

SPEND, BORROW, AND TAX TOO MUCH

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, in the land of spend too much, borrow too much and tax too much, and in the age of the trillion-dollar deficits, the American taxpayers deserve to know where their hard-earned money is being spent.

After the \$1.63 trillion spent in the stimulus and TARP bills, we need a system for transparency and accountability. That is why I have introduced the TARP and Stimulus Reporting and Waste Prevention Act. This bill requires complete disclosure of the TARP and stimulus spending, and it goes further than the President's "Recovery.gov." It establishes a waste, fraud and abuse hotline that provides protection to all whistleblowers, including Federal employees.

The bill will promote accountability policies for government agencies and companies that benefit from the bailout in the stimulus so that taxpayers know that their money is not going to big bonuses and lavish resorts.

We owe it to the taxpayers to ensure that these funds are being used for designated purposes. It is their money, and they deserve to know.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1262, WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 235 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 235

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1262) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for State water pollution control revolving funds, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee

amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. House Resolutions 218, 219, and 229 are laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 235 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. The rules makes in order 10 amendments, including all five of the Republicans' amendments considered for consideration.

Among the many challenges confronting us, none could be more elemental than protecting our water. Today, the nationwide system of wastewater infrastructure includes 16,000 publicly owned wastewater treatment plants, 100,000 major pumping stations, 600,000 miles of sanitary sewers, and 200,000 miles of storm sewers. It is estimated that we have already invested over \$250 billion on the construction and maintenance of this system. However, we are now in danger of losing that investment, if we do not act to maintain and improve the system.

The vast majority of the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 is made up of five bills that the House considered and passed during the 110th Congress, four of which were not addressed by the

Senate. With any luck, our colleagues in the other body will be able to address these important issues this Congress.

The need for serious investment in our infrastructure is clear. In 2002, the EPA estimated that there will be a \$534 billion gap between spending and needs for water and wastewater infrastructure in 2019. The EPA's Clean Watersheds Needs Survey of 2004 Report to Congress documented America's wastewater infrastructure needs at more than \$202 billion, and these are numbers from several years ago.

The Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 authorizes \$13.8 billion in Federal grants over 5 years to capitalize clean water State revolving loan funds that provide grants and low-interest loans to communities for water and wastewater infrastructure. These funds are critical to so many communities in the district that I represent. During December and January, it seemed like every local official that I met with had a water or wastewater infrastructure project that was shovel-ready and in dire need of stimulus funds. The funding authorized by this bill will help to address that backlog of need.

H.R. 1262 also authorizes \$1.8 billion over the next 5 years for Sewer Overflow Control Grants programs. Addressing and eliminating combined sewer overflows is one of the biggest financial challenges facing communities in my district and all over the country.

Communities in the Northeastern United States tend to have old and deteriorating sewer systems. Old clay pipes with leaking joints and other weaknesses in the system allow outside water to infiltrate into the system. During heavy storms or spring snowmelt, this infiltration causes the system to overflow and discharge water and sewage into local rivers.

A number of county and municipal water systems in my district are facing multi-million dollar projects to prevent their systems from overflowing into the Mohawk River that runs from west to east across upstate New York and feeds into the Hudson River. Many of these communities have small populations, incapable of simply passing the cost of these projects on to ratepayers.

H.R. 1262 authorizes extended repayment periods of up to 30 years for the SRF loans to help lessen the burden on local ratepayers.

To further assist rural or small communities like these, the legislation also authorizes technical assistance to help them meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act and to assist them to gaining access to financing wastewater infrastructure. In the upstate New York district that I represent, I often hear from rural communities about the difficulties they have in finding and applying for grant and loan opportunities.

The most reliable way to prevent human illness from waterborne diseases and pathogens is to eliminate human exposure in discharged sewage.

While system repairs and upgrades take time to implement, timely public notice can limit the human exposure when these discharges occur. The Water Quality Investment Act also requires owners and operators of publicly owned treatment works to monitor for and provide timely notification of sewer overflows to Federal and State agencies, public health departments and the public at large.

The legislation properly extends Davis-Bacon prevailing wage protections to contractors on treatment works projects that are constructed with my assistance from the State revolving loan funds. This prevents “cut-rate” crews from performing shoddy work and ensures that local contractors can competitively bid on local water infrastructure projects.

The bill also reinstates the applicability of the Buy American Act to construction projects funded by Clean Water Act. In this way, the bill ensures that the investment we make in our infrastructure has the greatest possible benefit on the American economy. The Buy American provisions included in the Water Quality Investment Act are consistent with the Buy American provisions included in the final conference agreement of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The bill also increases the authorization to remediate contamination in the Great Lakes. In 2002, the EPA reported that pollution was impairing the use of 91 percent of the Great Lakes shorelines and 99 percent of the Great Lakes open water.

□ 1030

Impairment means that the shoreline of the open waters did not meet all of the designated uses, including fishing, swimming, and suitability for aquatic life. The leading causes of this impairment were pathogens, metals—mainly mercury—and toxic organic compounds. EPA noted that the dominant cause of shoreline impairment was historic pollution in the form of contaminated sediment.

H.R. 1262 increases to \$150 million per year the authorization for projects that address sediment contamination in the Great Lakes areas. Areas of concern are defined under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the United States and Canada as ecologically degraded geographic areas that require remediation. An area qualifies if at least one of 14 beneficial uses—fishing, swimming, drinking water, et cetera—is impaired as a result of contamination.

By increasing the authorization for the cleanup of contaminated sediment in the most polluted areas of the Great Lakes, the bill will improve opportunities for fishing, swimming, boating, and agriculture. This will help approximately 40 million people who live in the Great Lakes Basin. The level of authorization is consistent with the provision of the House-passed Great Lakes Legacy Act Reauthorization passed by the House in the fall of 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the Water Quality Investment Act. I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will continue to support it as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI), for the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

American taxpayers have invested billions of dollars in our sewage treatment infrastructure resulting in decades of progress in reducing water-borne illness from contaminated drinking water. By the way, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the history of the 20th century, the single factor that contributed most to public health in the United States, and in the developed world generally, was the development, the spreading, if you will, throughout society of the ability of people to have access to clean water, clean drinking water. And so what we're dealing with today is perhaps more important than at first glance, it seems.

Now, unfortunately, whenever there has been, for example, an accidental breach in sewage treatment facilities, we see the repercussions of polluted water to public health, to our communities, and also to important industries such as tourism. That is why it is sound economic and environmental policy to invest in effective sewage treatment that ensures that the United States continues to have a healthy and vibrant aquatic ecosystem and clean water.

But the cost for these systems is expensive. In south Florida, the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department evaluated its wastewater needs through the year 2020 and determined that in order to maintain adequate transmission systems capability, treatment, disposal and the prevention of sanitary sewer overflows, that department alone in south Florida would have to spend over \$2 billion. The cause of many sanitary sewer overflow events is that the infrastructure is failing due to structural deterioration and corrosion. So Federal funding, such as is provided in the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009, will give additional assistance to proactively identify the infrastructure requiring replacement prior to failure.

Included in the underlying bill is \$13.8 billion in Federal grants over 5 years to capitalize the Clean Water State Revolving Funds for the construction of publicly owned wastewater treatment works and other wastewater infrastructure. And it provides low-interest loans to communities for wastewater infrastructure. These grants will encourage communities to consider alternative and innovative processes, materials, and technologies that maximize the potential for efficient water use, reuse, and conservation.

I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA

for their hard work on this important bill that will help to keep our water safe and healthy and will also keep our ecosystem clean of wastewater.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the underlying legislation consolidates five bills that passed the House in the 110th Congress. In the 110th Congress, the House considered two of these bills under modified rules. The majority set a precedent, thus, that these bills should be considered under at least modified open rules. Modified open rules allow Members in the House to debate and consider all amendments that are preprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. So why not do the same today? Those two bills, even with a modified open rule, easily passed the House. So is the majority so afraid of debate that, even on a noncontroversial bill like this, they feel they must restrict debate? It's a shame.

It is unfortunate that the majority continues to backpedal on the open debate precedent—even that they themselves set. Yet, considering the way the majority has run this House in the last Congress and in this Congress, it's not a surprise; it is just the way the majority conducts business.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Rules Committee mentioned that this bill is costly. There is no question there is a cost associated with clean water. But I would submit, how do you put a price tag on clean water? How do you put a price tag on keeping the water that your family drinks and the water that is so important to life on this planet clean? There is no real price tag that you can put on it.

In my own county, Oneida County in New York, we are under a consent order from the State of New York to eliminate sewer overflow that discharges into our river during storms. It would cost \$150 million for our small community to fix our water system, but it's necessary for us to do that. And I would submit that, without projects such as this, local communities cannot keep their water clean and cannot do the kind of things that are necessary and so important for our country.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ARCURI. I would yield.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Thank you. I hope my friend did understand that I praised the underlying legislation.

Mr. ARCURI. I understand.

Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio, a former colleague from the Rules Committee, Ms. SUTTON.

Ms. SUTTON. I thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership on this issue and for the time that he has yielded to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation, H.R. 1262, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. This bill provides

a total investment of \$18.7 billion over 5 years for much-needed water and environmental infrastructure. Not only will this bill help provide communities with improved water quality, but it must be remembered that it will create over 480 million jobs.

H.R. 1262 provides \$13.8 billion in Federal grants to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund over the next 5 years. This fund provides low-interest loans to our communities so that they can repair wastewater infrastructure, and that is desperately needed. Like much of the Nation's infrastructure, the wastewater systems in my district are aging, and they are in dire need of repair, or, in some cases, replacement.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased that this legislation includes a "buy American" provision. This provision will require that steel, iron, and other manufactured goods used for the construction of these water projects are produced here in the United States.

The economic downturn has taken a toll on U.S. manufacturing, including the steel plants in my district in Ohio. And with this legislation, and with this "buy American" provision, we will be putting Americans back to work doing work that America needs to have done.

The bill also contains Davis-Bacon protections requiring that the workers who will do this work will be paid a local prevailing wage, a wage that will ensure that they are able to provide for their families, which is all that they really are looking to do.

Now, last year, Congress passed the Great Lakes Legacy Act to clean up contaminated toxic sediments that are endangering families and communities throughout the Great Lakes Basin, which is an area that is home to approximately 40 million people in eight States, including Ohio. As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, the House-passed version of that bill provided \$150 million each year through fiscal year 2013 for cleaning up the Great Lakes. However, our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol in the Senate operate under different floor rules, and one Senator was able to block action on the bill until funding levels for this program were cut by two-thirds.

This bill also restores the funding level for the Great Lakes Legacy Act projects to the level initially—and overwhelmingly—passed by the House last September. The residents of the Great Lakes Basin have been waiting far too long for these toxic sites to be cleaned up. The funding in this bill will allow for the cleanup of all contaminated sediment in the Great Lakes region by 2020. For these reasons, I urge a "yes" vote on the bill.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlelady from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise to support this rule, as well as the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that if the last century was all about the world's obsession with oil, that this century is going to be about water; fresh, clean water. Now, you cannot drink oil, but you cannot live without fresh, clean water.

In Michigan, we are truly blessed to be surrounded by the Great Lakes. These bodies of water are a world treasure—not just a national treasure, but a world treasure—because they comprise fully 20 percent, or one-fifth, of the fresh water drinking supply of our entire planet. Unfortunately, after years of industrial pollution and sewage overflows from aging, inadequate underground infrastructure and sewage systems, all of this has taken a toll on our magnificent Great Lakes.

This bill, the Water Quality Investment Act, continues a very proud tradition of continuing our efforts to improve water quality, both in the Great Lakes and around our Nation as well. I want to commend Chairman OBERSTAR, as well as Ranking Member MICA, for their work on these very important bills. As has been mentioned, we are consolidating five very important bills that passed the House last year into this one piece of legislation which is, again, so critically important to our fresh water supply in our Nation.

Specifically, this bill is authorizing \$13.8 billion for capitalization grants for Clean Water Revolving Funds, and \$1.8 billion for grants to deal specifically with sewer overflows. It is estimated, Mr. Speaker, that 24 billion gallons of municipal sewage find their way directly into local water systems every year, and that is the equivalent of over 100 olympic-size swimming pools full of sewage each and every day getting into our water supply. This legislation recognizes this problem and acts to correct it.

This bill also reauthorizes the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which, unfortunately, will expire next year if we don't take action now. As a result of this act, nearly 800,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments have been removed from areas of concern in the Great Lakes Basin. But we still have a very long way to go. We need to continue this good work because 31 areas of concern which have been designated remain in the United States alone, and then there are five others that are split between the United States and the nation of Canada. This bill increases the authorization for this program up to \$150 million annually, again, which will help us meet our goal of cleaning up the Great Lakes.

I also want to take a moment and mention my support for the application of Davis-Bacon requirements to projects funded from Clean Water Revolving Funds in this act. As a Member, Mr. Speaker, coming from the great State of Michigan, which is, unfortunately, suffering with over 11 percent unemployment today, I want to be absolutely certain that water infrastructure projects in my State are

built by workers who live in my State, a State where we need every single job that we can get.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield the gentlewoman an additional minute.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Davis-Bacon ensures that local workers benefit from projects being done in their area.

The Water Quality Investment Act will help us make great strides, I think, in efforts to maintain and to improve our Nation's water infrastructure and to clean up the Great Lakes. As I say, for all these water projects throughout our entire Nation, as my colleague from Florida has mentioned, this is such a critically important piece of legislation. On our side, I think you can expect an awful lot of support for this bill.

Clean water is not a partisan issue. Water doesn't know if it's in a Republican district or a Democratic district or what kind of district it is, but it is for those of us in Congress to speak up and to support, again, this rule and this bill, and I would certainly urge my colleagues to do so.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) will control the remainder of the time.

There was no objection.

□ 1045

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

It's wonderful to see such strong words of support from both sides of the aisle for this important piece of legislation.

I rise today in support of this rule and ask my colleagues to join me and pass the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and the members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for bringing forward this legislation, which will protect clean water for Americans.

Clean water is essential to America's urban and rural communities. With this legislation, our cities will be able to take a comprehensive approach to water and wastewater management. It combines green and traditional methods to create a sustainable infrastructure that provides clean drinking water and leverages our precious natural resources to meet the demands of growth.

For agricultural uses, the advancements in water storage and treatment will provide reliable, clean water supplies that are good for the economic stability of our rural economies and improve the quality of our food supply, keeping Americans healthy. In these difficult economic times, the infrastructure improvements made possible through this legislation will create jobs and reduce costs for municipal governments. I ask my colleagues to

invest in clean, reliable water resources for all Americans by supporting this rule and voting for the Water Quality Investment Act.

This will also address the growing needs for improvements in our water treatment systems. Several sectors of our economy will benefit from the improvements in this bill. The Nation's farmers, fishermen, manufacturing, and tourism industries rely on clean water that carry out our economic activities that contribute more than \$300 billion to our economy each year. Our wastewater infrastructure is badly in need of the investment that this bill provides, Mr. Speaker, especially the \$13.8 billion in Federal grants that capitalize the Clean Water State Revolving Funds. States can use that money to repair and build wastewater treatment plants and pipes.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is a rule on the Water Quality Investment Act, a rule sent to the floor by a committee the Speaker of the House controls, a Speaker who speaks often about the need for climate change legislation.

To that end, the Speaker of the House, Ms. PELOSI, went before the American people in February of 2007 and repeatedly disputed a report that her office requested a larger, fossil fuel burning military plane than has ever been used by a Speaker before. The type of plane which she denied requesting is exactly the type of plane that most certainly has a negative impact on our environment and the quality of water, the bill that is before us today under this structured rule. In fact, the Speaker went so far as to say in her rebuttal, "We didn't ask for a larger plane, period."

However, earlier this week, prior to the consideration of this rule we have before us now, new e-mail evidence was revealed that contradicts the Speaker's public statements from 2 years ago. These e-mails between the Speaker's staff and the Department of Defense show that it was the Speaker's office that requested the larger plane, not once but repeatedly.

While we are considering legislation today to provide quality water to the American people, I think we should also note for the American people that spending their taxpayer dollars on a luxurious plane for Speaker PELOSI could negatively impact the environment and our quality of water. But even if you disagree with me on that, you should be troubled by these new facts. These newly reported facts contradict the Speaker's prior statement, possibly jeopardizing the faith of the American people, who we are here today representing and trying to help with this water quality bill.

Most alarmingly, a member of the Speaker's staff threatened a wartime budget of the Defense Department, implying that unless the Speaker's demands for personal luxuries were met, the defense budget itself would be placed in jeopardy. This is a department that has spent many resources developing and promoting clean water technology, like this bill before us today purports to do.

What did the Speaker know and when did she know it? The American people deserve the truth, something that this uncovered e-mail evidence shows the Speaker has not been telling them.

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

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, without continued improvements in wastewater treatment infrastructure, future population growth will erode away many of the important achievements of the Clean Water Act. Without the sort of improvements that this bill, this bipartisan bill, includes, EPA projects that by 2016 wastewater treatment plants nationwide may discharge pollutants into U.S. waters at levels similar to those in the mid 1970s.

Mr. Speaker, this bill allows us to move forward rather than backward with regard to making sure that America's water supply is clean and safe. By requiring that workers on projects funded by the Clean Water State Revolving Funds be paid local prevailing wages, this bill promotes the payment of fair wages, as my colleague from Michigan pointed out on the other side of the aisle. This is important, both for its stimulative effect as well as being a future investment in our country.

The EPA reported in 2002 that pollution is impairing the use of 91 percent of the shoreline of the Great Lakes and 99 percent of Great Lakes open water. By authorizing \$750 million for cleanup of the Great Lakes, this bill will improve opportunities for fishing, swimming, boating, agriculture, industry, and shipping for the 40 million people in one of the hardest-hit areas of our country in the recession who live in the Great Lakes Basin.

The vast majority of the provisions of this bill were contained in five bills that were passed in the House in the 110th Congress, most of them with broad bipartisan support, and it passed the committee by a voice vote. The provisions in this bill are similar. By reinstating the applicability of the Buy American Act for the construction of projects funded, we can ensure that our money will be spent here and that the infrastructure expenditures will have the greatest possible benefit for the American people and the American economy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of our colleagues who have taken to the floor to speak about this underlying legislation, which is important. Again, I want

to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA for their hard work in bringing forward this legislation and allowing the House to consider it today. I see that it's Thursday and the House has been waiting all week to get to this legislation, so I commend the majority for finally bringing the legislation to the floor on Thursday.

Having seen the reiteration of bipartisan support for the underlying legislation, I do so again, and once again I thank all our colleagues that have come to speak on the underlying legislation.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

With regard to this rule, we are, in fact, advancing to the floor all of the amendments that were recommended in advance by the minority party. This will allow a full discussion, debate, and vote on all the important issues that still divide us on this bipartisan piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 is made up of five bills that passed the House with strong bipartisan support during the 110th Congress. Four of those bills were never addressed by the Senate. Those measures are:

First, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007, which was passed by the House on March 7, 2007, by a vote of 303-108. Provisions of that bill comprise title I of the legislation we will consider today.

Secondly, the Healthy Communities Water Supply Act, passed by the House of Representatives on March 8, 2007, by a vote of 368-59. That legislation is included in H.R. 1262 as title II.

Third, the Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, passed by the House on March 7, 2007, by a vote of 367-58. Provisions of that bill comprise title III of the legislation that we will consider today.

Fourth, the Sewage Overflow Community Right-to-Know Act, which was passed by the House on June 24, 2008, by voice vote under suspension of the rules. This legislation is included in H.R. 1262 as title IV.

The Water Quality Investment Act of 2009 also includes an increased authorization for eligible projects that address contamination within the Great Lakes Areas of Concern. The authorization for these programs is consistent with the authorization contained in a previous version of the Great Lakes Reauthorization Act of 2008, which the House passed on September 18, 2008, by a vote of 371-20.

I would also like to emphasize that the rule for debate today makes in order every single amendment filed by the minority party. This rule will allow for a full debate of the issues involved. At the end of that debate, I hope that this legislation will enjoy the same bipartisan support that its

components enjoyed in the last Congress.

This bill will accomplish two things that have already become a key characteristic of all of our efforts here in the 111th Congress: It will create jobs and it will save energy. The Water Quality Investment Act will support quality paying jobs by ensuring that workers receive no less than local prevailing wages. By authorizing funding for cleanup of the Great Lakes, the bill will improve opportunities in the fishing, swimming, boating, agriculture, and shipping industries, which support approximately 40 million people in the Great Lakes Basin whose livelihoods are directly dependent upon clean water resources.

This bill has a thoughtful eye on the future by taking into account energy efficiency and water conservation. As a westerner, I understand the vast challenges we face with regard to our water supply. Establishing our water infrastructure that encourages and promotes conservation is of incredible importance for regions that will only see their water sources become fewer and farther between. In Colorado, we rely on clean water not only for municipal and agricultural use, but entire communities are supported by visiting kayakers, fly fishermen, and outdoorsmen from across the country who flock to our pristine rivers and streams. Our environment, communities, industries, and businesses all stand to gain under the provisions of this law. Without the infrastructure investments in this bill, the EPA has projected that our water quality could be set back decades to pre-Clean Water Act levels.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the rule and to vote "yes" on the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMISSION TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING DURING PROCEEDINGS TODAY

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during proceedings today in the House and in the Committee of the Whole, the Chair be authorized to reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any questions that otherwise could be subjected to 5-minute voting under clause 8 or 9 of rule XX or under clause 6 of rule XVIII.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks on H.R. 1262 and include extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON). Pursuant to House Resolution H. Res. 235 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1262.

□ 1058

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1262), with Mr. PASTOR of Arizona in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill pending before us has been so well described in the discussion of the rule that it seems superfluous to repeat the major items of the pending legislation.

At the Rules Committee yesterday, I said, and our floor manager for the Rules Committee restated, that we bring to the House bills that passed the House in the 110th Congress individually. The gentleman from Colorado read off the votes, which were overwhelming, well over 300-plus votes in favor of each of those bills; just bipartisanship, nonpartisanship, overwhelming support for these measures.

Unfortunately, they went to the other body, never to be heard of again. So we thought it would be a better approach this year to combine those all into one bill, and maybe the other body can do one bill instead of five, we are hoping.

The commitment to clean water, though, cannot be taken so slightly, cannot be just subject to "hotline holds" by the other body, cannot be subject to undisclosed holds, cannot be subject to indifference to action. The agenda for clean water is ours. It's for the next generation. It's to hand on to the next generation water in better condition than we received it from the previous generation.

I have been on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure from the time it was the Committee on Public Works. I started my career in this House in January of 1963 as Clerk

of the Subcommittee on Rivers and Harbors, the oldest committee of the House, the first committee of the House.

Our work has evolved over many years to encompass a wide range of issues related to investment in the Nation's well-being, but none more fundamental, more important, than water. All the water we ever had on this Earth, or ever will have, is with us today. We aren't going to create new water from any technological source. No comet is likely to come into our orbit and deposit new ice to form water. Our responsibility is to care for the water we have.

Every day, 42 trillion gallons of moisture passes over the continental United States. Ten percent of that falls as moisture, 4.2 trillion gallons. Of that, some .4 trillion gallons is absorbed by the soil or evaporates. The rest, some 680 billion gallons, goes into surface waters of the United States. That is all we have every day, 680-some billion gallons.

We have to manage it well, make sure that we use it properly, that we return to the streams and lakes and estuaries of the Nation water in clean condition. This legislation will move us in that direction.

The centerpiece of this \$18.7 billion package of bills is restoration of and reauthorization of the State Revolving Fund from which funds are borrowed by municipalities to build wastewater treatment facilities, sewer lines, interceptor sewers, separate storm and combine storm and sanitary sewers. But for a dozen years, until the 110th Congress, that legislation had expired and had not been reauthorized. The funding was continued, but at lower levels of appropriation, for each of those 12 years until the 110th Congress.

That leveled off, because the authorization legislation could never make its way to the House floor, even though our committee was prepared to do that. We had bipartisan support within the committee, but could never get it to the House floor.

Well, we brought it to the floor in the 110th and passed it overwhelmingly, as I said earlier. It went to the Senate, and that has not moved.

The stimulus legislation provides funding of \$4.6 billion, half in loans and half in grant funds to the State Revolving Funds to create jobs and to deal with the backlog of need in State wastewater treatment programs and sewer upgrades. Hardly a week goes by that I don't read of a major main break or a sewer line break somewhere in this country.

It is commentary on the aging wastewater structure of this country and the need to rebuild it, need to upgrade our sewage treatment plant facilities built in the 1970s and some in the 1980s that are beyond their capacities or that are in need of new technology upgrades. This legislation will move us in the direction of dealing with those needs.