

pollution control facilities, rather than solid waste management units.

Similarly, requirements for liners for coal ash ponds vary State by State. For example, Alabama and Florida do not require liners for surface impoundments for coal ash, while Wisconsin does.

The argument that all States have adequate regulations for coal ash is not substantiated by the facts. It is impossible to write off the disaster in Tennessee as a freak accident. The absence of national standards for coal ash has resulted in environmental damage throughout the country—not just last month, or last year, but for decades. In 2007, the EPA recognized 67 contaminated sites in 23 states where coal combustion byproducts have polluted groundwater or surface water. This may be just the tip of the iceberg, because most coal ash sites in the United States are not adequately monitored.

The “Coal Ash Reclamation and Environmental Safety Act of 2009” requires minimum design and stability standards for all surface impoundments constructed to hold coal ash. The bill draws on the regulatory model for impoundments that is used for coal slurry management under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Requirements for coal slurry impoundments that would be made applicable to coal ash impoundments under 2 this legislation cover aspects of design, construction, operation, and closure, including:

Regulations detailing the engineering and stability of the embankment.

Regulations requiring all applications for an impoundment to have a foundation investigation to determine design requirements for stability.

Each design plan must include a geotechnical investigation of the embankment foundation area.

Each impoundment plan must include a survey describing the potential effect on the structure from subsidence of the subsurface strata resulting from past mining operations in the area.

Plans for impoundments must be reviewed by a geologist or an engineer.

Regulations requiring that a qualified engineer, with experience in construction of impoundments, inspect each impoundment regularly during construction, upon completion of construction, and periodically thereafter.

The “Coal Ash Reclamation and Environmental Safety Act of 2009” also requires immediate development of a detailed inventory and analysis of all existing coal ash disposal sites, to guide informed and prompt decisions on how to bring that universe of ponds and lagoons up to safe standards, now.

For States that already have careful standards for coal ash disposal, the bill I am introducing will not be a problem. For those that do not, the “Coal Ash Reclamation Environmental Safety Act of 2009” will require immediate attention to shocking gaps in coal ash management.

As a witness at our hearing last year so presciently reminded the Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals: “the cost of safe disposal [of coal ash] is not burdensome to industry, although it has proved, at site after site, to be catastrophic to the public and the environment.”

The time to act is now.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009:
JANUARY 9, 2009

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am today pleased to introduce the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009.

There are 7 species of marine turtles which were once abundant throughout the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. Sadly, 6 of those species including the Green turtle, the hawksbill, the Kemp's ridley, the leatherback, the loggerhead and the Olive ridley, have experienced tremendous over-exploitation and they are now listed as critically endangered under our Endangered Species Act. In fact, only the flatback turtle which lives in the inshore waters of Australia has managed to maintain a healthy population.

While there are many reasons for the dramatic decline in marine turtle population numbers, the leading factors include foreign fishing practices, the destruction of essential nesting habitat, massive poaching of turtle eggs, meat and shells, the degradation of grass beds and coral reefs, light pollution from onshore development and the dumping of tons of plastic products into our oceans.

In response to this crisis, the Congress enacted the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 which I strongly supported. While this law authorized up to \$20 million in Federal funds over the past 4 fiscal years, only \$2.2 million has been appropriated to finance worthwhile conservation projects. Despite these funding limitations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has leveraged nearly \$4 million in private matching funds and together this money has funded 78 meritorious conservation projects in more than 60 countries. While more than 200 grant proposals have been submitted, sadly, the Service has only awarded grants to less than 40 percent of the eligible recipients.

Nevertheless, a number of extraordinary projects have been funded. These included a project to assist loggerhead turtles in Oman which has the largest nesting population of this species in the world; a project to protect leatherback turtles at their 4 primary nesting beaches in Mexico and a project to assist the highly depleted Chiriqui Beach hawksbill nesting population in Panama.

Madam Speaker, marine turtles have been a vital component of our ocean ecosystems for more than 100 million years. They have long symbolized longevity, fertility and strength. We are proud of the fact that populations of loggerhead sea turtles nest on our beaches in South Carolina where they are highly protected.

Like canaries in a coal mine, declining populations of marine sea turtles are a bellwether species for the health of the world's oceans. The Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 sent a powerful message of the international community that the United States was willing to take proactive conservation efforts to save these flagship species from extinction. It is essential that this law which has yet to reach its full potential be reauthorized beyond this fiscal year.

The legislation I am introducing today would extend the authorization of appropriations for the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund until September 30, 2014. Despite severe funding limitations, this law has conclusively demonstrated that it is an effective and essential lifeline to marine turtle populations throughout the world. We should not allow any of these 6 species of marine turtles to disappear during our lifetime.

I urge early consideration of the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009.

CONGRATULATING HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service to intercultural understanding and youth travel.

Hostelling International USA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1934 to promote hostels and hostel-related programs in the United States, especially among youth travelers. In doing so, it promotes cultural exchange through travel and supports tourism for local economies.

The North Carolina Council of Hostelling International USA promotes hostelling in North Carolina by offering workshops on world travel and intercultural understanding at local venues, including NC college campuses and through local Girl Scout troops. During the past year, the NC Council funded overnight stays for 51 young people and their group leaders, allowing them to stay at hostels in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Philadelphia's Fairmont Park, and Washington, DC.

I congratulate Hostelling International USA for its 75 years of service to our country and our state.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KAGEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, I deeply regret that I was not able to vote on H. Res. 34 recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza and reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. On Wednesday, January 7, 2009, I had surgery on my knee and was not able to be present for voting.

Make no mistake about it, I fully support Israel's right to defend itself against all attacks. I would have wholeheartedly voted for H. Res. 34.

Presently, Israel, like any other country, is exercising its right to self-defense. If any country were attacked like Israel has been they would do the same.

How many attacks on an American city would we tolerate from our neighbors? Zero.

In July 2008, I visited Sderot, an Israeli town just over the border from Gaza. I toured sites where Israeli homes were destroyed by rockets launched from Gaza. I met with the U.S.

Security Coordinator and understand the daily threat Israelis live with every single day. The constant and deliberate attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians are unconscionable. The Israeli people must be allowed to go about their daily lives—and the only way to do that is by defending themselves.

The United States has always been and must always be a steadfast ally of Israel. We will support Israel's right to defend itself and continue to push for a return to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

I, like so many throughout the world, hope for a peaceful resolution to the current fighting and look forward to a sustainable peace when Israelis and Palestinians alike can live free from terror.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MICHAEL C. BARRETT

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in memory of my dear friend, Michael C. Barrett. He was a brilliant attorney, involved civic leader, and philanthropist always looking for ways to give back to his community.

Although born in Salt Lake City, Michael was a Texan at heart. He was raised in Sherman, Texas and went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1974 and the Dedman School of Law at Southern Methodist University in 1977. His academic excellence in law school earned him the American Jurisprudence Award and membership with the Journal of Air Law & Commerce. After graduation, Michael practiced with various firms before deciding to start his own firm, Barrett Daffin Frappier Turner & Engel, in 1990. As the founder and Chairman, he turned this Texas-based company into one of the nation's leading mortgage banking law firms. He was a pioneer and a leader of the mortgage banking industry, serving as a trusted advisor on mortgage banking issues for the Texas Supreme Court and Texas Legislature.

Aside from his professional career, Michael was an enthusiastic supporter of many local nonprofit organizations and causes like the Addison Police Department and veterans support groups. His generosity extended to nonprofits such as Hope's Door, KickStart, Dallas Junior Forum, and the Special Olympics. In 2007, Michael founded the BDF Homeworks Foundation, which encourages employees to become more involved in their local community by providing volunteer and contribution opportunities. Not only did this provide valuable financial support to nonprofits, but also boosted the esprit de corps among employees.

Michael was always full of life and had an amazing ability to captivate people's attention with his stories. He was as wise as he was generous and loving. He cared deeply for his friends and family and will be greatly missed. May the peace of God be with those he loved and sustain them through this hour of sorrow.

TRIBUTE TO OLIVER B. CONOVER
UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM
THE LEHIGH ACRES CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

HON. CONNIE MACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Oliver "Ollie" Conover of Lehigh Acres, Florida upon his retirement from the Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce.

Ollie served as the Executive Director of the Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce for the last seven years, and during that time, has helped to make the Chamber an influential organization in Lehigh Acres.

Ollie's community and public service didn't start with the Chamber, however. Ollie served in the Ordnance Corps in the U.S. Army and continued on to serve in the Reserves when his active duty service was completed.

Ollie's subsequent professional career spanned 22 years as an insurance agent and broker, and 25 years in non-profit fundraising for educational and cultural organizations. It's this unique experience that made him well-suited to take the helm of the Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce in 2002.

Since moving to Lehigh Acres 10 years ago, and serving with the Chamber for the last seven, Ollie has made an indelible mark on a community that is growing by leaps and bounds. In fact, Ollie has joined a number of community officials and activists on the Lehigh Acres Community Planning Corporation to put together a master plan for controlling the substantial growth in the area. Ollie's leadership and guidance on the issue of controlling Lehigh's growth while expanding opportunities for residents and businesses will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the Corporation, its members and the people of Lehigh Acres.

Madam Speaker, Ollie's enthusiasm and passion for serving his community is inspiring. His efforts have helped to make Southwest Florida a great place to live, work and visit. It is truly an honor and a privilege to represent Ollie in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I wish Ollie and his family all the best during his retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL
ELECTION INTEGRITY ACT OF 2009

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Federal Election Integrity Act of 2009. This legislation would take the long-overdue step of prohibiting chief state election officials from taking part in the political campaigns of Federal candidates in elections over which the officials have supervisory authority.

As a former President of the League of Women Voters in San Diego and a proud American voter myself, I know that election officials are entrusted with a crucial responsi-

bility for our democracy. Their only allegiance must be to the will of the voters, not to partisan political agendas.

I think we can all agree that an inherent conflict of interest exists when a state's chief election official is responsible for monitoring and certifying the results of a Federal election while actively participating in the campaign of one of the candidates in that election.

In recent years, multiple Secretaries of State have captured national attention and incited great controversy because of their political involvement in elections they were responsible for overseeing.

Although such individuals may be honorable public servants with no improper intentions, it is of the utmost importance for the integrity of our democracy that we provide legal safeguards to ensure the public trust is never violated.

This is not a partisan issue. The record shows that officials of both parties have in the past held these two types of positions simultaneously. Rather, this is an issue of preserving the American people's faith in the integrity of our democracy.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to offer this important legislation to protect the public's trust in the electoral process.

IN RECOGNITION OF RON
SHELTON, NATIONAL APART-
MENT ASSOCIATION'S CHAIRMAN
OF THE BOARD FOR 2009

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Ron Shelton, elected Chairman of the Board for 2009 for the National Apartment Association (NAA).

Ron has been a part of the multi-family housing industry for twenty-eight years. His career began with Lincoln Property Company where he started as a part-time grounds person while attending the University of Texas at Arlington. He quickly moved up the ranks into a leadership role that oversaw properties in Dallas and Houston before leaving to become Vice President of Operations for SBC Realty Company in 1989. Since then, he dedicated thirteen years to the Apartment and Investment Management Company (AIMCO) and subsequently moved over to Amalgamated Management Corporation.

Ron is committed to quality rental housing and meeting the housing needs of the public. He has served in numerous roles such as chairing the New Technology Task Force, President of the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas and the NAA's Education Institute. His career exemplifies his enthusiasm for NAA's mission. As Chairman Elect, Ron's hard work, skills, and insight garnered from his many years of experience will greatly benefit the NAA.

Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in expressing our best wishes to him on this special day.