

Host families: Nestor and Laurie Jaramillo, Stephen and Elizabeth Smith, John and Mary O'Toole.

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH) Central America: Father Ron Hicks.

The U.S. Embassy in San Salvador: thanks to Consul General Virginia Hotchner and the entire staff of the Consular Section for their assistance in providing non-immigrant visas for the children.

Mr. Chao Lee from my St. Paul office: special thanks to Chao for his hard work and tenacity in working with Friends of the Orphans and the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador to secure non-immigrant visas for the children.

Madam Speaker, in honor of the staff of Friends of the Orphans, U.S. Embassy staff in San Salvador, and the doctors, pediatricians and nurses of the Fairview Southdale Hospital and compassionate citizens who made an impact on the lives of the five Salvadoran orphans, I submit this statement for the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BAY AREA REGIONAL WATER RECYCLING PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to be joined by many of my colleagues in introducing legislation to help the San Francisco Bay Area to solve its water challenges. The bill is a revision of legislation I first introduced in the 109th Congress, and will provide local agencies with the Federal partner that they need to implement an ambitious and forward-thinking regional water recycling program.

The City of Pittsburg and the Delta Diablo Sanitation District, in my congressional district, have been leading the charge, investing time, energy, and local funds in developing water recycling projects to help meet regional water needs.

My new legislation, the Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program Authorization Act of 2007, would authorize a federal partner for the effort in Pittsburg, as well as for similar programs in Antioch, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Pacifica, South Santa Clara County, Redwood City, and San Jose.

We put the tools for these Federal-local water recycling partnerships in place with the historic Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, which not only included my Central Valley Project Improvement Act but featured a provision now known simply as the "Title XVI" water recycling program.

In my introductory remarks for last year's version of the bill, I made the case for the Title XVI program and the importance of water recycling. Although the Bush administration continues to oppose funding water recycling, the case has only gotten stronger since then, as evidenced by the breadth of local support for this bill and for the Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program. I am also including in the record an editorial from the Contra Costa Times supporting the earlier bill.

The Bay Area Regional Water Recycling Program is a collaboration of public utilities

that helps to meet our region's and state's growing water needs through a set of recycling and reclamation projects. The projects in this coalition have been repeatedly vetted, both internally at the local level and through each step of the Title XVI review process.

Although these worthy projects have supplied local funding, and secured matching State funding, they still need the Federal partner to step up. There is a clear Federal interest in these projects, as there is in the other successful regional recycling programs like those of Southern California. A good water recycling program stretches existing supplies and provides certainty to all of the water users in the area; conflict can be reduced even in a critically dry year. As we all know, a stable and reliable regional water supply makes good neighbors.

This new bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the following Bay Area water reuse projects: Antioch Recycled Water Project (Delta Diablo Sanitation District, City of Antioch); Pacifica Recycled Water Project (North Coast County Water District); Mountain View/Moffett Area Water Reuse Project (City of Palo Alto, City of Mountain View); Pittsburg Recycled Water Project (Delta Diablo Sanitation District, City of Pittsburg); Redwood City Recycled Water Project; South Santa Clara County Recycled Water Project (Santa Clara Valley Water District, South County Regional Wastewater Authority); and South Bay Advanced Recycled Water Treatment Facility (Santa Clara Valley Water District, City of San Jose).

These seven projects are estimated to make 12,205 acre-feet of water available annually in the short term, and 37,600 acre-feet annually in the long term, all while reducing demand on the Delta and on existing water infrastructure. The new bill also directs the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to fully fund the San Jose Area Water Reclamation and Reuse Project, first authorized in the original Title XVI legislation.

These programs are a fiscal and environmental win-win, and encouraging them is sound federal policy. I commend my original cosponsors for joining in this effort to support our region's water recycling initiative: Reps. ANNA ESHOO, ELLEN TAUSCHER, TOM LANTOS, MIKE HONDA, ZOE LOFGREN, JERRY MCNERNEY, and PETE STARK.

I'm glad to be working with my Bay Area colleagues to help our region's water reuse program, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

[From the Contra Costa Times, Jan. 25, 2007]

FUND WATER RECYCLING

One of the most effective ways to protect our environment and efficiently use natural resources is recycling. It is particularly true of water, which can be used more than once.

There is no good reason to flush wastewater into rivers, bays, estuaries and the ocean if it can be treated and used again for other purposes such as irrigating parks and golf courses.

That is the philosophy behind six Bay Area water recycling projects ready to begin once they are fully funded. They are in Pittsburg, Antioch, Pacifica, Palo Alto-Mountain View, Redwood City and South Santa Clara County.

The recycled water will be treated and piped to water golf courses, parks, school grounds and roadway medians, and will be used by some businesses.

Half of the money for the projects will come from local sources. One-fourth will

come from the state, including Proposition 50 funds. Another one-fourth will come from the federal government under a bill sponsored by Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez.

Pittsburg has taken the lead in the recycling effort, has raised local money, has some of the infrastructure in place and already is doing some recycling. Antioch is not far behind.

Both cities are at the top of the list for the second round of state funding for recycled-water projects.

However, the Department of Water Resources, which can approve the money by administrative decision, needs a bit of prodding by local legislators.

Miller's bill, HR 6218, which has bipartisan support, also needs quick approval.

Together, the six Bay Area projects would recycle nearly 10,000 acre-feet of water per year. That is not a large percentage of the total volume of water used in the area, but it is a significant amount and would help spur more recycling efforts.

The total cost of the six projects is \$74.8 million. But the state and federal governments' share is only \$18.7 million each. The state money already is available, and there is no reason to believe the federal funds will not be forthcoming.

Recycling is not the only way to meet the Bay Area's and California's water needs, but it must be part of the solution. Not only does it use water effectively, it also reduces pollution of the Delta, San Pablo Bay and San Francisco Bay.

We trust state and federal officials will agree and act quickly to help local efforts to recycle an essential resource.

THE WYLAND FOUNDATION'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AQUARIUM OF NIAGARA

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the Wyland Foundation for its outstanding achievements in environmental education programs. Since 1993, the Wyland Foundation has dedicated itself to protecting the earth's oceans by bridging the world of art and science.

The Wyland Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, and preserving the world's oceans, waterways, and marine life. The foundation, led by the artist Wyland, encourages environmental awareness through education programs, life-size public arts projects, and community events. The Wyland Foundation strives to inspire as many people as possible—especially school children—to learn more about our oceans and aquatic habitats.

Perhaps the Wyland Foundation's best known initiative is the Whaling Walls: Art in Public Places. Through Whaling Walls, the Wyland Foundation works with communities to paint large-scale murals of migrating gray whales, breaching humpbacks, blue whales, and other marine life. The program is predicated on the idea that the best way to teach someone about environmental conservation is to show them what they are conserving.

The 81st Whaling Wall was painted at the Aquarium of Niagara in Niagara Falls, New York in 1998. The project allowed children ranging from three to eighteen years old to

work side-by-side with Wyland to create a beautiful indoor mural. Niagara's Whaling Wall is a regional treasure that has helped foster a greater appreciation and awareness for our world's oceans.

Madam Speaker, I want to again commend the Wyland Foundation for their commitment to protecting the world's oceans, and their partnership with the Aquarium of Niagara.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I missed rollcall Votes No. 136–138 on March 12, 2007 and rollcall votes No 139–141 on March 13, 2007. It was six suspension votes H.R. 85, the Energy Technology Transfer Act, H. Res. 136, Commending the Girl Scouts of the United States of America on the occasion of their 95th anniversary, and H. Res. 89, Expressing the sense of the House that a day should be established as Dutch-American Friendship Day, H. Res. 64, Expressing the sense of the House that the Government of Bangladesh should immediately drop all pending charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, H. Res. 228, Recognizing the 186th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating Greek and American Democracy, and H. Res. 222, Expressing the support of the House for the Good Friday Agreement as a blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland, respectively. I was detained and could not make it to the floor for this vote.

If present, I would have voted rollcall Vote No. 136, "yea," roll call Vote No. 137, "yea," rollcall Vote No. 138, "yea," Vote No. 139, "yea," rollcall Vote No. 140, "yea," and rollcall Vote No. 141, "yea."

TRIBUTE TO HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE ROBERT ECKELS

HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and wish a happy 50th birthday to my dear friend and colleague, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels. Until last week, Judge Eckels was the presiding officer of the Harris County Commissioners Court—the governing body of the county, and the only member that is elected countywide. The position involves executive, judicial, and legislative functions in the third most populace county in the United States. There are 34 municipalities within the county, including the county seat and the fourth largest city in the country, the City of Houston. More than 1.2 million people live in unincorporated Harris County and rely on the county to be the primary provider of basic government services. The term County Judge in Texas is comparable to a County Executive or County Mayor in other parts of the country.

Judge Eckels has been in public service for more than 25 years. He recently retired from

public service after a distinguished career to join the private sector. He and his wife, Jet, are dear friends of mine and my wife, Belinda.

Robert Eckels was first elected to the Texas Legislature in 1982. When he began his service in January of 1983 he was only 25-years-old. Few thought he would have much impact his first year, but he passed 8 of 13 bills in his legislative package. Robert's quiet demeanor frequently led fellow members to urge the enforcement of the "no mumble rule" so they could understand what he was saying, but his understated nature was also key to his success in Austin. He did not care who got credit for passing legislation, so long as it was good law that did not have to fix later. He understands the legislative process, legislative language and the legislative intent as well as anyone I know.

Robert also cared about his colleagues. He would approach Members towards the end of our legislative sessions to ask them how their legislative agendas were coming along. If a Member complained that their most important bill was in trouble in committee or on the House floor, he would help his colleagues amend their priority onto another bill or find some other way to pass their bills.

In 1991 the Texas Monthly Magazine described his character in its biennial article at the end of the Legislative session entitled "The Best and the Worst Legislators." In that piece he was named an Outstanding Legislator for his work in ethics reform and redistricting, "the session's most thankless issues." It said "Eckels wrote a bill that outshone its rivals as silver outshines dirt." Other quotes describe his character, "Eckels is unselfish to the point of being sacrificial. He's the Good Samaritan of the House; he finds hurt people by the side of the road and helps them get well."

In 1994 Robert decided to leave the Legislature, over the protests of many of his House colleagues, myself included, to run for the office of Harris County Judge. He saw an opportunity to work on the issues that were most important to him and his vision for the county he grew up in and served with distinction in the Legislature. He won the election and his opponent in that election later became a member of his advisory group.

TRANSPORTATION

Judge Eckels believes as I do that one of the most important priorities in our county is improving the major transportation corridors so people do not spend hours stuck in traffic jams. Judge Eckels also believes, as I do, that mobility is vital to our county's future. He served as chairman of the Transportation Policy Council for the Houston-Galveston region and was a major author of the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan.

Judge Eckels was also Chairman of the Alliance for I-69 Texas and the Texas High Speed Rail & Transportation Corporation. Texas House of Representatives Speaker Tom Craddick appointed him to the Study Commission on Transportation Financing to look at the broader issues facing the State of Texas. It was Judge Eckels who spearheaded an effort to turn abandoned railroad right-of-way running through my District into major traffic arteries which bring hundreds of thousands of daily commuters into and out of downtown Houston. Today, as a result of his vision and leadership, the Westpark Toll Way, the country's first entirely electronic toll road, is an innovative addition to the Harris County Toll Road Authority.

HOMELAND SECURITY/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Judge Eckels has always been deeply concerned with hurricanes and other natural disasters and the county's response to crises. He commissioned a study showing the impact of a Category-V hurricane coming into Galveston Bay, and he initiated planning procedures to ensure first responders had the proper training and equipment to take action.

He began to set up an interoperable communications system for Harris County that could be expanded regionally to allow communications among first responders across jurisdictional and disciplinary lines. Building such a system has required a strong leader like Judge Eckels to convince various agencies that rely on mission-critical communication to trust Harris County's Information Technology Department to build an interoperable system which was better than one they could run on their own.

Today, the Harris County Regional Radio System is a model communication system that has grown to support a shared infrastructure with more than 133 channels and 17 tower sites. It currently covers all of Harris County and parts of eight other counties, with the intent to expand even farther. As resources are available it will be expanded until it serves all 13 counties in the Houston/Galveston Area Council's service area.

There are more than 20,000 users from more than 400 different departments/agencies with nearly 2,000 mobile data-terminals and the system is growing quickly. The regional radio system is not only an essential response tool when disaster strikes, it can also be adapted to conform to the needs of the partners in day-to-day operations. Harris County has more than 90 different policing agencies operating in very close proximity. This system allows dispatchers to send the closest officer to the scene of an incident regardless of which agency the responder works for.

In his first State of the Union Address after 9/11, President George W. Bush called upon all Americans to dedicate at least two years of their lives—the equivalent of 4,000 hours—in service to others. He launched the Citizen Corps initiative to inspire and enable Americans to find ways to serve their communities and country. In response to the President's initiative, in August 2002, Judge Eckels created the Harris County Citizen Corps Council. The Council coordinates with volunteer groups such as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the United Way to identify volunteer opportunities. The Citizen Corps programs include the Community Emergency Response Team, the Neighborhood Watch Program, Volunteers in Police Service, Fire Corps, and the Medical Reserve Corps.

When Hurricane Katrina caused the evacuation of more than 250,000 to the Harris County area, Judge Eckels coordinated and managed the relief effort to create comfortable, welcoming shelters. Approximately 27,000 evacuees came to "Reliant City," which was created in the facilities at Reliant Park and the George R. Brown Convention Center in a 20 hour period in August 2005. This was the largest sheltering operation in U.S. history.

Thousands of volunteers were needed to assist in the relief operation and within one hour of the initial call for assistance to the Citizen Corps, more than 1,000 volunteers arrived at the shelter. In all, more than 60,000