

2011. The chair of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) has outlined all of the specifics of the bill; I need not go into them.

I simply speak to reinforce the specific examples the benefits of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program. It is a sound investment in the future of this country for all of us as we are subjected to increasing amounts of disaster from natural causes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DAVIS of California). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6109, 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.

OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING REDEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5001) to authorize the Administrator of General Services to provide for the redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building located in the District of Columbia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5001

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 "Old Post Office Building Redevelopment Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING DEFINED.

In this Act, the term "Old Post Office Building" means the land, including any improvements thereon and specifically including the Pavilion Annex, that is located at 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., in the District of Columbia, and under the jurisdiction, custody, and control of the General Services Administration.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) For almost a decade the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives has expressed considerable concern about the waste and neglect of the valuable, historic Old Post Office Building, centrally located in the heart of the Nation's Capital on Pennsylvania Avenue, and has pressed the General Services Administration to develop and fully use this building.

(2) The policy of the Government long has been to preserve and make usable historic properties rather than sell them for revenue.

(3) Security concerns related to this property's proximity to the White House may hinder the sale of the Old Post Office Building to a private party.

(4) On December 28, 2000, the General Services Administration, pursuant to Public Law 105-277, submitted to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations and Environment and Public Works of the

Senate a plan for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Old Post Office.

(5) The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved the redevelopment plan on May 16, 2001, and the Committees on Appropriations and Environment and Public Works approved the plan on June 15, 2001.

(6) The General Services Administration issued a Request for Expression of Interest in 2004 for developing the Old Post Office Building that generated a healthy, private sector interest, but the General Services Administration has failed to proceed with implementation of the approved redevelopment plan.

(7) Redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building will preserve the historic integrity of this unique and important asset, put it to its highest and best use, and provide a lucrative financial return to the Government.

SEC. 4. REDEVELOPMENT OF OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of General Services is directed to proceed with redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building, in accordance with existing authorities available to the Administrator and consistent with the redevelopment plan previously approved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Appropriations and Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

(b) RELOCATION OF EXISTING BUILDING TENANTS.—The Administrator is authorized, notwithstanding section 3307 of title 40, United States Code, and otherwise in accordance with existing authorities available to the Administrator, to provide replacement space for Federal agency tenants housed in the Old Post Office Building whose relocation is necessary for redevelopment of the Building.

SEC. 5. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of General Services shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report on any proposed redevelopment agreement related to the Old Post Office Building.

(b) CONTENTS.—A report transmitted under this section shall include a summary of a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed development agreement and a description of the material provisions of the proposed agreement.

(c) REVIEW BY CONGRESS.—Any proposed development agreement related to the Old Post Office Building may not become effective until the end of a 30-day period of continuous session of Congress following the date of the transmittal of the report required under this section. For purposes of the preceding sentence, continuity of a session of Congress is broken only by an adjournment sine die, and there shall be excluded from the computation of such 30-day period any day during which either House of Congress is not in session during an adjournment of more than 3 days to a day certain.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 5001, as amended, and to ask for the support of the House, a bill to direct the General Services Administration to redevelop the Old Post Office located on Pennsylvania Avenue, right in the center of the District of Columbia.

On January 16, 2008, I introduced H.R. 5001, the Old Post Office Development Act, to redevelop the nearly empty Old Post Office, a unique historic treasure which was once the post office of the Nation's capital located at 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, owned by the Federal Government's GSA.

For more than ten years, our Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management has expressed continuing and mounting concern about the neglect and underutilization of this invaluable government site, and has pressed the GSA to develop and use this building to its full potential.

Madam Speaker, when I brought this bill to the full committee, Mr. OBERSTAR from whom we just heard on a prior bill and Ranking Member MICA lead what could only be called a round of hoorahs and hosannas that this bill was being brought forward.

More than 20 million visitors come. This building is so strategically placed that it is almost certain that constituents of Members have ventured into this extraordinary building which looks like just the kind of building that invites people on the outside, and then they come on the inside and they can't believe what they see. So the building is well known not only by our subcommittee but by the full committee. Worse, as I shall relate, is why it has not been brought forward.

The Old Post Office Building was completed in 1899. That makes it one of the oldest buildings here, and is certainly one of the oldest, perhaps the oldest, for which rehabilitation and preservation has not somehow begun or envisioned. This grand example of Romanesque revival occupies an entire city block. Because it was the main post office, it was strategically located for a purpose not as an historic building, but in the 19th century when that is how you built post offices.

The building was placed on the Historic Register in 1973, and remains one of the city's most unusual, interesting, and appealing landmarks. Part of the appeal of the Old Post Office Building also is its central location in the Federal Triangle, its proximity to many Federal historic sites not the least of them the White House which is a stone's throw from the Old Post Office. Our major metro lines converge there, and a host of restaurants and other amenities surround this location's major tourist site.

□ 1615

This bill is important for the city I represent, as well, but its importance

goes far beyond any particular district. This building belonged to the United States of America before there was any home rule in the District of Columbia.

When the Congress of the United States ran the District of Columbia, they saw fit to have a post office befitting the Nation's capital. You would have thought, particularly given the history of developing historic structures here, for which the GSA deserves special credit, that this building certainly, at some point in the 20th century, would have been rehabilitated.

Actually, this particular struggle started in 1998. Congress passed the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999, and in that act our committee required the GSA to submit a development plan for the Old Post Office before any Federal funds could be used to convert the space. And on February 28, 2000, GSA did in fact, pursuant to law, submit such a plan as required.

Madam Speaker, no bill, and in my entire history on the committee, no bill has been necessary for this work. We don't trouble the Congress with this work. But it took a bill now 10 years ago just to get a plan. On May 16, 2001, the Committee on Transportation and the Infrastructure passed an additional resolution authorizing the development of the Old Post Office. So we come forward with bills that ordinarily are unnecessary because the GSA goes ahead and submits a prospectus that we approve, and that's it.

The GSA finally in 2005 did issue what we call a request for expression of interest. That's the way we do federal development in our subcommittee.

This is a priceless treasure. If you go to the inside of the building, you see it was built and looks now almost like a cavernous space, most of it is ceiling like this chamber, Madam Speaker, without the room to place for offices or the like. So in order to decide whether or not this was a property which the private sector thought could be developed, we required GSA to ask for expressions of interest.

The GSA received apparently many indications of interest from the private sector. But the agency has never proceeded to the next step. For that reason—and remember we are talking about 2005 when the request for expression of interest occurred—as has been required, every step along the way, a bill is going to be necessary to move the GSA to act and that is what H.R. 5001 does, so that this structure can in fact be utilized for the benefit of Federal taxpayers, for the benefit of visitors to the city, and of course for the benefit of the city as well.

The Congress may be curious as to why there would be any resistance. It is difficult to understand, Madam Speaker, considering that for three, almost four decades we have poured money into the Old Post Office because they didn't want to let it just stand there and get no revenue. So each year the Federal Government loses \$6 mil-

lion or \$7 million more than it takes in from the tiny agencies around the rim of the cave, as it were.

If you multiply that over many decades, you will understand that pouring renovations into a building that needed a complete makeover, while allowing a tiny agency here or there to occupy whatever space you could find, has resulted in the loss of billions of dollars to the Federal Government, when in fact we could have reversed that process, bringing billions of dollars of revenue for us, had we done what we did with the highly regarded Tariff Building, another one of the grand old buildings that stood here when I was a kid and where GSA has already shown it can make excellent use of otherwise antiquated and virtually useless structures.

What it did was to convert the old Tariff Building into the rarified, high priced Monaco Hotel, which sits across from the Portrait Gallery. That building quickly returned revenue to the Federal Government. The redevelopment of the Tariff Building shows what can be achieved when the Federal Government works with the private sector to redevelop a site that brings a return to the government, provides a safe and necessary facility for the city and for visitors, and importantly, preserves a priceless, truly priceless historic treasure.

Madam Speaker, our bill now has language that makes it impossible for the GSA to refuse to proceed, as it has done with our prior two bills. GSA is directed to proceed. We waived the prospectus. OMB is not implicated. And I should say for the record that I think the villain in the piece is OMB and not GSA. For reasons known only to itself, and some have said that they wanted to sell the building, even though there is a bipartisan "no" to, in fact, selling any historic structure in the United States. Whatever is the reason, it took a killing in front of the building when they had rented it out to a George Washington University student organization in order to get any movement on the bill, and now the Congress is going to have to make it impossible for OMB to keep GSA from proceeding or face contempt of Congress.

We also take away the excuse that there are agencies in the building. There are a couple of tiny agencies in the building, the kind of agencies that GSA can relocate on the back of an envelope because it relocates very large agencies all the time. Congress has done its homework. It is now time for the GSA to do its work and start bringing some revenue here from this historic structure and some pleasure for the many visitors who wander inside and are distressed by what they see.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5001, the Old Post Office Building Redevelopment Act of 2008.

The bill would direct the General Services Administration to enter into an agreement to develop the Old Post Office building on Pennsylvania Avenue in accordance with its plan approved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in 2001. The bill would also authorize GSA to relocate the Federal agencies currently occupying the Old Post Office Building.

The management of Federal real property has been on the Government Accountability Office's high-risk list since 2003. One of the key issues the GAO has raised is the problem of unused and under-used Federal property.

Currently, the Old Post Office is under-used and has been for some time. Over the years, there have been many attempts to make better use of this historic building. The most recent attempt was made after Congress passed the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act in 1976. This act, among other things, required GSA to encourage the public use of public buildings for "cultural, educational and recreational activities" and allowed Federal entities and commercial enterprises to share federally owned buildings.

Unfortunately, the mixed use of Federal and commercial space was not successful in this case. Today, there are only a handful of Federal agencies in this historic building on Pennsylvania Avenue, considered America's Main Street. This area of the city has undergone revitalization to help benefit and attract people who live, work and visit the Nation's capital. Allowing for the redevelopment and reuse of this important building will help to further the progress made in this area of the city.

Authorizing GSA to proceed with the full redevelopment of this building has the potential of being a win-win situation for the Federal Government, the taxpayers, and the local community. I support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5001, a bill to direct the redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building, which is not only a landmark in the Nation's capital, but a jewel of "America's Main Street," Pennsylvania Avenue. I commend the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for introducing this legislation and for her work on this issue as Chair of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

Completed in 1899, the Old Post Office building was intended to be the U.S. Post Office Department Headquarters building as well as the city's main post office. The Old Post Office building was awarded a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. This Romanesque building is the second tallest structure and one of the first steel-frame buildings in the District of Columbia.

Despite the magnificence of this building and its extraordinary location, it has been difficult to develop this building to its fullest potential. A renovation of the Old Post Office began in 1977 as part of the redevelopment of Pennsylvania Avenue. In 1982, the General Services Administration, GSA, entered into a 55-year lease with a private sector developer

to lease and operate the Old Post Office building. The building was renovated as a multifunctional building that included office space, retail, and a food court. Unfortunately, this redevelopment effort was not successful because of high turnover among the retail businesses and low satisfaction among tenants. The original developer went into bankruptcy and the lender foreclosed on the leasehold.

Today, the Old Post Office building is an aging historical building that is inefficient, underutilized, and a financial drain on the Federal Building Fund. The building's large atrium and other factors contribute to the high costs of operating and maintaining the building.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has provided oversight and direction to GSA previously in attempts to foster the development of the Old Post Office, including requiring that GSA submit a viable development plan for the Old Post Office before any Federal funds be used to convert the space. Notwithstanding these efforts, the desired development has not occurred.

H.R. 5001, the "Old Post Office Building Redevelopment Act of 2008", authorizes the Administrator of General Services to enter into an agreement to redevelop the Old Post Office Building in a manner that is beneficial to the Federal Government. This bill will not only help spur the redevelopment of this building but also help ensure that the taxpayers get the fullest return from this historic and treasured structure.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 5001, the "Old Post Office Building Redevelopment Act of 2008."

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I too am prepared to yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5001, 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.

□ 1630

RAW SEWAGE OVERFLOW COMMUNITY RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2452) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to ensure that sewage treatment plants monitor for and report discharges of raw sewage, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2452

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 "Sewage Overflow Community Right-to-Know Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 502 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1362) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(25) **SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOW.**—The term 'sanitary sewer overflow' means an overflow, spill, release, or diversion of wastewater from a sanitary sewer system. Such term does not include municipal combined sewer overflows or other discharges from a municipal combined storm and sanitary sewer system and does not include wastewater backups into buildings caused by a blockage or other malfunction of a building lateral that is privately owned. Such term includes overflows or releases of wastewater that reach waters of the United States, overflows or releases of wastewater in the United States that do not reach waters of the United States, and wastewater backups into buildings that are caused by blockages or flow conditions in a sanitary sewer other than a building lateral.

"(26) **TREATMENT WORKS.**—The term 'treatment works' has the meaning given that term in section 212."

SEC. 3. MONITORING, REPORTING, AND PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF SEWER OVERFLOWS.

Section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(r) **SEWER OVERFLOW MONITORING, REPORTING, AND NOTIFICATIONS.**—

"(1) **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.**—After the last day of the 180-day period beginning on the date on which regulations are issued under paragraph (4), a permit issued, renewed, or modified under this section by the Administrator or the State, as the case may be, for a publicly owned treatment works shall require, at a minimum, beginning on the date of the issuance, modification, or renewal, that the owner or operator of the treatment works—

"(A) institute and utilize a feasible methodology, technology, or management program for monitoring sewer overflows to alert the owner or operator to the occurrence of a sewer overflow in a timely manner;

"(B) in the case of a sewer overflow that has the potential to affect human health, notify the public of the overflow as soon as practicable but not later than 24 hours after the time the owner or operator knows of the overflow;

"(C) in the case of a sewer overflow that may imminently and substantially endanger human health, notify public health authorities and other affected entities, such as public water systems, of the overflow immediately after the owner or operator knows of the overflow;

"(D) report each sewer overflow on its discharge monitoring report to the Administrator or the State, as the case may be, by describing—

"(i) the magnitude, duration, and suspected cause of the overflow;

"(ii) the steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate, or prevent recurrence of the overflow; and

"(iii) the steps taken or planned to mitigate the impact of the overflow; and

"(E) annually report to the Administrator or the State, as the case may be, the total number of sewer overflows in a calendar year, including—

"(i) the details of how much wastewater was released per incident;

"(ii) the duration of each sewer overflow;

"(iii) the location of the overflow and any potentially affected receiving waters;

"(iv) the responses taken to clean up the overflow; and

"(v) the actions taken to mitigate impacts and avoid further sewer overflows at the site.

"(2) **EXCEPTIONS.**—

"(A) **NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.**—The notification requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C) shall not apply a sewer overflow that is a wastewater backup into a single-family residence.

"(B) **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**—The reporting requirements of paragraphs (1)(D) and (1)(E) shall not apply to a sewer overflow that is a release of wastewater that occurs in the course of maintenance of the treatment works, is managed consistently with the treatment works' best management practices, and is intended to prevent sewer overflows.

"(3) **REPORT TO EPA.**—Each State shall provide to the Administrator annually a summary of sewer overflows that occurred in the State.

"(4) **RULEMAKING BY EPA.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Administrator, after providing notice and an opportunity for public comment, shall issue regulations to implement this subsection, including regulations to—

"(A) establish a set of criteria to guide the owner or operator of a publicly owned treatment works in—

"(i) assessing whether a sewer overflow has the potential to affect human health or may imminently and substantially endanger human health; and

"(ii) developing communication measures that are sufficient to give notice under paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C); and

"(B) define the terms 'feasible' and 'timely' as such terms apply to paragraph (1)(A), including site specific conditions.

"(5) **APPROVAL OF STATE NOTIFICATION PROGRAMS.**—

"(A) **REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL.**—

"(i) **IN GENERAL.**—After the date of issuance of regulations under paragraph (4), a State may submit to the Administrator evidence that the State has in place a legally enforceable notification program that is substantially equivalent to the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C).

"(ii) **PROGRAM REVIEW AND AUTHORIZATION.**—If the evidence submitted by a State under clause (i) shows the notification program of the State to be substantially equivalent to the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C), the Administrator shall authorize the State to carry out such program instead of the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C).

"(iii) **FACTORS FOR DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCY.**—In carrying out a review of a State notification program under clause (ii), the Administrator shall take into account the scope of sewer overflows for which notification is required, the length of time during which notification must be made, the scope of persons who must be notified of sewer overflows, the scope of enforcement activities ensuring that notifications of sewer overflows are made, and such other factors as the Administrator considers appropriate.

"(B) **REVIEW PERIOD.**—If a State submits evidence with respect to a notification program under subparagraph (A)(i) on or before the last day of the 30-day period beginning on the date of issuance of regulations under paragraph (4), the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (1)(C) shall not begin to apply to a publicly owned treatment works located in the State until the date on which the Administrator completes a review of the notification program under subparagraph (A)(ii).

"(C) **WITHDRAWAL OF AUTHORIZATION.**—If the Administrator, after conducting a public hearing, determines that a State is not administering and enforcing a State notification program authorized under subparagraph (A)(ii) in accordance with the requirements