

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1559

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor from H.R. 1559.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

THE 1997 BUDGET

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

Mr. BOB SCHAEFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, for 40 years Congress was in the hands of liberal Democrats who succeeded brilliantly in accomplishing two things. First, they made absolutely sure that, come rain or shine, Government would keep getting bigger and bigger year after year. Second, they made absolutely sure that, come rain or shine, Government would take more and more of your money year after year.

For the great middle class, playing by the rules and paying taxes, big government liberalism soon became the No. 1 obstacle standing in the way of their hopes and dreams. It is time for change. It is hard to save for your future when Government pursues policies that punish saving. It is hard to pass on the family farm or the family business to your children when the Government hits you with a death tax that the children are unable to pay.

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It is hard to believe in the American dream anymore when the Government leaves future generations a legacy of more debt and higher taxes.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, the 1997 budget finally puts an end to 40 years of expanding Government and endless taxation. This Congress should stand squarely behind the balanced budget.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OVER- WHELMINGLY OPPOSED TO MFN

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage all Members of this body to read the poll in today's Wall Street Journal.

By an overwhelming margin, 67 percent of Americans polled by NBC News and the Wall Street Journal said that the United States should demand improvements in China's human rights if China wants to continue its current trading status of MFN; 67 percent.

Among men, the percentage who favor human rights improvement before MFN was renewed was 63 percent. Among women, the percentage was a staggering 70 percent. And I say regarding my side, we are concerned about the gender gap. If we want to see

a gender gap, 70 percent of the American women favor linking trade and MFN.

No matter whether we break it down according to party affiliation, income, or age, the results are still the same: 60 to 70 percent favor demanding improvements in China's human rights record before renewing MFN. Republicans polled, 61 percent; Democrats, 73 percent. Of those earning \$50,000 or more, 63 percent favor human rights; 76 percent of those earning less than \$20,000 favored human rights improvements.

The American people want the Congress to send a message about human rights. They want to send a message about the Catholic priests, the Protestant pastors, the Buddhist monks, and the Muslims being persecuted. I urge this Congress to send a message to the Chinese people. Vote to deny MFN.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has been concluded on all motions to suspend the rules but not before 2 p.m. today.

EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR AUSABLE HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT IN NEW YORK

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 848) to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act applicable to the construction of the AuSable hydroelectric project in New York, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 848

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.

(a) PROJECT NUMBERED 10836.—Notwithstanding the time period specified in section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) that would otherwise apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project numbered 10836-000NY, the Commission shall, at the request of the licensee for the project, and after reasonable notice, in accordance with the good faith, due diligence, and public interest requirements of that section and the Commission's procedures under that section, extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence the construction of the project, under the extension described in subsection (b), for not more than 3 consecutive 2-year periods.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This subsection shall take effect on the date of the expiration of the extension of the period required for commencement of construction of the project described in subsection (a) that the Commission issued, prior to the date of enactment of

this Act, under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806).

(c) REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.—If the license for the project referred to in subsection (a) has expired prior to the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall reinstate the license effective as of the date of its expiration and extend the time required for commencement of construction of the project as provided in subsection (a) for not more than 3 consecutive 2-year periods, the first of which shall commence on the date of such expiration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. DAN SCHAEFER] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. HALL] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. DAN SCHAEFER].

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, under section 13 of the Federal Power Act, project construction must begin within 4 years of issuance of a license. If construction has not begun by that time, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission cannot extend the deadline and must terminate that license.

H.R. 848 and H.R. 1184 provide for extensions for the construction deadline if the sponsor pursues the commencement of construction in good faith and with due diligence. H.R. 1217 provides additional time to complete construction of a project.

These types of bills have not been controversial in the past. The bills do not change the license requirements in any way and do not change environmental standards but merely extend construction deadlines. There is a time in which we have to act, since construction deadlines for one project expired in February and the others expire in the coming months. If Congress does not act, the FERC will terminate the licenses, the project sponsors will lose millions of dollars that they have invested in these projects, and communities will lose the prospect of significant job creation and added revenues.

I should also note that the bills incorporate the views of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The Energy and Power Subcommittee solicited the views of FERC, and the agency does not oppose any of the three bills we have up today.

I would like to briefly describe the first of the bills, H.R. 848. It is a bill to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project in the State of New York. The AuSable project is very important to the village of Keeseville. The Prescott Mill hydropower project was the symbolic heart of the community and the major employee in Keeseville from 1832 until the 1960's. The demise of Prescott Mill in the 1960's caused economic hardship in the village that can be felt today.

Redevelopment of the project will provide a badly needed boost to an area

that is going through some very hard times. Jobs are important everywhere, we all know that, but especially in Keeseville, whose unemployment is nearly 18 percent. The Prescott Mill project would permit the village to attract more businesses, provide 35 temporary jobs during construction and 75 permanent jobs. There is extensive support in the village of Keeseville for this particular project.

There is a need to act on H.R. 848 in a timely manner, since the construction deadline expired last February.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Members support H.R. 848 for the people in Keeseville, NY.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HALL of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Colorado has pointed out, H.R. 848 would authorize FERC to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of the 800-kilowatt AuSable project to be located in New York.

Mr. Speaker, FERC of course has the authority to extend the initial deadline but for no longer than 2 years. If additional time is needed, Congress can enact legislation to extend that deadline.

I think I should also point out that it is not without warranted reason that these hydroelectric projects are in need of license extensions. In the case of the project in New York, it is very difficult to find a sponsor to secure financing until it has a power sales contract in hand. Generally a licensee cannot secure a contract until it has been granted a license. These circumstances make it critical for a construction license to be granted.

There is no one opposed to it. It is an easy bill with no objection from FERC. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting "yes" on H.R. 848.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. DAN SCHAEFER, that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 848.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 848, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR BEAR CREEK HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT IN WASHINGTON

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1184) to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for the construction of the Bear Creek hydroelectric project in the State of Washington, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1184

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the time period specified in section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) that would otherwise apply to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project numbered 10371, the Commission may, upon the request of the project licensee, in accordance with the good faith, due diligence, and public interest requirements of that section and the Commission's procedures under that section, extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of the project for not more than 3 consecutive 2-year periods.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The extension under subsection (a) shall take effect for the project upon the expiration of the extension, issued by the Commission under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806), of the period required for commencement of construction of the project.

(c) REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.—If the license for the project referred to in subsection (a) has expired prior to the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall reinstate the license effective as of the date of its expiration and extend the time required for commencement of construction of the project as provided in subsection (a) for not more than 3 consecutive 2-year periods, the first of which shall commence on the date of such expiration.

SEC. 2. REENACTMENT OF SENTENCE IN SECTION 6.

Section 6 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 799) is amended by adding the following sentence (deleted by section 108(a) of the General Accounting Office Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-316)) at the end thereof: "Licenses may be revoked only for the reasons and in the manner prescribed under the provisions of this Act, and may be altered or surrendered only upon mutual agreement between the licensee and the Commission after thirty days' public notice."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. DAN SCHAEFER and the gentleman from Texas, Mr. HALL each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. DAN SCHAEFER.

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1184, as amended, au-

thorizes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of the Bear Creek hydroelectric project in the State of Washington.

The reason for this legislation is the same as with other hydroelectric license extension bills. The onset of intense competition in the electric industry is driving utilities to lower their costs and avoid making long-term commitments. As hydroelectric projects are typically financed through long-term power sales contracts, it has been difficult for many project developers to secure financing to construct licensed projects.

There is a need to act on this legislation in a very timely manner, since the construction deadline expired on December 9, 1997. I should note that H.R. 1184 does not ease the environmental requirements of the license but merely extends the construction deadline.

H.R. 1184, as amended, also would restore a sentence in the Federal Power Act that was erroneously deleted by the General Accounting Office Act of 1996. In the last Congress, both the National Defense Authorization Act and the General Accounting Office Act provided for the deletion of the last sentence of section 6 of the Federal Power Act. The intent of both laws was to strike a requirement that the FERC would file all issued hydropower licenses with the General Accounting Office.

However, since the National Defense Authorization Act was enacted first, the General Accounting Office Act erroneously deleted the next-to-last sentence of section 6 of the Federal Power Act which addressed the authority of FERC to revoke hydropower licenses. H.R. 1184 would restore this sentence to the Federal Power Act.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has no objection to this particular legislation and I urge the support of 1184, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HALL of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1184, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF]. The bill allows the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the deadline under the Federal Power Act for the construction of the Bear Creek hydroelectric project in Washington State.

I have had the pleasure of working with the gentleman from Washington, a noted author and a very respected Member of this Congress. I have sat in on many financial meetings with him and have the highest regard for him. He has done a good job on H.R. 1184. It allows FERC simply to extend the commencement of construction for the