us.

On March 25, Greece will celebrate the 175th anniversary of its declaration of independence from foreign domination. We revere and honor the contributions that Greek civilization has made to democratic traditions.

The cause of Greek independence and the adherence of the Greek nation to the path of democracy and true respect for the will of the people to determine their political course has always been dear to the hearts of democrats everywhere. We remember that the great Romantic poet, Lord Byron, gave his life for this cause during the tumultuous revolt of the Greeks against their Ottoman overlords, and the cause of democracy in Greece continues to be a matter of interest for us here today.

In particular, we in America are gratified by Greece's role as a close American ally, and by the contribution that the Greek-American community makes to this country—and we only have to look around this chamber to see our members of Greek heritage with whom I know we are all proud to serve.

Mr. Speaker, we look to Greece to continue to play the strong and responsible role it has played in assuring that the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean remain a region of peace and stability. I trust that our Government will also continue to support a free, prosperous

and strong Greece. I urge my colleagues to join in wishing the people and Government of Greece our best wishes and heartfelt hopes for a bright future.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so very, very much.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE].

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking Mr. BILIRAKIS for taking the lead in organizing what has now become an annual event: the celebration of Greek Independence Day here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. I am honored to participate in this year's tribute, which will mark the 175th anniversary of Greek independence and the 10th consecutive year the Congress sends a resolution to the President's desk asking that March 25 be designated as a National day of celebration of Greek and American democracy. Looking around, I am pleased to see that many of the same faces who were here last year have returned to once again commemorate this historic event.

You do not have to be a student of history to know that the United States and Greece will forever be connected to each other. We are all well aware of the fact that throughout history, our countries have turned to each other for advice on how best to shape our respective democracies.

The roots of America's very existence, as Thomas Jefferson once observed, are grounded in the foundation of ancient Greece. "To the ancient Greeks" said Jefferson, "we are all indebted for the light which lead ourselves [American colonists] out of Gothic darkness."

Conversely, the Greeks have long drawn inspiration from the American commitment to freedom. "Having formed the resolution to live or die for freedom," noted a former Greek Commander in Chief—Petros Mavromichalis—in an 1821 appeal to the citizens of the United States, "we are drawn toward you by a just sympathy since it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode, and by you that she is prized as by our fathers."

There is no doubt that the substance behind these words has held in full since they were spoken 175 years ago. Time and again Greece has sent its sons and daughters to fight alongside our children in defense of democracy. Over 600,000 Greeks—or a staggering 9 percent of the entire Greek population—died fighting with the allies in World War II. Greece, moreover, is one of only three nations not part of the former British Empire that has been allied with the United States in every major international conflict this century.

Today, through their high levels of education and steadfast commitment to hard work, Americans of Greek descent enrich our culture, better our lives, and strengthen the bond that connects our two countries. From