

is part of the solution. Not only has it helped states in the region deal with this insidious threat but it also recognizes and affirms that the continuing protection of the Great Lakes is and must remain a national priority.

Although it has never been funded at its authorized level of \$50 billion a year, the Legacy Act has contributed to a number of projects to remove polluted sediments from these waters and protect the water quality of the Great Lakes as well as the millions of Americans who reside near, recreate in, or depend on the Lakes for their drinking water.

One of the areas of concerns targeted by the Legacy Act is the Milwaukee Estuary in my district which includes the lower portions of several rivers (the Milwaukee River, Menomonee River, and Kinnickinnic Rivers) and the inner and outer areas of the Milwaukee harbor and nearshore waters of Lake Michigan.

The rivers that flow through the area were for decades filled with toxic contaminants such as PCBs (polychlorinated biphenylhydrocarbons), PAHs (polychlorinated biphenyls and polyaromatic hydrocarbons), and industrial heavy metals.

Recently, the EPA and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources announced that they will soon begin a \$22 million cleanup project to remove contaminated sediment from the Kinnickinnic River using Great Lakes Act funding (\$14 million).

The project would remove about 170,000 cubic yards of sediment contaminated with PCBs and PAHs and is expected to be completed in Late 2009.

The project's successful completion will mean the removal of about 1,200 pounds of harmful PCBs and 13,000 pounds of PAHs and lead to the reduction of contaminated sediment being transported downstream to Lake Michigan. It will also improve the habitat for fish and wildlife that live in or near the river, while increasing recreational and commercial boating use of the river by the public, uses that have been strictly discouraged if not prohibited for a number of years.

Even as this project moves forward in my district, I know that many more are needed and remain on the drawing board for possible action and funding.

According to one estimate, seven projects being reviewed for possible funding under the Legacy Act would have a projected cost of about \$85 million. The Legacy Act received \$35 million in FY 2008 and this grant program is currently authorized at \$50 million.

It is clear that the funding needs far outweigh the funding available. Given the high costs of these important projects, it is important that the federal government step up to the plate. This legislation before us does just that as it would triple the authorized levels of funding for Great Lakes Legacy Act programs.

Great Lakes communities have long taken pride in protecting our region's greatest natural resources. That pride has been matched by financial commitment. A study earlier this year by the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence Cities initiatives estimated that local governments in the U.S. and Canada invest over \$15 billion annually to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin ecosystem.

It is important that the federal government continue to show its commitment to this region as well. The strong reauthorizing legislation before us today would help keep that commit-

ment and help mitigate the risk to the Great Lakes posed by toxic pollutants.

This program has and continues to enjoy strong support from elected officials in the Great Lakes states, the business community, environmental groups, and local communities affected by the legacy of contamination.

As a cosponsor of this bill and a strong supporter of efforts to protect the Great Lakes, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this important bill.

Mrs. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6460, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VERITAS TELESCOPE RELOCATION

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 35) to amend Public Law 108-331 to provide for the construction and related activities in support of the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System (VERITAS) project in Arizona.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate joint resolution.

The text of the Senate joint resolution is as follows:

S.J. RES. 35

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LOCATION OF VERITAS PROJECT.

Public Law 108-331 (118 Stat. 1281) is amended—

(1) in the long title, by striking "on Kitt Peak near Tucson, Arizona" and inserting "in Arizona"; and

(2) in section 1, by striking "on Kitt Peak near Tucson, Arizona" and inserting "at the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory Base Camp on Mount Hopkins, Arizona, or other similar location".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unani-

mous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials to S.J. Res. 35.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of S.J. Res. 35, which amends Public Law 108-331. This public law provided for the construction and location and related activities in support of the VERITAS project in Arizona.

Madam Speaker, this Senate resolution amends this law by identifying another location for the VERITAS project. S.J. Res. 35 authorizes the Smithsonian to relocate the telescope to Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory Base Camp on Mount Hopkins, Arizona, from the original site at Kitt Peak, Arizona. This is a simple but necessary change, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Senate Joint Resolution 35 that would amend Public Law 108-331 to provide for the Smithsonian Institution's construction of certain facilities in support of the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System, or VERITAS.

The VERITAS project is a collaboration with the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy as the lead agencies. Universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland are participants in this work.

The goal of the VERITAS project is to increase our ability to view gamma-ray radiation in space.

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Studying gamma ray radiation from objects like exploding stars and black holes will help increase our scientific understanding of the universe. In 1968, the first telescope was created to observe this gamma ray radiation. VERITAS significantly enhances this technology.

In 2004, Congress authorized the Smithsonian to construct a control building to support the VERITAS project. The control building would include space for computers, technical equipment, and other facilities for researchers to carry out their work with the new telescopes.

The original legislation authorized the control building to be built in Kitt Peak, Arizona, where the VERITAS project was expected to be located. Site and construction preparation began in Kitt Peak in 2004 on land leased to the U.S. Government by a local Indian tribe. Unfortunately, in 2005, the

project was halted when a lawsuit was brought and the National Science Foundation issued a stop work order.

As a result, the NSF and the DOE began to undertake new environmental assessments of the Kitt Peak site and, in 2005, started initial work on the VERITAS telescopes 35 miles away at the Fred Lawrence Base Camp in Mount Hopkins, Arizona. The plan was to move the telescopes to Kitt Peak following completion of the necessary assessments.

However, the assessment process continued into 2007 and there were concerns about missing windows of opportunities for joint work planned with NASA's gamma ray telescope satellite.

In light of this, the VERITAS team sought and received approval from the United States Forest Service to test the telescopes at the Whipple Base Camp. The testing revealed that the Whipple location produced results comparable with those they expected at Kitt Peak. As a result, the collaborative partners agreed that the VERITAS project should remain at the Whipple Base Camp.

The legislation enacted in 2004 authorized the construction of a control building by the Smithsonian for the project; however, it specified Kitt Peak, Arizona, as the project location.

The Senate resolution today would amend that law to authorize the construction of the control building at the Whipple Base Camp in Mount Hopkins, Arizona, where the VERITAS project is now located.

This resolution does not authorize any additional funds for the project. The resolution simply authorizes the change in the location of the project at no additional cost.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

If the gentlelady does not have any further speakers, Madam Speaker, I would go ahead then and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of S.J. Res. 35, which amends Public Law 108–331 to provide for the construction and related activities in support of the Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System, “VERITAS”, project in Arizona. Public Law 108–331 was passed in October 2004 during the 108th Congress.

This joint resolution authorizes the Smithsonian Institution to permanently locate the telescope at the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory Base Camp on Mount Hopkins, Arizona, which is approximately 35 miles from the original site, Kitt Peak's Horseshoe Canyon. The Smithsonian Institution has set up the telescope at this site on an interim basis and the VERITAS Science Consortium and Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory request that the VERITAS telescope remain at the Whipple Observatory for the rest of its scientific life. As a result, the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution requests an amendment to Public Law 108331 to authorize the Board to locate the VERITAS telescope at Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory Base Camp on Mount Hopkins, Arizona, or other similar location.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S.J. Res. 35.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I just urge support and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 35.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FACILITIES AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6627) to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to carry out certain construction projects, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6627

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 “Smithsonian Institution Facilities Authorization Act of 2008”.

SEC. 2. LABORATORY AND SUPPORT SPACE, EDGEWATER, MARYLAND.

(a) AUTHORITY TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT.—The Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution is authorized to design and construct laboratory and support space to accommodate the Mathias Laboratory at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section a total of \$41,000,000 for fiscal years 2009 through 2011. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 3. LABORATORY SPACE, GAMBOA, PANAMA.

(a) AUTHORITY TO CONSTRUCT.—The Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution is authorized to construct laboratory space to accommodate the terrestrial research program of the Smithsonian tropical research institute in Gamboa, Panama.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section a total of \$14,000,000 for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON)

and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material on H.R. 6627.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 6627, the Smithsonian Facilities Authorization Act of 2008. This bill has bipartisan support, including support from Congresswoman MATSUI, Congressman BECERRA, and Congressman JOHNSON, who are Smithsonian regents. Majority Leader HOYER and Ranking Member MICA are also in support of authorizing construction funding of these two renowned and vital Smithsonian facilities.

The Mathias Research Center located in Edgewater, Maryland, is a global leader in the study of ecosystems in coastal zones. It was established in the 1930s on a dairy farm in Edgewater, Maryland. Nearly one-half of SERC's 146 employees and fellows conduct the majority of their work in trailers. A major part of SERC's mission is research and professional training of the next generation of environmental scientists.

The Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution requested authority to design and construct laboratory space to accommodate the Mathias Laboratory at SERC.

The Board requested authority to upgrade and replace the facility to eliminate unsafe trailers and address substandard, inefficient labs. The facility and its support spaces need to be replaced.

The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, located in Mathias Research Center, Panama, is the principal United States organization devoted to research in tropical biology which will advance scientific study and improve human welfare. Ecological catastrophes such as drought, starvation, and flooding caused by deforestation and overpopulation of tropical regions are studied for causes and remedies.

This facility is a world-renowned research and education center dedicated to research and analysis of tropical ecosystems. The Board of Regents requested authority to replace current science building structure that is heavily infested with termites.

I support these projects and the Board of Regents' request for construction authorization.

I urge passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.