

allow members to be disagreeable. I think what it does is foster a committee where members cooperate and get to know each other and work together, and even though we may not agree on everything, every member should have a right to offer his or her ideas about the pending legislation.

Now back to the bill at hand, and I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for supporting the extension of the Higher Education Act for 3 months, and it is my fervent desire in the next 3 months Congress will reenact this authorization to the benefit of millions of American students.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3784, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY TO ACCEPT AND EXPEND FUNDS

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3765) to extend through December 31, 2007, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3765

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

SECTION 1. FUNDING TO PROCESS PERMITS.

Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (33 U.S.C. 2201 note; 114 Stat. 2594; 117 Stat. 1836) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking “In fiscal years 2001 through 2005, the” and inserting “The”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) DURATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority provided under this section shall be in effect from October 1, 2000, through December 31, 2007.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. 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 Louisiana?

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3765, to authorize an extension of the Army Corps of Engineers' section 214 program. Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 allows the Army Corps of Engineers to accept and expend funds provided by non-Federal public entities to hire additional personnel to process regulatory permits.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3765 is urgently needed since the authority for this program expires on September 30 of this calendar year. If this program expires, the corps will have to fire some regulatory personnel, reducing its ability to process permits in a timely manner.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has heard from Members on both sides of the aisle supporting the section 214 program. H.R. 3765 is identical to the language in section 2003 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July 14, 2005, by a vote of 406 to 14.

While the other body has not yet acted upon the Water Resources Development Act this year, I am hopeful that in the wake of Hurricane Katrina they move quickly to pass the bill providing for the water resources needs of our Nation. But because the authority for the section 214 program is expiring, it is necessary to move this piece separately.

I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and our colleagues from Washington State for introducing this bill. I urge all Members to vote in favor of H.R. 3765.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I support House passage of H.R. 3765. This bill extends through December 31, 2007, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899.

This program is popular and well received, particularly in the northwest part of the country. And I congratulate the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD), my committee colleague, for his attention to this issue and for securing today's consideration of this bill.

The language in H.R. 3765 is identical to that which is contained in H.R. 2864, the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July 14 by an overwhelming vote of 406 to 14. This bill should likewise receive strong support.

Today's consideration of one section of this larger Water Resources Development Act should not be viewed as an indication that the larger bill will not be enacted this year. I remain opti-

mistic that the other House of Congress will soon consider this vital legislation, particularly in light of the vital role of flood damage reduction, navigation, and storm damage reduction projects in protecting lives and property and enhancing economic well-being.

The tragic events associated with Hurricane Katrina indicate how important our water infrastructure really is. However, the Senate is not likely to act on the broader legislation before the Secretary's authority to accept funds expires on September 30, just 10 days from now. By providing this extension, the program can continue uninterrupted; and I urge support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding me this time, and my colleagues on the committee and the gentleman.

I also want to express my gratitude to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), as well as the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), subcommittee Chair, for their support and recognition of the urgency of this matter.

The sense of what we are about today is trying to extend a bill that is already law that is included in the WRDA bill, which we have already passed in this body but that has not passed the other body. The reason we need to do this is common sense, and it is about preserving jobs.

The listing under the Endangered Species Act of salmon in the Pacific Northwest overwhelm the Corps of Engineers and other regulatory agencies in their ability to process permits in a timely manner. Section 214(d) of the Water Resources Development Act allows local entities to provide financial assistance to the corps to provide for the resources needed to process permits more efficaciously. It does not in any way prejudice the outcome of that permitting application. It merely expedites it and provides valuable needed resources. This has been used successfully in partnership throughout the Northwest and the west coast and has saved literally millions of dollars and thousands of jobs in our region.

I reiterate that the bill has passed the House already in its portion of the WRDA, that it is existing law. So we are not really trying to change anything. What we are trying to do is extend this vital provision for several more years so that permits in the process right now are not immediately stopped, which they otherwise would be without passage of this.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their leadership and recognition of the

importance of this bill. I urge its passage.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding me this time.

I rise in support of section 214, which was introduced by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD), my friend and colleague.

This is a critical piece of legislation for many States including Washington, and I hope that every member of the delegation rises to voice strong bipartisan support.

We have, in the last few weeks, seen in Katrina what nature can do, and section 214 enables communities to fund a fast-track Federal permit process by the Army Corps of Engineers. A modest investment by local governments can reap enormous community benefits in time and money without compromising either the independence or the integrity of the permit process.

Seattle, the community I represent, has used section 214 to save time and millions of dollars on a number of important local projects including the Seawall-Viaduct project. Unless we act, this important tool will expire by the end of the month.

Hurricane Katrina reminds us how vulnerable we are to natural forces. Seattle is an earthquake zone. There is no one living in Seattle who does not think we are going to have another earthquake. And we must move quickly, in my view, to replace the aging and fragile viaduct along the waterfront which carries over 100,000 cars a day. The viaduct is a lifeline of the region. If it falls, the port of Seattle will be blocked. It will create havoc in the whole area. It connects our communities and is the transportation artery for goods arriving at the port of Seattle and going to the middle of the country. In fact, Seattle is often called "Chicago West."

It would be a national catastrophe if we lost the viaduct, and we are trying to prepare for it. We are counting on 214 as part of our comprehensive viaduct replacement strategy, and we really do not want to lose this tool at this point. Without it, the seawall, the viaduct's foundation, will surely take much longer; and time is not on our side. We had an earthquake here about 3 years ago which shook for 60 seconds. Had it shaken for about 90 seconds, we probably would have had the catastrophe at that point.

It is not a matter of if. It is really a matter of when this happens in Seattle, and we must prepare. And we need this tool.

I thank the committee for bringing this bill forward and urge every Member to support it.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I have no fur-

ther requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I thank our colleagues from the other side of the aisle for working on this bipartisan piece of legislation. It is critically important, and I urge its passage.

Madam 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 Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3765.

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.

SPORTFISHING AND RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3649) to ensure funding for sportfishing and boating safety programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund through the end of fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate Amendment:

On page 7, after line 3, insert the following new section:

SEC. 302. CORRECTION OF DISTRIBUTION OF OBLIGATION AUTHORITY UNDER SECTION 1102(c)(4)(A) OF PUBLIC LAW 109-59.

Notwithstanding section 1102(c)(4)(A) of Public Law 109-59; 119 Stat. 1144, et seq., or any other provision of law, for fiscal year 2005, obligation authority for funds made available under title I of division H of Public Law 108-447; 118 Stat. 3216 for expenses necessary to discharge the functions of the Secretary of Transportation with respect to traffic and highway safety under chapter 301 of title 49, United States Code, and part C of subtitle V of title 49, United States Code, shall be made available in an amount equal to the funds provided therein: Provided, That the additional obligation authority needed to meet the requirements of this section shall be withdrawn from the obligation authority previously distributed to the other programs, projects, and activities funded by the amount deducted under section 117 of title I of division H of Public Law 108-447.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. 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. 3649.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I will be very brief in my comments on this. The bill that we are considering today is nearly identical to the legislation that was approved by this body by a 401 to 1 vote last week. H.R. 3649, as passed by the Senate, includes an additional technical amendment that will temporarily extend funding for national highway safety programs through the end of the current fiscal year.

H.R. 3649 will also ensure that funding is made available for State recreational boating programs for the remainder of fiscal year 2005. These funds support boating safety and education, outreach and communication programs in each and every State and U.S. territory to promote safe and responsible boating and fishing practices nationwide.

I thank my colleagues for their continued support of this important legislation and for their work to improve access and safety on our Nation's waterways. I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 3649.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to voice my support for H.R. 3649, the Sportfishing and Recreational Boating Safety Amendments Act of 2005.

The purpose of this bill is very simple: to correct two provisions in the recently passed H.R. 3, the SAFETEA-LU bill. One concerns the reauthorization of the Coast Guard's boating safety program; and the other, Vehicle Safety Operations and Research funding.

The short-term extension that extended the highway program and the funding of the Recreational Boating Safety program until August 15 did not have this provision. However, SAFETEA-LU provided for long-term reauthorization and funding of the Recreational Boating Safety program beginning on October 1, the new fiscal year. So as a result, gas taxes that are collected between August 15 and October 1 from recreational boaters cannot be given to the State boating law administrators to fund their recreational boating safety programs.

H.R. 3649 corrects this problem by extending the old Recreational Boating Safety and Sportfish programs until October 1, 2005, when the new funding formulas take effect.

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Madam Speaker, the Recreational Boating Safety Grant program provides 50/50 matching funds to the States for their recreational boating safety and education programs.

These programs save lives. It is our responsibility to see that there is not an interruption in this program.

H.R. 3649 also corrects a funding problem that resulted in a \$23.7 million