stands in excess of $2.1 billion. This unique public-private wetland conservation partnership effort is a classic case of how government should work and because of these proactive conservation grants dozens of species are witnessing a renaissance in the growth in their population numbers.

It is, therefore, not surprising that this program has been enthusiastically supported by nearly every conservation organization in America including Ducks Unlimited, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, California Waterfowl Association, National Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, the National Rifle Association, Pheasants Forever and the Wildlife Management Institute.

For the past 5 years, Congress has appropriated about $40 million each year for the North American Wetlands Conservation Program. In its budget submission, the Bush administration recommend an allocation of $41.6 million and under current law the maximum amount that can be appropriated in FY'07 is $75 million. Under the terms of this legislation, the North American Wetlands Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2006, existing funding levels would be extended for an additional 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act has been remarkably effective and successful in conserving wetlands. This program has earned an extension and I compliment my colleagues for joining with me in this effort.

I am confident that this important legislation will be warmly embraced by the Administration and President Bush who has stated that ''The North American Wetlands Conservation Reauthorization Act shows our concern for the environment and our respect for future generations of Americans''. I look forward to giving the President the opportunity to sign this important conservation measure into law this year.

VERMONT'S OUTSTANDING BUSINESS IS EMPLOYEE-OWNED

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the Nation's attention, and to celebrate, the winner of this year's Deane C. Davis Outstanding Vermont Business Award, King Arthur, Flour of Norwich, Vermont.

Founded in 1790, back when the Nation's President was George Washington, King Arthur is the oldest flour company in America. It is also one of the most progressive. It had three owners 215 years ago; today, it has 200. For those who work at King Arthur Flour are not just employees: They own the company. In 1996 its management began an Employee Stock Ownership Plan [ESOP]. Today, King Arthur Flour is a 100 percent employee-owned company.

And King Arthur's president and CEO, Steven Voigt, is helping businesses all across the Nation follow the company's example, for Steve Voigt is chair of the ESOP Association. The ESOP Association, founded in 1978, is a national non-profit membership organization, with 18 local chapters, serving approximately 2,400 ESOPs.

King Arthur Flour itself was founded in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1790 and moved its headquarters to Vermont in 1986. The company has grown since then from a regional staple to a brand known nationwide for its purity and consistent quality; from a small mail-order business with five employees in 1990 to the premier baker's resource in America with nearly 200 employees today; from a family-owned operation for five generations to a 100 percent employee-owned business. Its flour is sold in supermarkets in everyone of the Nation's 50 States.

While most of America's flour makers for the retail market have seen their sales decline, King Arthur has bucked the trend: Its sales have increased 15 percent over the past decade. This should be no surprise. Employee ownership is good for business.

Ten years ago, King Arthur made the move toward employee ownership. It holds quarterly owners' meetings, and its employees gather monthly in what they call ''Town Meetings'' to keep information flowing and to make sure decisions are participatory. The company's books are open.

An employee-owned company can have a larger and more progressive agenda than just its core business. King Arthur's employee-owners have established a program that allows them to volunteer up to 40 hours a year to a non-profit orgnization—and get paid by the company for that time. King Arthur knows that simply making and selling healthy, non-bleached and non-bromated flour is not enough: It has been offering free bread-making classes to 12,000 people a year in 40 American cities. And it has taught over 60,000 middle school students to bake bread—and taught them about giving and sharing, by providing the students ingredients so that they can bake bread for local foodbanks.

King Arthur Flour employees are worth recognizing because they show so plainly that CEOs who run companies from the top down, and who reward themselves with 431 times the amount that their average employees make, are not essential to running a corporation efficiently and well. ESOPS are soundly managed, good to work for, forward-looking, environmentally conscious. And they make a profit.

So there are many reasons why, in Vermont, one of our major ESOPs, King Arthur Flour, has just been recognized by the Chamber of Commerce and Vermont Business Magazine as the outstanding business in the entire state.

There is much to be learned from the model that the employees at King Arthur Flour have developed so successfully.

AMENDING TITLE 49, UNITED STATES CODE

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5449.

This bill, sponsored by Representative LATOURETTE, will restore fairness and accountability to the FAA's negotiating process.

It is time that Congress steps in to ensure that no serious damage is done to the integrity and safety of our aviation system. We must support the men and women who help keep our airways safe and on time.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been trying to circumvent real negotiations and to unilaterally impose a contract on the air traffic controllers. Increasingly, they have refused to negotiate in good faith in an effort to create a false impasse.

Congress must act! Earlier this week, the FAA moved to start implementing its unilateral changes to the terms and conditions of employment for our nation's air traffic controllers.

The system is already facing a massive staffing crisis that could leave fewer and fewer qualified and trained controllers guiding record air traffic. More than 7,000 air traffic controllers are expected to retire over the next nine years. Air traffic controller staffing is critical. We will need 1,000 new air traffic controllers per year over the next five years to avert a staffing crisis. These conditions will lead to an erosion of talent at the agency because retirement-eligible controllers, the FAA's most experienced, would see the imposition as a reason to retire. This will in turn make recruiting replacement controllers of quality and excellence much more difficult. Possible delays due to staff shortages and inexperienced staff, as well as the closing of severely understaffed facilities could impose hundreds of millions of dollars in unnecessary costs for consumers and communities.

H.R. 5449 would encourage the FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) in the contract negotiations to reach an agreement and turn toward other important matters, including the future growth and safety of the U.S. air traffic system.

This bill would allow for the existing sections of the law to be utilized to solve the contractual differences—the same way disputes are settled for other federal workers. It would allow for this and future disputes to be settled in a manner that ensures a fair hearing for both sides.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5449 and restore fairness to this negotiating process and keep America's airways flowing safely and professionally.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I was present and voting during the series of rollcall votes that included rollcall No. 226, final passage of the FY2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. While I believed that I had voted ''yea'' on the measure, apparently the electronic voting system did not register this vote. I would like to ensure that the record reflect that my vote, had it been recorded, would have been ''yea'' on rollcall No. 226.