

LOFGREN, and the ranking member, Mr. CANNON, have described, this important legislation stands to provide immediate assistance to wildfire-fighting crews in South Dakota, Colorado, and Wyoming.

Passage and enactment of S. 975 is the final step in the fire compacting process, which allows States covered by the compact to more effectively share firefighting personnel and equipment in response to wildfires. The compacting process begins with State approval but also requires consent from the Congress. Further, this legislation enjoys the support of South Dakota's Senators TIM JOHNSON and JOHN THUNE, as well as the entire Colorado and Wyoming Senate delegations. Companion legislation that I introduced in the House also enjoys similar support from the congressional delegations within the compacted States.

The need for this legislation is underscored each fire season as we undoubtedly watch communities struggle to cope with forest fires. In my own district, I recently visited areas devastated by the Alabaugh Canyon fire near Hot Springs, South Dakota, which consumed over 10,000 acres and destroyed more than 30 homes. Tragically, one man lost his life. Only the tireless and professional work by emergency response staff in South Dakota with the help of volunteers across the State and region stopped this fire from becoming even worse.

The fire season is, however, far from over, and I am pleased that the passage of this bill in the House today will be the final legislative step towards enacting this important bill into law. The new authorities contained in the bill will let compacted States work directly with each other increasing the efficiency and, most importantly, the speed with which firefighting crews in South Dakota, Colorado, and Wyoming can mobilize resources in response to fires. The compact also leaves space for North Dakota to join at a later date.

Finally, I would like to thank Chairman CONYERS and his staff for their swift consideration of this bill and their willingness to work with me to bring it to the House floor this evening. Their work, and a joint effort from State officials in South Dakota and the State's entire congressional delegation, has facilitated this progress. I stand in strong support of S. 975 and urge my colleagues to join me.

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, this bill grants our approval to an important interstate compact that will enable States in the Great Plains to pool resources to control forest fires. Especially in light of the fact that these States may shortly be experiencing what could be the worst fire season in years, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this urgently needed measure.

I commend the ranking member, Mr. CANNON, and the chairwoman of the

subcommittee, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, as well as the chairman of the committee and ranking member for not standing on formality, waiving jurisdiction, and bringing this bill directly to the floor. It is the right way to get something done in a hurry, and it needs to get done.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 975.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY ACT

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3067) to amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 to exempt small public housing agencies from the requirement of preparing an annual public housing agency plan, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3067

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 "Small Public Housing Authority Act".

SEC. 2. PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY PLANS FOR CERTAIN SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5A(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c-1(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN SMALL PHAS FROM FILING REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1) or any other provision of this Act—

“(i) the requirement under paragraph (1) shall not apply to any qualified small public housing agency; and

“(ii) except as provided in subsection (e)(4)(B), any reference in this section or any other provision of law to a ‘public housing agency’ shall not be considered to refer to any qualified small public housing agency, to the extent such reference applies to the requirement to submit an annual public housing agency plan under this subsection.

“(B) CIVIL RIGHTS CERTIFICATION.—Notwithstanding that qualified small public housing agencies are exempt pursuant to subparagraph (A) from the requirement under this section to prepare and submit an annual public housing plan, each qualified small public housing agency shall, on an annual basis, make the certification described in paragraph (16) of subsection (d) of this section, except that for purposes of such small public housing agencies, such paragraph shall be applied by substituting ‘the public housing program of the agency’ for ‘the public housing agency plan’.

“(C) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘qualified small public housing agency’ means a public housing agency that meets all of the following requirements:

“(i) The sum of (I) the number of public housing dwelling units administered by the agency, and (II) the number of vouchers under section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) administered by the agency, is 250 or fewer.

“(ii) The agency—

“(I) is not designated pursuant to section 6(j)(2) as a troubled public housing agency; and

“(II) has not, within the preceding 12 months, been assigned a failing or below passing score under the section 8 management assessment program of the Secretary.”.

(b) RESIDENT PARTICIPATION.—Section 5A of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c-1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e), by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) QUALIFIED SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), nothing in this section may be construed to exempt a qualified small public housing agency from the requirement under paragraph (1) to establish one or more resident advisory boards. Notwithstanding that qualified small public housing agencies are exempt pursuant to subsection (b)(3)(A) from the requirement under this section to prepare and submit an annual public housing plan, each qualified small public housing agency shall consult with, and consider the recommendations of the resident advisory boards for the agency, in any determinations and actions of the agency regarding establishing goals, objectives, and policies of the agency.

“(B) APPLICABILITY OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Paragraph (3) shall apply to qualified small public housing agencies, except that for purposes of such small public housing agencies, subparagraph (B) of such paragraph shall be applied by substituting ‘the functions described in the second sentence of paragraph (4)(A)’ for ‘the functions described in paragraph (2)’.

“(f) PUBLIC HEARINGS.—”; and

(2) in subsection (f) (as so designated by the amendment made by paragraph (1) of this subsection), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) QUALIFIED SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES.—

“(A) REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding that qualified small public housing agencies are exempt pursuant to subsection (b)(3)(A) from the requirement under this section to conduct a public hearing regarding the annual public housing plan of the agency, each qualified small public housing agency shall, not less than annually, conduct a public hearing to discuss the goals, objectives, and policies of the agency, and any changes to such goals, objectives, and policies, and to invite public comment regarding such issues.

“(B) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND NOTICE.—Not later than 45 days before the date of such a hearing, the qualified small public housing agency shall—

“(i) make all information relevant to the hearing and any determinations of the agency regarding the goals, objectives, and policies of the agency to be considered at the hearing available for inspection by the public at the principal office of the public housing agency during normal business hours; and

“(ii) publish a notice informing the public that (I) the information is available as required under clause (i), and (II) a public hearing under subparagraph (A) will be conducted.”.

(c) AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS TO PLANS.—Subsection (g) of section 5A of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.

1437c-1(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) QUALIFIED SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES.—Except to the extent that this subsection applies to annual public housing agency plans, nothing in this section may be construed to exempt a qualified small public housing agency from the requirements under this subsection.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill and include therein any extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is a bill that was brought forward in the previous Congress by the gentleman from Texas. It is very important that we regulate when necessary; it is equally important that we not regulate when it is unnecessary. This is an example of our recognition of that principle.

We have rules that govern housing authorities. These are complex and difficult issues that housing authorities face. But one set of rules should not be made to fit all. Smaller housing authorities ought to have more flexibility than the larger housing authorities. This bill, brought forward by the gentleman from Texas, and I congratulate him for his persistence in calling this to the attention of the committee, acts on that principle.

It exempts from excessive regulation, but not entirely from regulation, smaller housing authorities. In particular, I would just say that there was a rule for example that plans be made every 5 years and in some cases housing authorities have to report on certain things every year. In this case what we would say is that the smaller housing authorities would file their plan every 5 years and only if there are any changes of any significance in the covered matters would they have to report again. So it would save a lot of time, energy, and paperwork for the smaller housing authorities. It will help these people with the difficult job that they do.

I thank the gentleman for bringing the bill forward.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3067, the Small Public Housing Authority Act.

Like many of my colleagues, I represent a rural district where most of the public housing authorities operate in small communities. In fact, many of the PHAs in my district administer fewer than 200 housing units and some even have part-time directors or directors who split their time between public housing authorities. For many of those small public housing authorities, excessive paperwork requirements and outdated regulatory burdens continue to create an unnecessary distraction from their important work of providing affordable housing for underprivileged families.

For example, the 1992 Public Housing Reform Act requires PHAs to submit both a 5-year and an annual plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. While the annual plans were designed to address changes to the 5-year plan, small PHAs are already required by law to submit any policy changes, as the gentleman from Massachusetts said, to HUD for review and approval. This yearly report of unchanged plans and policy amounts to an unnecessary Federal mandate. While HUD has taken regulatory steps to streamline this annual reporting for small PHAs that are performing well, a recent example of one of the streamlined plans was 47 pages with attachments. So small public housing authorities just do not have the time and the staff and the resources to complete these annual plans by themselves and in many cases have to use outside vendors or contractors, expensive consultants to do the work that they don't have the computer software to do themselves to complete these annual plans.

For this reason, I have introduced H.R. 3067, the Small Public Housing Act. This legislation would bring long-needed regulatory relief to our small PHAs by exempting those that are 250 fewer units and section 8 vouchers from continuing the requirement of an annual plan if there is no material change in the operations during that year. So if they have some material change they still have to do it, but if it is just business as usual, then they do not have to make that submission. They still have to submit their 5-year plan, as is required by law.

H.R. 3067 only addresses, as I said, the annual plans. This legislation will provide an opportunity where they don't have to spend their much-needed resources and time away from doing what they need to be doing, and that is helping to provide affordable housing for our most needy folks.

I would just want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for his interest in public housing. This bill passed overwhelmingly in the previous Congress. Unfortunately, the time ran out, and we did not get that done from the other body. As a matter of fact, it passed 387-2; so I think there is broad support for this. I appreciate Chairwoman WATERS' Housing Subcommittee as well as Ranking Member

BIGGERT and, of course, Ranking Member BACHUS for their support for this legislation.

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I thank the staffs of the majority and minority, who worked very well together on this, as they do on many bills.

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3067, the Small Public Housing Authority Act.

Like many of my colleagues, I represent a rural district where most of the Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) operate in small communities. These small PHAs face excessive paperwork requirements and outdated regulatory burdens which undermine their ability to provide affordable housing to underprivileged families.

Currently, all PHAs are required to submit both 5-year and annual plans to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. However, these PHAs do not have the time, staff or resources to complete these annual plans and often have to hire expensive consultants to help complete these annual plans.

I am pleased that my friend, Mr. NEUGEBAUER from Texas, has taken the steps needed to alleviate this burden on small PHAs by introducing H.R. 3067, the Small PHA Act. This legislation will bring long needed regulatory relief to small PHAs by exempting those with 250 or fewer public housing units and Section 8 vouchers from the requirement of submitting an annual plan to HUD.

Today, I urge my colleagues to once again support regulatory relief for small PHAs by supporting H.R. 3067.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3067, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NASA 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2750) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2750

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 "NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act".