

CORAL REEF AND COASTAL MARINE CONSERVATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2272) to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide for debt relief to developing countries who take action to protect critical coral reef habitats, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2272

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

SECTION 1. DEBT REDUCTION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH CORAL REEFS AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES.

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“PART VI—DEBT REDUCTION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH CORAL REEFS AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES

“SEC. 901. SHORT TITLE.

“This part may be cited as the ‘Coral Reef and Coastal Marine Conservation Act of 2001’.

“SEC. 902. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

“(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

“(1) It is the established policy of the United States to support and seek the protection and restoration of natural coastal marine areas, in particular coral reefs and other critically imperiled coastal marine resources around the world, as demonstrated by the establishment of the United States Government’s Coral Reef Task Force under Executive Order 13089 (June 11, 1998) and by the emphasis given to coral reefs at the Conference on Oceans held in Monterey, California.

“(2) Coral reefs and other coastal marine resources provide a wide range of benefits to mankind by—

“(A) harboring a major share of the world’s marine biological diversity, and by acting as seed-grounds and nurseries for many deep-sea species; and

“(B) serving as the basis for major activities of critical economic, social, and cultural importance, including fishing, pharmaceutical research, recreation, tourism, and the natural purification and recharge of waters.

“(3) International organizations and assistance programs to conserve coral reefs and other coastal marine resources have proliferated in recent years, but the rapid destruction of these resources nonetheless continues in many countries.

“(4) Poverty and economic pressures on many developing countries, including the burden of official debts, has promoted inefficient, unsustainable over-exploitation of coral reefs and other coastal marine resources, while also denying necessary funds to protection efforts.

“(5) Reduction of official, government-to-government debts can help reduce economic pressures for over-exploitation of coral reefs and other coastal marine resources and can mobilize additional resources for their protection.

“(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this part are—

“(1) to recognize the values received by United States citizens from protection of coral reefs and other coastal marine resources;

“(2) to facilitate greater protection of remaining coral reefs and other coastal marine resources, and the recovery of damaged

areas, by providing for the alleviation of debt in countries where these resources are located, thus allowing for the use of additional resources to protect and restore such coral reefs and other coastal marine resources, and to reduce economic pressures that have led to unsustainable exploitation; and

“(3) to ensure that resources freed from debt in such countries are rechanneled to protection of coral reefs and other coastal marine resources.

“SEC. 903. DEFINITIONS.

“In this part:

“(1) ADMINISTERING BODY.—The term ‘administering body’ means the entity provided for in section 908(c).

“(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

“(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

“(3) BENEFICIARY COUNTRY.—The term ‘beneficiary country’ means an eligible country with respect to which the authority of section 906(a) or paragraph (1) or (2) of section 907(a) of this part is exercised.

“(4) BOARD.—The term ‘Board’ means the board referred to in section 910.

“(5) CORAL.—The term ‘coral’ means species of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

“(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals), Alcyonacea (soft corals), Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera (organpipe corals and others), and Coenothecalia (blue coral), of the class Anthozoa; and

“(B) all species of the order Hydrocorallina (fire corals and hydrocorals) of the class Hydrozoa.

“(6) CORAL REEF.—The term ‘coral reef’ means any reef or shoal composed primarily of corals.

“(7) DEVELOPING COUNTRY WITH A CORAL REEF OR OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCE.—The term ‘developing country with a coral reef or other coastal marine resource’ means—

“(A)(i) a country that has a per capita income of \$725 or less in 1994 United States dollars (commonly referred to as ‘low-income country’), as determined and adjusted on an annual basis by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in its World Development Report; or

“(ii) a country that has a per capita income of more than \$725 but less than \$8,956 in 1994 United States dollars (commonly referred to as ‘middle-income country’), as determined and adjusted on an annual basis by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in its World Development Report; and

“(B) a country that contains at least one coral reef or other coastal marine resource that is of conservation concern.

“(8) ELIGIBLE COUNTRY.—The term ‘eligible country’ means a country designated by the President in accordance with section 905.

“(9) CORAL REEF AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES AGREEMENT.—The term ‘Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Agreement’ or ‘Agreement’ means an Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Agreement as provided for in section 908.

“(10) CORAL REEF AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES FACILITY.—The term ‘Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Facility’ or ‘Facility’ means the Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Facility established in the Department of the Treasury by section 904.

“(11) CORAL REEF AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES FUND.—The term ‘Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Fund’ or ‘Fund’ means a Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Fund provided for in section 909.

“SEC. 904. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FACILITY.

There is established in the Department of the Treasury an entity to be known as the ‘Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Facility’ for the purpose of providing for the administration of debt reduction in accordance with this part.

“SEC. 905. ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for benefits from the Facility under this part, a country shall be a developing country with a coral reef or other coastal marine resource—

“(1) the government of which meets the requirements applicable to Latin American or Caribbean countries under paragraphs (1) through (5) and (7) of section 703(a) of this Act; and

“(2) that has established investment reforms, as evidenced by the conclusion of a bilateral investment treaty with the United States, implementation of an investment sector loan with the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank-supported investment reforms, or other measures, as appropriate.

“(b) ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with subsection (a), the President shall determine whether a country is eligible to receive benefits under this part.

“(2) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—The President shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of the intention of the President to designate a country as an eligible country at least 15 days in advance of any formal determination.

“SEC. 906. REDUCTION OF DEBT OWED TO THE UNITED STATES AS A RESULT OF CONCESSIONAL LOANS UNDER THIS ACT.

“(a) AUTHORITY TO REDUCE DEBT.—

“(1) AUTHORITY.—The President may reduce the amount owed to the United States (or any agency of the United States) that is outstanding as of January 1, 1999, as a result of concessional loans made to an eligible country by the United States under this Act or predecessor foreign economic assistance legislation.

“(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the cost (as defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990) for the reduction of any debt pursuant to this section, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2002 through 2005.

“(3) CERTAIN PROHIBITIONS INAPPLICABLE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A reduction of debt pursuant to this section shall not be considered assistance for purposes of any provision of law limiting assistance to a country.

“(B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—The authority of this section may be exercised notwithstanding section 620(r) of this Act or section 321 of the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975.

“(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF DEBT REDUCTION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any debt reduction pursuant to subsection (a) shall be accomplished at the direction of the Facility by the exchange of a new obligation for obligations of the type referred to in subsection (a) outstanding as of the date specified in subsection (a)(1).

“(2) EXCHANGE OF OBLIGATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Facility shall notify the United States Agency for International Development of an agreement entered into under paragraph (1) with an eligible country to exchange a new obligation for outstanding obligations.

“(B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—At the direction of the Facility, the old obligations that are the subject of the agreement shall be canceled and a new debt obligation for the country shall be established relating to the agreement, and the United States Agency for International Development shall make an adjustment in its accounts to reflect the debt reduction.

“(C) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The following additional terms and conditions shall apply to the reduction of debt under subsection (a)(1) in the same manner as such terms and conditions apply to the reduction of debt under section 704(a)(1) of this Act:

“(1) The provisions relating to repayment of principal under section 705 of this Act.

“(2) The provisions relating to interest on new obligations under section 706 of this Act.

“SEC. 907. AUTHORITY TO ENGAGE IN DEBT-FOR-NATURE SWAPS AND DEBT BUYBACKS.

“(a) LOANS AND CREDITS ELIGIBLE FOR SALE, REDUCTION, OR CANCELLATION.—

“(1) DEBT-FOR-NATURE SWAPS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may, in accordance with this section, sell to any eligible purchaser described in subparagraph (B) any concessional loans described in section 906(a)(1), or on receipt of payment from an eligible purchaser described in subparagraph (B), reduce or cancel such loans or portion thereof, only for the purpose of facilitating a debt-for-nature swap to support eligible activities described in section 908(d).

“(B) ELIGIBLE PURCHASER DESCRIBED.—A loan may be sold, reduced, or canceled under subparagraph (A) only to a purchaser who presents plans satisfactory to the President for using the loan for the purpose of engaging in debt-for-nature swaps to support eligible activities described in section 908(d).

“(C) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—Before the sale under subparagraph (A) to any eligible purchaser described in subparagraph (B), or any reduction or cancellation under such subparagraph (A), of any loan made to an eligible country, the President shall consult with the country concerning the amount of loans to be sold, reduced, or canceled and their uses for debt-for-nature swaps to support eligible activities described in section 908(d).

“(D) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the cost (as defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990) for the reduction of any debt pursuant to subparagraph (A), amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 906(a)(2) shall be made available for such reduction of debt pursuant to subparagraph (A).

“(2) DEBT BUYBACKS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may, in accordance with this section, sell to any eligible country any concessional loans described in section 906(a)(1), or on receipt of payment from an eligible purchaser described in paragraph (1)(B), reduce or cancel such loans or portion thereof, only for the purpose of facilitating a debt buyback by an eligible country of its own qualified debt, only if the eligible country uses an additional amount of the local currency of the eligible country, equal to not less than the lesser of 40 percent of the price paid for such debt by such eligible country, or the difference between the price paid for such debt and the face value of such debt, to support eligible activities described in section 908(d).

“(3) LIMITATION.—The authority provided by paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be available only to the extent that appropriations for the cost (as defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990) of the modification of any debt pursuant to such paragraphs are made in advance.

“(4) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President shall, in accordance with this section, establish the terms and conditions under which loans may be sold, reduced, or canceled pursuant to this section.

“(5) ADMINISTRATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Facility shall notify the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development of eligible purchasers described in paragraph (1)(B) that the President has determined to be eligible under paragraph (1), and shall direct such agency to carry out the sale, reduction, or cancellation of a loan pursuant to such paragraph.

“(B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—Such agency shall make an adjustment in its accounts to reflect the sale, reduction, or cancellation of such a loan.

“(b) DEPOSIT OF PROCEEDS.—The proceeds from the sale, reduction, or cancellation of any loan sold, reduced or canceled pursuant to this section shall be deposited in the United States Government account or accounts established for the repayment of such loan.

“SEC. 908. CORAL REEF AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES AGREEMENT.

“(a) AUTHORITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State is authorized, in consultation with other appropriate officials of the Federal Government, to enter into a Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Agreement with any eligible country concerning the operation and use of the Fund for that country.

“(2) CONSULTATION.—In the negotiation of such an Agreement, the Secretary shall consult with the Board in accordance with section 910.

“(b) CONTENTS OF AGREEMENT.—The requirements contained in section 708(b) of this Act (relating to contents of an agreement) shall apply to an Agreement in the same manner as such requirements apply to an Americas Framework Agreement.

“(c) ADMINISTERING BODY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts disbursed from the Fund in each beneficiary country shall be administered by a body constituted under the laws of that country.

“(2) COMPOSITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The administering body shall consist of—

“(i) one or more individuals appointed by the United States Government;

“(ii) one or more individuals appointed by the government of the beneficiary country; and

“(iii) individuals who represent a broad range of—

“(I) environmental non-governmental organizations of, or active in, the beneficiary country;

“(II) local community development non-governmental organizations of the beneficiary country; and

“(III) scientific, academic, or forestry organizations of the beneficiary country.

“(B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—A majority of the members of the administering body shall be individuals described in subparagraph (A)(iii).

“(3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The requirements contained in section 708(c)(3) of this Act (relating to responsibilities of the administering body) shall apply to an administering body described in paragraph (1) in the same manner as such requirements apply to an administering body described in section 708(c)(1) of this Act.

“(d) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—Amounts deposited in a Fund shall be used only to provide grants to conserve, maintain, and restore the coral reefs and other coastal marine resources in the beneficiary country, through one or more of the following activities:

“(1) Establishment, restoration, protection, and maintenance of parks, protected areas, and reserves.

“(2) Development and implementation of scientifically sound systems of natural resource management, including ‘ridgeline to reef’ and ecosystem management practices.

“(3) Training programs to increase the scientific, technical, and managerial capacities of individuals and organizations involved in conservation efforts.

“(4) Restoration, protection, or sustainable use of diverse marine animal and plant species.

“(5) Development and support of the livelihoods of individuals living near a coral reef or other coastal marine resource, in a manner consistent with protecting those resources.

“(e) GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Grants made from a Fund shall be made to—

“(A) nongovernmental environmental, forestry, conservation, and indigenous peoples organizations of, or active in, the beneficiary country;

“(B) other appropriate local or regional entities of, or active in, the beneficiary country; or

“(C) in exceptional circumstances, the government of the beneficiary country.

“(2) PRIORITY.—In providing grants under paragraph (1), priority shall be given to projects that are run by nongovernmental organizations and other private entities and that involve local communities in their planning and execution.

“(f) REVIEW OF LARGER GRANTS.—Any grant of more than \$100,000 from a Fund shall be subject to veto by the Government of the United States or the government of the beneficiary country.

“(g) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—In the event that a country ceases to meet the eligibility requirements set forth in section 905(a), as determined by the President pursuant to section 905(b), then grants from the Fund for that country may only be made to nongovernmental organizations until such time as the President determines that such country meets the eligibility requirements set forth in section 905(a).

“SEC. 909. CORAL REEF AND OTHER COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES FUND.

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Each beneficiary country that enters into a Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Agreement under section 908 shall be required to establish a Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Fund to receive payments of interest on new obligations undertaken by the beneficiary country under this part.

“(b) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO OPERATION OF FUND.—The following terms and conditions shall apply to the Fund in the same manner as such terms as conditions apply to an Enterprise for the Americas Fund under section 707 of this Act:

“(1) The provision relating to deposits under subsection (b) of such section.

“(2) The provision relating to investments under subsection (c) of such section.

“(3) The provision relating to disbursements under subsection (d) of such section.

“SEC. 910. BOARD.

“(a) ENTERPRISE FOR THE AMERICAS BOARD.—The Enterprise for the Americas Board established under section 610(a) of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (7 U.S.C. 1738i(a)) shall, in addition to carrying out the responsibilities of the Board under section 610(c) of such Act, carry out the duties described in subsection (c) of this section for the purposes of this part.

“(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

“(1) INITIAL MEMBERSHIP.—Of the six members of the Enterprise for the Americas

Board appointed by the President under section 610(b)(1)(A) of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (7 U.S.C. 1738i(b)(1)(A)), at least one shall be a representative of the Department of State, at least one shall be a representative of the Department of the Treasury, and at least one shall be a representative of the Inter-American Foundation.

“(2) **ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP.**—The Enterprise for the Americas Board shall be composed of an additional four members appointed by the President as follows:

“(A) Two representatives from the United States Government, including a representative of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a representative of the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

“(B) Two representatives from private non-governmental environmental, scientific, forestry, or academic organizations with experience and expertise in preservation, maintenance, sustainable uses, and restoration of coral reefs and other coastal marine resources.

“(C) **DUTIES.**—The duties described in this subsection are as follows:

“(1) Advise the Secretary of State on the negotiations of Coral Reef and Other Coastal Marine Resources Agreements.

“(2) Ensure, in consultation with—

“(A) the government of the beneficiary country;

“(B) nongovernmental organizations of the beneficiary country;

“(C) nongovernmental organizations of the region (if appropriate);

“(D) environmental, scientific, oceanographic, and academic leaders of the beneficiary country; and

“(E) environmental, scientific, oceanographic, and academic leaders of the region (as appropriate),

that a suitable administering body is identified for each Fund.

“(3) Review the programs, operations, and fiscal audits of each administering body.

“SEC. 911. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS.

“The President shall consult with the appropriate congressional committees on a periodic basis to review the operation of the Facility under this part and the eligibility of countries for benefits from the Facility under this part.

“SEC. 912. ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE CONGRESS.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than December 31 of each year, the President shall prepare and transmit to the Congress an annual report concerning the operation of the Facility for the prior fiscal year. Such report shall include—

“(1) a description of the activities undertaken by the Facility during the previous fiscal year;

“(2) a description of any Agreement entered into under this part;

“(3) a report on any Funds that have been established under this part and on the operations of such Funds; and

“(4) a description of any grants that have been provided by administering bodies pursuant to Agreements under this part.

“(b) **SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS IN ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than December 15 of each year, each member of the Board shall be entitled to receive a copy of the report required under subsection (a). Each member of the Board may prepare and submit supplemental views to the President on the implementation of this part by December 31 for inclusion in the annual report when it is transmitted to Congress pursuant to this section.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman

from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I am pleased that the House is considering H.R. 2272, the Coral Reef and Coastal Marine Conservation Act of 2001, a bill introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and co-sponsored by the distinguished chairman emeritus of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN); the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the vice chairman, and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2272 authorizes \$10 million for each of the fiscal years 2002 through 2005 to build upon the environmental and conservation programs of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative and the Tropical Forest Conservation Act that was recently marked up by the Committee on International Relations, passed by Congress, and enacted into law by the President.

In simple terms, Madam Speaker, the Coral Reef and Coastal Marine Conservation Act helps to protect the world's dwindling coral reefs through debt-for-nature swaps, debt buy-backs, or debt restructuring instruments.

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This successful program, which is modeled on former President Bush's innovative Enterprise for the Americas initiative, is another creative example of how we can address developing country debt while helping to protect our planet's environment.

Madam Speaker, this bill gives the President the authority to reduce certain forms of debt owed to the United States in exchange for the deposit by eligible developing countries of local currencies in a coral reef facility to preserve, restore, and maintain coral reefs throughout the developing world.

These funds are used by qualified non-governmental organizations working to preserve the world's most endangered coral reefs.

This program is overseen by a board of directors in the United States that is comprised of U.S. public and private officials; and the board, in turn, annually reports to Congress on the progress made to implement the program's objectives.

I am pleased that key U.S. Government agencies, including the State and Treasury Departments, as well as the Inter-American Foundation, are mem-

bers of the Enterprise for America's board and charged with the oversight of these programs.

In closing, I wish to commend the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for his leadership, vision, and dedication in promoting and expanding conservation efforts in the developing world. I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 2272.

I congratulate and appreciate the opportunity to work with the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) on this bill, as well as all bills.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2272. First, I would like to commend our colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), for introducing this important piece of legislation; our colleague, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for his leadership on this issue; and the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for moving the bill so expeditiously through the legislative process.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 2272 will help provide vital protection to valuable coral reefs and coastal marine resources around the globe. The bill provides significant funding for the administration to pursue actively debt swaps, buy-backs, and reduction and restructuring with developing nations in return for concrete efforts to protect coral reefs and sensitive coastal marine environments.

Coral reefs and coastal marine environments provide a host of significant benefits to mankind. They harbor a major share of the world's marine biological diversity, and act as vital nurseries and seeding grounds for many sensitive deep sea species. They also provide the foundation for critical economic, social, and cultural activities of almost immeasurable value.

Coral reefs are extremely sensitive marine treasures. The shocking reports of massive coral bleaching that has occurred around the globe in recent years should serve as a wake-up call for all of us. Urgent action is needed to help mitigate the contributions that human activities are making to this problem.

Our bill provides just the kind of intelligent, targeted, and mutually beneficial assistance that is required; and I urge all of our colleagues to support H.R. 2272.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the learned gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me; and I also thank our ranking Democrat member, leader, and original cosponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS); the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN); and the

gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for helping out on this crucial piece of legislation.

I also want to thank one of the intellectual authors of this legislation, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), for his leadership on the debt-for-nature swap initiative.

The Coral Reef and Coastal Marine Conservation Act of 2001 will credit qualified developing nations for each dollar spent on a comprehensive reef preservation or management program designed to protect these unique ecosystems from degradation. This bill builds on the model of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, expanding it to include coral reefs.

Madam Speaker, it is said that coral reefs are the rainforests of the ocean. Although they occupy less than one-quarter of 1 percent of the marine environment, coral reefs are home to more than one-quarter of all known marine fish species.

Coral reefs are among the most biologically rich ecosystems on Earth. About 4,000 species of fish and 800 species of reef-building corals have already been identified. However, scientists have barely begun to catalogue the total number of species found within these habitats. Their scientific value cannot be underestimated. Yet, they are disappearing at an alarming rate.

According to a 1998 study conducted by the United Nations and various international environmental organizations, 58 percent of the world's reefs are potentially threatened by human activity. These activities include coastal development, overfishing, marine pollution, and runoff from inland deforestation and farming.

More than one-quarter of the world's reefs are at risk. Predictions made in 1992 were that 10 to 20 years from now, another 30 percent of the world's coral reefs could be effectively destroyed, adding to the 10 percent that already were destroyed.

While these numbers sound alarmist, figures today show that they are conservative. Most Caribbean and South Pacific mangroves have disappeared, while India, Southeast Asia, and West Africa have each lost about one-half of their mangroves.

Almost a half a billion people, 8 percent of the world's population, live within 100 kilometers of a coral reef. A decline in the health of coral reefs has implications for the lives of millions of people who depend upon them.

The burden of foreign debt falls especially hard on the smallest nations, such as island nations in the Caribbean and Pacific. With few natural resources, these nations often resort to harvesting or otherwise exploiting coral reefs and other marine habitats to earn hard currency to service foreign debt. At least 40 countries lack any marine protected areas for their coral reef systems.

This legislation will make available resources for environmental stewardship that would otherwise be the low-

est priority in a developing country. It will reduce debt by investing locally in programs that will strengthen indigenous economies by creating long-term management policies that will preserve the natural resources upon which local commerce is based.

The Tropical Forest Conservation Act has set a path for debt-for-nature swaps, and the United States has an important role to play in assisting in the protection of the world's natural resources. This bill extends the support from forests to the oceans, and critical countries like Jamaica, Belize, Dominican Republic, the Philippines, and Thailand could benefit from this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the legislation and take an important step to helping preserve one of the world's largest, most precious, and most threatened resources.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), one of the leaders in this field of legislation.

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan bill, which enhances international efforts to protect critical coral reef habitats, and commend the author, my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, and also the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), for introducing this piece of legislation.

I say this especially because one does not have to come from an island to have a sense of appreciation what coral reefs are all about. I know there are a lot of reefs in Illinois and Ohio. But certainly, I want to really commend not only our chairman of the Committee on International Relations, but also our ranking senior Democratic member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for their leadership in bringing this measure to the floor. Indeed, I am honored to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, coral reefs and the marine life they support are the world's most biologically diverse marine ecosystems. Yet, it is only recently we have begun to appreciate how important coral reefs are to local, regional, and national interests, especially the economies of several countries.

For example, coral reefs provide fisheries for food and raw materials for new medicines and pharmaceuticals. Tourism and recreation flourish along coral reef tracts and provide jobs and real income for coastal residents. They also provide effective shore protection, shielding coastal communities and harbors from violent storms and erosion.

Yet, because corals depend on light and require clear water for growth, they are remarkably fragile. Recent evidence indicates that coral reefs are deteriorating worldwide, and many are

highly at risk. Symptoms include the loss of coral diversity, an increased abundance of algae, an increased frequency in outbreaks of coral bleaching and other diseases, such as black band disease.

Scientists and managers still lack critical information about the causes, but evidence suggests that a variety of human forces, including shoreline development, increased sediments and pollutants in the water, ship groundings, and overfishing, including destructive fishing practices such as the use of dynamite and cyanide, have all contributed to the decline of healthy coral reef ecosystems.

Madam Speaker, the destruction of coral reefs is particularly profound in developing nations in the tropics. Legislation before us addresses this problem, and is specifically targeted to encourage coral reef resource protection in these developing countries.

By authorizing the administration to sell, reduce, or cancel loans owed by these nations to the United States in an amount equivalent to what these countries spend on coral conservation programs, we promote the economic growth while significantly enhancing international efforts to protect and restore coral reefs and coastal marine resources.

Madam Speaker, this is a very worthwhile initiative and piece of legislation. I again commend my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, for his authorship of this bill; and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), an indefatigable guardian of the environment.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I appreciate his courtesy and leadership, as with our chair of the full committee, and my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Madam Speaker, I think it is important that we take a step back and look at this legislation today because as we have heard, there is a crying need for this type of protection.

Coral reefs are indeed among the most diverse and productive communities on our world. They are home to nearly a quarter of all marine plants and animals.

We have heard a lot of numbers here on the floor today, but there are nearly 1 million species of fish, crab, eel, sponges, worms, grasses, all of these organisms that live on the reefs or depend directly on them.

We find that the coral provides a natural filtration system for seawater. It, as we have heard, protects coastal landscapes, maintaining coastal quality of water. There are millions of people on the coastal areas who receive important protections from storms, wave damage, and erosion, to say nothing of economic opportunities dealing with fishing and tourism.

Madam Speaker, we have heard each speaker use slightly different statistics to talk about the alarming rate of destruction. Sadly, all of the information we have received is true. There may be different statistics, but they are all bad. We have more than 10 percent of the inventory of coral reefs already destroyed; and if we take the big view, because what we are doing today in the United States and around the world, we are taking steps that are going to have a profound impact over the next generation, and 70 percent of the coral reefs at risk could be gone in the next 40 years.

Madam Speaker, the legislation before us is an important extension of the protections that we have had for the rain forests. It will provide the administration to be able to actively pursue debt swaps and buy-backs. It is going to help give those developing countries the tools that they need and would otherwise not be available.

But we on this floor ought to be clear that this is just the beginning, because we are in a situation now where we are in the United States only investing \$1 in oceanographic research for every \$13 that we put in outer space, when the world's fishery industry are now costing \$1.33 to harvest each \$1 of fish, producing dramatic overharvest, and we are going to have to step up and put serious money on the table, negotiate serious trade agreements, to provide for the protection of these important resources.

Madam Speaker, I think this legislation is important. It is a step in the right direction. It is relatively painless. But I do hope we in this Congress will be willing to do our part, because the stakes are high. We are going to have to do more, and we are going to have to do it soon.

□ 1515

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

Before yielding back our time, I just would like to make an observation. It speaks to the strength of this body and this Nation that in the midst of a war we take time to pass important environmental legislation, as we are about to do; that we have taken time to recognize the historic continuity of the friendship between two democracies, Australia and the United States; and that we have had the creativity and courage to move with respect to Pakistan as it aligned itself with the United States in the fight against terrorism.

This is a fine day for Congress and for the American people, and it is a message to our enemies that we shall prevail.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. HYDE. Madam Speaker, I should very much like to associate myself with the trenchant remarks of the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Madam Speaker, having no more speakers, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2272, as amended.

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. HYDE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

INTERNET TAX NONDISCRIMINATION ACT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1552) to extend the moratorium enacted by the Internet Tax Freedom Act through 2006, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1552

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF INTERNET TAX FREEDOM ACT MORATORIUM.

Section 1101(a) of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (47 U.S.C. 151 note) is amended by striking "3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act" and inserting "on November 1, 2003".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1552, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1552, the Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act. Over the last several years, the Internet has revolutionized commerce in a manner few could have imagined. The Internet has expanded consumer choices, enhanced competition and enabled individuals, as well as brick and mortar retailers, to avail themselves of a national marketplace once reserved to a privileged few.

While government deserves some credit for helping create the technological infrastructure of the new digital economy, government regulation and taxation threaten to impede its tremendous commercial potential.

In 1998, Congress passed the Internet Tax Freedom Act to facilitate the commercial development of the Internet. Contrary to widely held impressions, the Internet Tax Freedom Act does not specifically exempt Internet retailers from collecting and remitting all sales taxes. Rather, it prohibits States from imposing multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce and shields consumers from new Internet access taxes. These limited protections will expire on October 21, less than a week from today.

Introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. Cox), who also authored the Internet Tax Freedom Act, H.R. 1552 extends the ban on new Internet access taxes and on all multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. The Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law has conducted a number of Internet tax hearings this Congress, and I commend the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARR), for his thorough and balanced consideration of this issue.

The version of H.R. 1552 reported by the Committee on the Judiciary preserves the protections contained in the Internet Tax Freedom Act until November 1, 2003. Renewal of these provisions for 2 years represents a compromise approach that simply maintains the existing moratorium on Internet taxes. A 2-year renewal also provides the best legislative vehicle for getting an Internet tax extension bill to the President before its imminent expiration.

If H.R. 1552 is not passed, Internet commerce will be subject to State and local taxes in more than 7,500 taxing jurisdictions. As Chief Justice John Marshall recognized over 200 years ago, the "power to tax involves the power to destroy." Failure to extend the moratorium may result in the imposition of a complex web of taxes that would destroy the viability of this critical medium at a time the technology industry and broader economy can least afford it.

Recent events have only underlined the fragility of the technology sector. Information technology companies have been buffeted by falling stock prices and signs of a deepening economic downturn. The last thing these companies need is more uncertainty, and passage of H.R. 1552 will provide a measure of stability during this turbulent period.

Last year, the House overwhelmingly passed an extension of the Internet tax moratorium by a vote of 352 to 75, but this measure did not receive a vote from the other body. This year there is no time to delay, and I urge support of the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.