

Alzheimer's Disease is on track to become the epidemic of the 21st Century. Today 4 million Americans are afflicted and by 2050 it is estimated that this number will increase to 14 million.

That's right Mr. Speaker, 14 million Americans will face the devastation of losing their independence, their personality, and their memory—the very threads of life that gives one his or her identity.

Funding for basic research to find a cure for Alzheimer's Disease is important and I'm pleased that this year's funding levels will increase to over \$550 million. But there's no way to know when a cure will present itself—it could be in two years or ten years or twenty years. In the meantime people are suffering.

A recent study conducted at the Oregon Health Sciences University indicated that 65% of patients with probable dementia are going undiagnosed. This study highlights the crucial need to improve recognition and assessment of dementia patients.

The language included in H.R. 2498 addresses this need. The Alzheimer's Clinical Research and Training Awards program is designed to compliment the 30 Alzheimer's Research Centers across our nation which currently focus on basic research and are administered through the National Institutes on Aging at NIH. During my own personal experience with my mother's Alzheimer's disease, top Alzheimer's researchers and clinicians underscored the crucial need for providing a bridge between Alzheimer's laboratory research and new methods of diagnosis, treatment and prevention. This program provides awards to junior and mid-level physicians to focus their careers on Alzheimer's and to train as physician scientist specialists to improve and apply cutting edge research to Alzheimer's patients.

Researching a cure for tomorrow is critical, but we also need to do better in treating those suffering with Alzheimer's Disease today.

The Alzheimer's Clinical Research and Training Awards program takes a first step in doing the very best we can in providing cutting edge diagnosis, treatment and prevention for those who are and will be effected by the epidemic of the 21st century.

□ 2030

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2498.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SENSE OF HOUSE WITH RESPECT TO RELEASE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION REGARDING ELECTRICITY CRISIS IN CALIFORNIA

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 650) expressing the sense of the House with respect to the release of findings and recommendations by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regarding the electricity crisis in California.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 650

Whereas the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has completed its investigation of the California energy crisis: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the United States House of Representatives that, before November 1, 2000, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should make public its findings and recommendations regarding the electricity crisis in California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.Res. 650.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 650, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from San Diego (Mr. BILBRAY).

The resolution expresses that it is the sense of the Congress that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should release its findings and recommendations regarding the electricity situation in California as soon as possible.

San Diego Gas and Electric is the first utility in California to pay off its stranded costs. Customers served by San Diego Gas and Electric were the first in the Nation to experience the effects of unregulated electricity pricing without unregulated competition for new supplies of electricity.

So while there is no new generating capacity in California and no free-wheeling competition in the wholesale market for electricity, consumers are facing unlimited prices.

As a result, beginning this summer, customers of San Diego Gas and Electric in San Diego and Orange Counties will have seen their electricity bills double and triple. And that has continued over the last several months. The small businesses have closed, and consumers are suffering.

On July 26, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission opened an inquiry into this situation. They have written their findings and their recommendations, and yet they have not been released to the Congress or to the public. Considering the seriousness of the situation in California, there should be no further delay in releasing this report.

This resolution, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), will help assure that his constituents in San Diego and all other San Diego Gas and Electric customers and Orange County and all other California electricity consumers in the near future do not have to continue to wait even longer before finally getting answers they need simply because the Federal bureaucracy is dragging its feet.

The Committee on Commerce has spent nearly 6 years holding hearings on the best way to modernize our laws governing the electric utilities so that electricity will be more affordable and reliable. In that process, we have talked to consumers, regulators, and power generators. We have learned from our California situation that interstate electricity markets pose complicated issues of Federal and State jurisdiction.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's report, if we can see it, will speak to the important question of interstate transmission of electricity. The situation in California highlights the importance of getting it right for consumers.

In conclusion, I commend the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), my colleague, on his resolution; and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the electricity price spikes in California have gained national attention and have moved to the center of the debate on the question of electricity industry restructuring.

Consumers in some California communities have faced unprecedented electricity prices and are rightly asking what the Federal Government might do to help bring down the price of this vital commodity.

This evening we consider a resolution which expresses the sense of the House that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should make public its findings and recommendations regarding California's electricity price problems by November 1, 2000. It is, to say the least, a modest measure.

I will take the occasion of these comments, Mr. Speaker, to note for a moment the very fine work which has been done during the course of the last 2 years by the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Barton).

Under his able guidance, the Subcommittee on Energy and Power reported a number of measures which, taken together, would have achieved

substantial progress toward the creation of a national energy policy.

Unfortunately, on the most significant of these topics, nuclear waste disposal and electricity industry restructuring, the legislative process stalled following the reporting of the legislation from the subcommittee of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON). And that happened despite the sound efforts of the gentleman to move the process forward.

As a result of this legislative inaction, we find ourselves no closer to having a national energy policy today than we were finding ourselves when this Congress convened approximately 2 years ago. And I think that is sad. And so, today we find ourselves debating relatively modest policy initiatives, such as the measure that is now before us, which is a nonbinding resolution that merely expresses an opinion.

While the measure might have some marginally beneficial effects, I would suggest that it is no substitute for leadership on energy policy.

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

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for bringing this resolution to us tonight. I thank his colleague and my friend, the gentleman from San Diego, California (Mr. BILBRAY). Our hearts and prayers are with him, as he has suffered a terrible loss in his family and cannot be here tonight.

I thank my colleagues for bringing this to us. Because San Diego is the poster child for the future of California what is going on in San Diego, what happened after the deregulation to a monopoly market, will happen to the rest of California in another year or so and perhaps the rest of the Nation if we do not take heed of San Diego's crisis.

The measure before us tonight is not the proper response to the crisis that we have in San Diego. It is a very weak response. If the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) was not my friend, I would say it was a meaningless response to the level of crisis that we face.

The gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) introduced this resolution yesterday. Magically, it comes to the floor today. The Republican leadership, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), and the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) could have brought meaningful legislation to this floor tonight to really help us in San Diego.

I introduced, for example, H.R. 5131 on September 7. I will explain that bill in a minute. But it can solve the crisis we have in San Diego. I asked the Speaker of the House to schedule this before we recessed.

San Diego is panicking. San Diego faces enormous debts. We have had no

response from the leadership of this House to really deal with the crisis that we face in San Diego.

The gentleman from California (Mr. COX) gave a good summary of the situation, the doubling and tripling of prices in San Diego over a 3-month period. The average small business in my district, my colleagues, in our districts in San Diego went from let us say \$800 a month in May and June to \$1,500 a month and then to \$2,500 a month. No business can survive with these kinds of increases.

A person on a fixed income had his bill or her bill go from \$35 a month to \$70 a month to \$120 a month. No person who is on a fixed income can survive this. And literally life-and-death decisions had to be made given that situation.

This was not an issue, Mr. Speaker, of supply and demand in California. We do not have enough supply for the future developments. But this crisis was brought about by manipulation of the market by wholesalers and marketers of electricity. They caused a crisis which did not have to exist.

When the FERC report that is referred to in this resolution is made public on November 1, it will show that there was incredibly close to criminal manipulation of the market, withholding of capacity by the major generators, laundering electricity through Northwestern States to get a higher price in California, artificially creating a sense of dearth of supply through manipulation of the transmission capacities and on and on. And the FERC report will outline that.

This was a criminal gaming of the rules that were set up in California. This was not an issue of supply and demand. And as my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), knows within those 3 or 4 months of this crisis, after deregulation occurred in San Diego and Orange counties advertise, close to \$600 billion was sucked out of our economy by these marketers and generators, \$6 billion. I hope I said that with a "B." Over \$600 million from the consumers of San Diego alone.

Now, the State legislature acted on this to the limit of their ability to act. They froze retail prices. As the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) knows, they froze retail prices at 6½ cents a kilowatt hour. And that took the gun away from the head of San Diego consumers because their prices and my bill that I got was frozen at this figure.

But, Mr. Speaker, that debt is mounting up for the consumers of California and San Diego. That retail price freeze was merely a deferral of the cost. The debt that individual businesses and consumers have is adding up in the so-called balancing account. Our Northern utilities in San Diego, not only San Diego Gas and Electric, which now has a mounting debt, but PG&E and Edison have debts mounting up again to almost \$6 billion between them.

This is an economic crisis, an economic recession hanging in the balance if we do not act here in this body and at the national level.

A crisis was created by deregulation to a monopoly situation, \$6 billion being sucked from our economy. And how do we respond? How does this body respond? The Republican majority gives what kind of resolution? That we will get a report 5 days earlier than FERC said it was going to come out.

They issued a finding in the last couple of days. That said they will issue the report November 1. I would like to see that earlier. I would like to see it today. I will vote for the resolution, but that does nothing for San Diego consumers. That does nothing for the California economy.

What we need and what H.R. 5131 does is a roll-back of wholesale prices to their prederegulation levels in the Western market and refunds to the consumers in California. That I will tell my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), is the only solution to San Diego and California's problem.

□ 2045

We must go after the folks who took our money away, and that is the wholesale generators and marketers. They, illegally in my opinion, in the opinion of the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) raised their prices to an unjust level, five, six, seven times what was the previous price. They charged what the market could bear. And now their earnings report have just come out, Mr. Speaker, the earnings report of the major generators in this country who provide the western market, and they have reported 200, 300 percent or more profit increase over the year before. That is unconscionable. They have taken away our businesses, they have taken away our future, they threaten our whole economy. And yet the majority motion on the floor is give us a report a few days earlier.

What this Congress should do, I say to the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), is to put H.R. 5131 on the floor tomorrow. You have the power to do it. You showed you can take a resolution and put it on the floor within a day. Let us go after those who have caused this enormous panic and frightening situation in San Diego. Let us instruct FERC to roll back the wholesale prices in the western market and refund that overcharge to consumers.

That is what this House ought to do. That is what our Federal regulatory commission ought to do. San Diegans and Californians are holding our breath to see what the Federal Government will do. We have another day, 2 days, 3 days, we do not know yet, in this session of Congress. I ask the majority, I ask the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY), I ask the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) to bring us a real motion, a real resolution to solve this problem. Let us really help San Diego and not embark on this weak and meaningless response.

I thank my colleagues. I really do thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for spotlighting San Diego's situation. If the rest of California and the rest of the country deregulates through this monopoly situation under the rules that we had, the rest of the country is going to face the same panic and economic crisis that is brewing in California.

The majority party can help San Diego now. Let us do it tomorrow.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I want to thank the previous speakers for their bipartisan cooperation in the passage of this resolution; and I would add that there is a big difference between this resolution which, as has been pointed out, is a sense of the Congress resolution urging simply that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission release a report that has been shelf-ready since October 19, bearing directly on the kinds of legislation that are under discussion here, and substantive legislation to remake the electric utility industry in the largest State of the union or in the rest of the country.

My colleague referenced H.R. 5131, his legislation, and he was good to point out that he has introduced this legislation for the first time just last month in the closing days of the second session of the 106th Congress. Even though this legislation, which is sweeping in its effects, was introduced by such a distinguished Member as the gentleman from San Diego, I think he recognizes it would not be regular order for it to be simply whisked into law in a matter of weeks without even being able to know the results of the significant study that has been underway since July at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

And so I would return to the point and the purpose of this resolution, which is to put before the Congress and to put before the general public for the requisite 3-week period of comment the already completed study and recommendations of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission bearing on what we have all agreed is an extraordinarily difficult and complicated problem with very, very egregious consequences for consumers in Southern California.

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

Mr. COX. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) said, this is simply a resolution, a sense of the Congress. It does absolutely nothing for the citizens of San Diego.

Mr. COX. Reclaiming my time on that point. This resolution does nothing more, nothing less than it purports to do, which is to put before the Congress a report which we ought by rights to have seen on October 19, and I think that on that we should all agree.

Mr. FILNER. As the gentleman pointed out, I introduced H.R. 5131 a month and a half ago. That was plenty of time, given the crisis that San Diego has, for this Congress to go through hearings, to go through anything they want.

We have had bills put on this floor in the last couple of days that nobody has ever seen before, incredibly complicated tax business and appropriations bills that nobody had ever seen. The resolution of the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) did not have the light of day until yesterday and here it is on the floor today. So you can act when you want to. We have had a month and a half to act.

I will tell the gentleman that the crisis in San Diego mounts every day. People are going out of business as they face the mounting debt.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). The time of the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) has expired.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman knows, the major utilities in our State which are major economic forces have appealed to the Public Utilities Commission of California, have appealed to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to give them some relief because their debts are mounting and their bond ratings have gone down. If any one of those utilities goes under, the gentleman knows the domino effect on California.

I cannot overstate the crisis for my city, my State or my Nation. Yet we are not doing anything in the waning days of this session. We should have the hearings. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) and his Subcommittee on Energy and Power of the Committee on Commerce did come to San Diego, and we are very grateful for that. They had findings at that hearing. They heard San Diegans testify all day. They heard the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. They had enough to go on to have hearings on my bill or any other bill that anybody thought would solve the problem.

By the way, I am joined in my bill by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY). Also the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) and the gentleman from California (Mr. PACKARD) have expressed support. We do have time to act when you want to. The majority should put our bills on the floor now.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute and simply agree with the essential points that have been made on both sides here this evening. That is, first, that the crisis for consumers and small businesses alike in Southern California, in particular in San Diego and Orange Counties is very real.

Second, that we should take swift action and prudent action to address it both in the State legislature in Sac-

ramento and here in Washington, D.C. And, third, that to inform those decisions, we are entitled to see the report and the study and the recommendations of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on this very topic.

I would finally observe that as my colleague from San Diego points out, the legislation to which he refers, H.R. 5131, not the only bill on this topic but an important one, is sponsored jointly by Democrats and Republicans, highly respected Members of this body, and it is therefore in the interest of both Republicans and Democrats that we move rapidly on such legislation.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, let me just say to my colleague on the other side from California, there is really no purpose to this resolution whatsoever. I think he has been trying to justify it, and I know he is trying by suggesting that somehow this puts the report or the recommendation into the RECORD, but the resolution does not even accomplish that. There is a FERC order from October 26 that says that the commission will place in the public record the report. So not only is this just a sense of Congress which accomplishes nothing, but the report would be put in the RECORD, anyway, it would be made a public record that anybody would have access to. There is nothing here.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge opposition to this resolution. It is bad policy, it is bad process. I want to back up what the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) said. The bill was introduced last night, it has not seen the light of day let alone any proper committee process. Essentially the bill does nothing. It is purely political. The FERC is expected to come out with its findings and recommendations regarding California's energy price spikes on November 1. This bill just asks the FERC to release its findings 1 day sooner. It is already a matter of public record once it comes out. And California already has legislation in place to freeze energy rates.

Now, I say this is an exercise in futility not only because it is, and I want to bare the reality of it here tonight and support what the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) said but also to stress that in the meantime, the House Republican leadership is not bringing other measures to the floor that would truly address California and the Nation's rising energy costs.

In fact, the tax package that we debated today eliminates important energy conservation and alternative energy measures that would save energy and money for our businesses and consumers and would protect our environment. For example, the tax package does not include \$400 million for electricity produced from renewable sources. The package also does not include tax credits for alternative fuel or hybrid vehicles.

We all know that oil and gas prices have been higher than in previous years. If the average fuel economy of the 131 million cars driven in 1998 were to have been increased by just one mile per gallon, we would have conserved 3.2 billion gallons of gasoline that year. Furthermore, if we now were to increase the fuel efficiency of vehicles by just three miles per gallon, we would save one million barrels of oil per day. I say this because I would like to preclude the need for even suggesting the drilling in ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which Governor Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress also are advocating. Unfortunately, we do not see any measures being brought to the floor by the Republican leadership that would encourage greater fuel efficiency in vehicles.

The point is this bill is futile. It is bad policy. It accomplishes nothing. We should be doing a lot more important things.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1½ minutes.

I would simply correct for the record one statement that my distinguished colleague has just made, and, that is, that the purpose of this resolution is to advance by 1 day the release of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission report. It is, to the contrary, to release the report immediately, whereas it has been completed since October 19. Let me read from the concurring opinion of one of the FERC commissioners on October 19 when that report was released:

“Rather than wait for November to release the findings of our staff’s investigation, I urge the chairman to release the completed report now. Our open government requires it. Fairness does as well. The people of California should have as much time as possible to digest our staff’s findings and consider the options presented.”

The commissioner continues:

“Justice Brandeis often remarked, ‘Sunlight is the best disinfectant.’ Let the sun shine on our staff’s report. It could only help heal the raw emotions rampant in the State of California. I hope that the commission will proceed in the right path from now on.”

The bureaucracy here, to put it relatively impolitely in this case, is dragging its feet. This is a report on a very significant topic, the result of a significant and long study. It should not be gathering dust on the shelf. There is a 3-week comment period once it is released that will have to expire before the recommendations can be made final. The California legislature is going into session at the beginning of December.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out one more factor in all this before I conclude and, that is, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has claimed both in public and in private conversations they do not

have the authority to roll back wholesale prices retroactively.

My legislation, cosponsored by the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), gives them that authority to roll back prices retroactively. That is the only thing that can save San Diego and the rest of California from its mounting debt which has now reached \$6 billion as I pointed out. We must go after those who have gouged us with these prices.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that although the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) are saying that the bureaucracy is dragging its feet, actually FERC has acted with incredible speed in this investigation. It is the Congress that is dragging its feet. What San Diego wants to see from this Congress before it adjourns is some meaningful action to stop the mounting debt that threatens big and small business alike and threatens the very income of all of our residents.

□ 2100

San Diego is watching this Congress. What San Diego sees, because the majority party will not schedule any meaningful legislation to be voted on, is Congress dragging its feet. That is the issue, Mr. Speaker, that we must address. California is waiting. San Diego is waiting. This Congress should act before we adjourn.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is an important resolution, because it will lay before the Congress, lay before the public, lay before legislators in California, vitally important information, the results of a study by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the energy crisis in Southern California caused by the deregulation legislation enacted in the legislature in Sacramento.

Without question, this is a situation that we must not allow to continue; but without question, we also must know where we are headed with reform in Sacramento.

When the Democratic legislature adopted the deregulation that has led to this crisis, they did so with the best of intentions, and they did so with bipartisan cooperation.

It has not turned out as people would have wished. The best of intentions or acting in haste, therefore, as we have seen from experience is not what is required; what is required is immediate remedial action based upon the facts; and right now, the best facts lie with the FERC.

We ought to in this Congress, while we are still in session, have that information. This resolution, which I expect will be unanimously adopted by Republicans and Democrats, is, in fact, what the FERC needs to hear, because it is true, as Justice Brandeis has said, that sunshine is the best disinfectant. Let us get that information out. Let us get that report released.

Let us enact this Bilbray resolution so that we may then swiftly move to the more fundamental legislation that has occupied so much of our debate here this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD:

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BRIAN BILBRAY  
FOR H. RES. 650

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chairman Bliley and leadership for working with me to bring this resolution to the floor. H. Res. 650 is a simple, straightforward resolution that expresses the sense of Congress that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission release its completed report on the California electricity crisis before November 1, 2000.

FERC has been investigating the electricity market place in California as a result of unexpected rate of volatility this summer. San Diego and Orange Counties were the first in the nation to experience the effects of an unregulated electricity markets.

After speaking with the Commission and writing a letter, a copy of which is included for the record, requesting that the completed report be released as soon as possible, I introduced H. Res. 650 to ensure that the report be made public sooner rather than later, so that all interested parties can examine, analyze and make response to the report as quickly as possible. The initial report is complete. Why not let the public have access to it now?

The consumers in southern California have had a difficult time this summer, and the crisis is not over. The entire state of California will be facing these hardships unless consumers, industry, utilities, generators, legislators, the Governor, and regulators—both FERC and the California Public Utility Commission,—come together to fix the flaws in the California electricity market. Until the FERC report is released, all of these interested parties are in limbo.

Help San Diego. Help California. Vote for H. Res. 650.

Thank you.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, October 20, 2000.

Chairman JAMES J. HOECKER,  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HOECKER: I am writing regarding the “Order Announcing Expedited Procedures for Addressing California Market Issues” issued October 19, 2000—the result of the staff fact-finding investigation you commissioned on July 26, 2000, of the conditions of the electric bulk power markets in various regions of the country, particularly California.

I commend you for initiating this process, the results of which will surely be critical in developing a strategy for moving beyond the crisis we are now enduring in California. It is my understanding, that the results of this investigation are complete; however, they are not currently scheduled for public release until November 9, 2000.

Given the time-sensitive nature of the electricity crisis in California, with small businesses closing and consumers suffering, I would strongly urge you to make the results of your investigation public immediately, so that this information can be put to use as soon as possible in developing sound remedies for the adverse situation to which California electricity consumers have been subjected. Additionally, with the State legislature set to reconvene in December, it would seem to make sense to provide California’s legislators with this information as soon as

possible, in order to enable them to "hit the ground running" on this critical matter once they gather again in Sacramento in December. It is my intention to do everything within my power to make this information available to the decisionmakers who will need it to help bring some relief to the long-suffering electricity consumers in San Diego and elsewhere throughout California.

I greatly appreciate and thank you in advance for your attention to this request, and your anticipated affirmative response. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly with any questions or to further discuss this important matter.

Sincerely,

BRIAN BILBRAY,  
*Member of Congress.*

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Sincerely,

BRIAN BILBRAY,  
*Member of Congress.*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 650, which encourages the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to make public its findings and recommendations regarding the electricity crisis in California.

While I have no substantive objection to H. Res. 650, I'm disappointed that the Majority party failed to bring forward comprehensive electricity legislation this Congress which would help prevent another crisis next year.

According to industry figures, power transactions across the national grid have jumped from 200,000 transactions in 1997 to over 1.5 million projected for this year. Reliability of energy, therefore, is likely to get worse without comprehensive action.

We must have open and non-discriminatory access to transmission lines. We must ensure the reliability of the electricity market. And we must take action to stem the threat to stable prices caused by market manipulation.

If the leadership of this Congress had been willing to take a first step, we could have considered H.R. 4941, the National Electric Reliability Act, which I'm proud to cosponsor. The bill would create an independent organization to ensure the reliability of the interstate transmission grids. This legislation has already passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Yet this House failed to consider any of these measures. Now it's likely that price spikes, power market abuses, and reliability problems will continue, especially in my state and in places like San Diego where there have been such problems. What a dismal outcome.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution. For those who come from states who haven't yet felt the impact of higher energy prices, the failure of this House to take meaningful steps to ensure reliable electricity, prevent price spikes, and protect against market power abuses in the electricity market will come home to your state and your constituents as well.

Mark my words. We'll be back here next Congress in a crisis mode because of the House leadership's failure to take on the hard challenges this issue confronts us with.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 650.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### MAKING IN ORDER ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2000, CALL OF PRIVATE CALENDAR

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. I ask unanimous consent that on Friday, October 27, 2000, it be in order to consider the call of the Private Calendar.

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

There was no objection.

#### FIRE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 655) providing for the consideration of the bill H.R. 1550 and the Senate amendment thereto.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 655

*Resolved*, That, upon the adoption of this resolution, the House shall be considered to have taken from the Speaker's table the bill H.R. 1550 together with the Senate amendment thereto, and to have concurred in the Senate amendment with amendments as follows: In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

#### TITLE I—UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION

##### SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Fire Administration Authorization Act of 2000".

##### SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 17(g)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking "and" at the end of subparagraph (G);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (H) and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(I) \$44,753,000 for fiscal year 2001, of which \$3,000,000 is for research activities, and \$250,000 may be used for contracts or grants to non-Federal entities for data analysis, including general fire profiles and special fire analyses and report projects, and of which \$6,000,000 is for anti-terrorism training, including associated curriculum development, for fire and emergency services personnel;