

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 935, honoring John E. Warnock, Charles M. Geschke, Forrest M. Bird, Esther Sans Takeuchi, and IBM Corporation for receiving the 2008 National Medal of Technology and Innovation.

The National Medal of Technology and Innovation is the highest honor for technological achievement given by the President to the country's leading innovators, and the five recipients honored by this resolution have all made great contributions to technology and innovation in the United States.

These honorees have made contributions in areas including desktop publishing, medical and battery technologies, and supercomputing. Innovation and technological advancements in these areas and others are critical for many reasons, including furthering health care technology for our citizens and increasing the United States' ability to remain economically competitive with other nations.

I want to congratulate the five honorees and thank Representative LOFGREN from California for her leadership in introducing this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may command.

H. Res. 935 honors John E. Warnock, Charles M. Geschke, Forrest M. Bird, Esther Sans Takeuchi, and IBM for being awarded the 2008 National Medal of Technology and Innovation. The National Medal of Technology and Innovation is awarded annually to the Nation's leading innovators. This award recognizes those who have made significant contributions to their country. Additionally, it's intended to also inspire our youth to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-related fields of study.

Together, Drs. Warnock and Geschke founded Adobe Systems. Adobe Systems enabled documents to be successfully sent electronically from program to program through technology that's today known as PDF. Since their retirement as software executives, both have contributed generously to programs that help encourage young engineers and innovators.

Dr. Forrest Bird of Idaho served as an aviator during World War II. Following the war, he founded Bird, Inc., which developed amphibian aircraft and innovative breathing equipment to reduce the risks of altitude sickness. Using this same technology, Bird later developed medical respirators, which are still in use around the world, and contributed to lowering breath-related infant mortality rates.

Dr. Esther Sans Takeuchi of New York began her distinguished career as a scientist for Greatbatch, Inc. In her years there, she developed a lithium/silver vanadium oxide battery, which was essential to producing implantable cardiac defibrillators. Today, more than 200,000 of those ICDs are implanted each year, most with batteries originally developed by Takeuchi.

IBM's Blue Gene Server Group represents a new age of American innovation. These supercomputers have enabled business and science to visit new calculations previously unattainable. In addition, these computers have been recognized as the most energy efficient of their type in the world today.

On October 7, 2009, President Obama honored the 2008 recipients of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation during a White House ceremony. I join the President in recognizing these distinguished Americans and urge my colleagues to do so.

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

□ 1445

Mr. BAIRD. Again, I want to commend the sponsor of this bill, Ms. LOFGREN, and, most importantly of all, commend the recipients of this prestigious award and thank them for their contributions to the betterment of our entire society, our economy, and the well-being of our public.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 935.

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. BAIRD. 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.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS AND HYPOXIA RESEARCH AND CONTROL AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2010

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3650) to establish a National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program, to develop and coordinate a comprehensive and integrated strategy to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, and to provide for the development and implementation of comprehensive regional action plans to reduce harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3650

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 "Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA RESEARCH AND CONTROL ACT OF 1998.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 1451 note).

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The Act is amended by inserting after section 602 the following:

"SEC. 602A. DEFINITIONS.

"In this title:

"(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term 'Administrator' means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

"(2) PROGRAM.—The term 'Program' means the National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program established under section 603A.

"(3) STATE.—The term 'State' means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, any other territory or possession of the United States, and any Indian tribe.

"(4) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term 'Under Secretary' means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere."

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 is amended by adding after the item relating to section 602 the following new item:

"Sec. 602A. Definitions."

SEC. 4. NATIONAL HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The Act is amended by inserting after section 603 the following:

"SEC. 603A. NATIONAL HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA PROGRAM.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (d), the Under Secretary, through the Task Force established under section 603(a), shall establish and maintain a National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program pursuant to this section.

"(b) DUTIES.—The Under Secretary, through the Program, shall coordinate the efforts of the Task Force to—

"(1) develop and promote a national strategy to understand, detect, predict, control, mitigate, and respond to marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events;

"(2) integrate the research of all Federal programs, including ocean and Great Lakes science and management programs and centers, that address the chemical, biological, and physical components of marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(3) coordinate and work cooperatively with State, tribal, and local government agencies and programs that address marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(4) identify additional research, development, and demonstration needs and priorities relating to monitoring, prediction, prevention, control, mitigation, and response to marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(5) encourage international information sharing and research efforts on marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, and encourage international mitigation, control, and response activities;

"(6) ensure the development and implementation of methods and technologies to protect the ecosystems affected by marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms;

“(7) integrate, coordinate, and augment existing education programs to improve public understanding and awareness of the causes, impacts, and mitigation efforts for marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(8) assist in regional, State, tribal, and local efforts to develop and implement appropriate marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia response plans, strategies, and tools;

“(9) provide resources for and assist in the training of State, tribal, and local water and coastal resource managers in the methods and technologies for monitoring, controlling, mitigating, and responding to the effects of marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events;

“(10) oversee the development, implementation, review, and periodic updating of the Regional Research and Action Plans under section 603B; and

“(11) administer peer-reviewed, merit-based competitive grant funding to support—

“(A) the projects maintained and established by the Program; and

“(B) the research and management needs and priorities identified in the Regional Research and Action Plans.

“(C) COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.—The Under Secretary shall work cooperatively and avoid duplication of efforts with other offices, centers, and programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other agencies represented on the Task Force established under section 603(a), States, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations concerned with marine and freshwater aquatic issues related to harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

“(d) FRESHWATER PROGRAM.—With respect to the freshwater aspects of the Program, the Administrator and Under Secretary, through the Task Force, shall carry out the duties otherwise assigned to the Under Secretary under this section and section 603B, including the activities described in subsection (e). The Administrator’s participation under this subsection shall include—

“(1) research on the ecology of freshwater harmful algal blooms;

“(2) monitoring and event response of freshwater harmful algal blooms in lakes, rivers, estuaries (including their tributaries), and reservoirs;

“(3) mitigation and control of freshwater harmful algal blooms; and

“(4) an identification in the President’s annual budget request to Congress of how much funding is proposed in that request for carrying out the activities described in subsection (e).

“(e) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES.—As part of the program under this section, the Under Secretary shall—

“(1) maintain and enhance existing competitive grant programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration relating to marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(2) carry out marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events response activities; and

“(3) enhance communication and coordination among Federal agencies carrying out marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia activities, and increase the availability to appropriate public and private entities of—

“(A) analytical facilities and technologies;

“(B) operational forecasts; and

“(C) reference and research materials.

“(f) INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM.—All monitoring and observation data collected under this Act shall be collected in compliance with all data standards and protocols developed pursuant

to the National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), and such data shall be made available through the System established under that Act.

“(g) ACTION STRATEGY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010, the Under Secretary, through the Task Force established under section 603(a), shall transmit to the Congress an action strategy that identifies—

“(A) the specific activities to be carried out by the Program and the timeline for carrying out such activities; and

“(B) the roles and responsibilities of each Federal agency in the Task Force established under section 603(a) in carrying out Program activities.

“(2) FEDERAL REGISTER.—The Under Secretary shall publish the action strategy in the Federal Register.

“(3) PERIODIC REVISION.—The Under Secretary shall periodically review and revise the action strategy prepared under this subsection as necessary.

“(h) REPORT.—Two years after the submission of the action strategy, the Under Secretary shall prepare and transmit to the Congress a report that describes—

“(1) the activities carried out under the Program and the Regional Research and Action Plans and the budget related to these activities;

“(2) the progress made on implementing the action strategy; and

“(3) the need to revise or terminate activities or projects under the Program.”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 is amended by adding after the item relating to section 603 the following new item:

“Sec. 603A. National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program.”.

SEC. 5. REGIONAL RESEARCH AND ACTION PLANS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The Act is amended by inserting after section 603A the following:

“SEC. 603B. REGIONAL RESEARCH AND ACTION PLANS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, through the Task Force established under section 603(a), shall—

“(1) identify the appropriate regions and subregions to be addressed by each Regional Research and Action Plan; and

“(2) oversee the development and implementation of the Regional Research and Action Plans.

“(b) CONTENTS.—The Plans developed under this section shall identify—

“(1) regional priorities for ecological, economic, and social research on issues related to the impacts of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(2) research, development, and demonstration activities needed to develop and advance technologies and techniques for minimizing the occurrence of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia and improving capabilities to prevent, predict, monitor, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(3) ways to reduce the duration and intensity of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, including in times of emergency;

“(4) research and methods to address human health dimensions of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(5) mechanisms, including the potential costs and benefits of those mechanisms, to protect vulnerable ecosystems that could be or have been affected by harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events;

“(6) mechanisms by which data, information, and products are transferred between the Program and State, tribal, and local governments and relevant research entities;

“(7) communication, outreach, and information dissemination methods that State, tribal, and local governments and stakeholder organizations can undertake to educate and inform the public concerning harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; and

“(8) the roles that Federal agencies can play to assist in the implementation of the Plan.

“(c) BUILDING ON AVAILABLE STUDIES AND INFORMATION.—In developing the Plans under this section, the Under Secretary shall—

“(1) utilize and build on existing research, assessments, and reports, including those carried out pursuant to existing law and other relevant sources; and

“(2) consider the impacts, research, and existing program activities of all United States coastlines and fresh and inland waters, including the Great Lakes, the Chesapeake Bay, and estuaries and tributaries.

“(d) DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS.—The Under Secretary shall develop Plans under this section with assistance from the individuals and entities described in subsection (f).

“(e) PLAN TIMELINE AND UPDATES.—The Under Secretary, through the Task Force established under section 603(a), shall ensure that the Plans developed under this section are completed not later than 24 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010, and updated once every 5 years thereafter.

“(f) COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION.—In developing the Plans under this section, as appropriate, the Under Secretary—

“(1) shall coordinate with State coastal management and planning officials;

“(2) shall coordinate with tribal resource management officials;

“(3) shall coordinate with water management and watershed officials from both coastal States and noncoastal States with water sources that drain into water bodies affected by harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; and

“(4) shall consult with—

“(A) public health officials;

“(B) emergency management officials;

“(C) science and technology development institutions;

“(D) economists;

“(E) industries and businesses affected by marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

“(F) scientists, with expertise concerning harmful algal blooms or hypoxia, from academic or research institutions; and

“(G) other stakeholders.”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 is amended by adding after the item relating to section 603A, as added by section 4(b) of this Act, the following new item:

“Sec. 603B. Regional research and action plans.”.

SEC. 6. NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO HYPOXIA.

Section 604 is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 604. NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO HYPOXIA.

“(a) TASK FORCE INITIAL PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010, the Administrator, through the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force, shall complete and transmit to the Congress and the President a report on the progress made by Task Force-directed activities toward attainment of the goals of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan 2008.

“(b) TASK FORCE 2-YEAR PROGRESS REPORTS.—After the initial report required under subsection (a), the Administrator, through the Task Force, shall complete and transmit to Congress and the President a report every 2 years thereafter on the progress made by Task Force-directed activities toward attainment of the coastal goal of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan 2008.

“(c) CONTENTS.—The reports required by this section shall assess progress made toward nutrient load reductions, the response of the hypoxic zone and water quality throughout the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin, and the economic and social effects. The reports shall—

“(1) include an evaluation of how current policies and programs affect management decisions, including those made by municipalities and industrial and agricultural producers;

“(2) evaluate lessons learned; and

“(3) recommend appropriate actions to continue to implement or, if necessary, revise the strategy set forth in the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan 2008.”

SEC. 7. PACIFIC NORTHWEST, ESTUARIES, AND PUGET SOUND HYPOXIA.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The Act is amended by inserting after section 604 the following:

“SEC. 604A. PACIFIC NORTHWEST, ESTUARIES, AND PUGET SOUND HYPOXIA.

“(a) ASSESSMENT REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010, the Task Force established under section 603 shall complete and submit to Congress and the President an integrated assessment of hypoxia in the coastal and estuarine waters of the Pacific Northwest that examines the status of current research, monitoring, prevention, response, and control efforts.

“(b) PLAN.—The Task Force shall include in the regionally appropriate Regional Research and Action Plan developed under section 603B a plan, based on the integrated assessment submitted under subsection (a), for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia in the coastal and estuarine waters of the Pacific Northwest. In developing such plan, the Task Force shall consult with State, Indian tribe, and local governments, and academic, agricultural, industry, and environmental groups and representatives. Such plan shall include incentive-based partnership approaches. The plan shall also address the social and economic costs and benefits of the measures for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia.”

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 is amended by adding after the item relating to section 604 the following new item:

“Sec. 604A. Pacific Northwest, estuaries, and Puget Sound hypoxia.”

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Section 605 is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 605. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated—

“(1) to the Under Secretary to carry out sections 603A and 603B, \$34,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015, of which, for each fiscal year—

“(A) \$2,000,000 may be used for the development of the Regional Research and Action Plans and the reports required by section 604A;

“(B) \$3,000,000 may be used for the research and assessment activities related to marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms at research laboratories of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

“(C) \$8,000,000 may be used to carry out the Ecology and Oceanography of Harmful Algal Blooms Program (ECOHAB);

“(D) \$5,500,000 may be used to carry out the Monitoring and Event Response for Harmful Algal Blooms Program (MERHAB);

“(E) \$1,500,000 may be used to carry out the Northern Gulf of Mexico Ecosystems and Hypoxia Assessment Program (NGOMEX);

“(F) \$5,000,000 may be used to carry out the Coastal Hypoxia Research Program (CHRP);

“(G) \$5,000,000 may be used to carry out the Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of Harmful Algal Blooms Program (PCM);

“(H) \$1,000,000 may be used to carry out marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events response activities; and

“(I) \$3,000,000 may be used for increased availability, communication, and coordination activities; and

“(2) to the Administrator to carry out sections 603A, 603B, and 604, \$7,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015.”

(b) EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.—The Under Secretary shall ensure that a substantial portion of funds appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) that are used for research purposes are allocated to extramural research activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3650, as amended, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act. This bill represents a timely and necessary step to address a large and growing problem. The Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and Hypoxia Research and Control Act was first signed into law in 1998 and last reauthorized in 2004. And from the outset, I want to commend my dear friend and colleague, Dr. EHLERS, for his tireless work on this over many years.

I stand in support of these programs because this affects virtually every coastal waterway in America as well as freshwater ecosystems. Let me share with you an example of how serious this problem is.

In a small lake in my own district recently, a person was out with their dog, playing fetch in the water. They threw their favorite tennis ball in the water. The dog jumped into the water, retrieved the tennis ball, swam back up on the shore, and promptly died.

Harmful algal blooms are what we know in the saltwater environment as red tides. In freshwater, it's often blue-green algae. They are deadly in both environments. Estimates suggest the cost may be \$82 million a year, the annual economic impact of HABs, according to a 2006 study. This means billions of dollars over decades.

I mentioned already the tragic loss of this animal, but on a human scale, red tides pose a serious neurotoxin that can actually affect your ability to remember things over the long run. So we have a serious problem. It is growing in the case of harmful algal blooms.

We have a parallel and related problem that the bill also addresses, and these are so-called dead zones, or hypoxia, so known because they are areas of lack of oxygen. These are expanding. Perhaps the most well known is in the Gulf of Mexico, areas literally thousands of square miles wide that if virtually any marine organism swims into them, they die very shortly thereafter because they do not have sufficient oxygen to survive. This has impacted not only the Gulf of Mexico, but also my own coast and elsewhere in the country.

Now, within the freshwater system, I want to underscore a particularly important point. From the Great Lakes to small creeks of West Virginia and throughout the country, this is a problem. My friend and colleague, Mr. MOLLOHAN from West Virginia, has been particularly interested in this. We need to understand that these harmful algal blooms in freshwater are particularly toxic for the following reasons:

Most of the mechanisms that we currently use to purify water do not work with harmful algal blooms. If you boil water to kill pathogens, that normally purifies it. If you boil water that has harmful algal blooms in it, you actually increase the toxin and increase its lethality. If you filter water to get out protozoa and other things, as many of us do when we are hiking or climbing, that can purify normal water. It is totally ineffective and may be actually counterproductive in harmful algal blooms because all you do is break up the bodies of the algae, but the toxin survives. Chlorination does not work to stop these things.

So we have a problem that is deadly to organisms ranging from fish to shore birds and to human beings. And again, both harmful algal blooms and hypoxic events are spreading.

I want to also mention that in my own district, which has a coastal area that is very economically benefited by the clamming season, all you need is one red tide to come in, shut down the clamming season, and you literally lose millions of dollars of business. And for many of our hotel owners and restaurateurs and others, that's the season. You lose that because of a harmful algal bloom, you have basically lost your economy for the year. So this bill would expand our ability to study and ultimately to control these harmful algal blooms and hypoxic events.

I appreciate the support of many colleagues.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Harmful algal blooms are those blooms that produce toxins that are hazardous to plants and animals. The

most recognized harmful algal bloom is red tide, since it discolors the water and makes seafood inedible. Such an event causes many States severe economic harm through beach closures and restrictions on seafood.

This bill fosters continued research into the causes of red tide, explores ways to manage the blooms, and sets up mechanisms to potentially predict when they may occur. These are all areas of research that are beneficial to our economy and to human health, and I commend the vice ranking member of our committee, Dr. VERN EHLERS, for his commitment to address this important issue through his cosponsorship of this legislation.

While I'm supportive of the goals of this measure, I do need to convey some concerns that I and several of my Republican colleagues had in committee. The bill addresses a problem that affects nearly every State. However, we want to make sure that the original and the regional research and action plans that are called for are not a top-down mandate but a true collaboration between the Federal Government and the States and local areas directly affected by these blooms. We want to make sure we are not imposing undue burdens on States that they would not voluntarily take on themselves.

Although the onus is currently on the Federal Government, the activities identified in these plans are ones that will most likely be executed by State, tribal, and local governments. As written, the bill does not contain any safeguards against unfunded mandates. During the markup, we offered amendments that would address these concerns.

The first amendment would have prevented any increased financial burden to State, tribal, or local governments as a result of anything in the bill or the law it amends. Despite receiving bipartisan support, the amendment was not accepted.

A second amendment would have required the development and implementation of the plans initiated only at the request of the States, not the Federal Government. Unfortunately, this amendment also failed. State, tribal, and local governments are already shouldering the burden of the effects of harmful algal blooms since these events have a direct impact on local and regional economies. Furthermore, in the current economic climate, these governments are struggling to prioritize and fund the most basic of services. The assurance of the added protection against unfunded mandates at this time should be something all Members favor.

This legislation has gone through a number of changes since it passed out of committee. Some changes were made by the majority after the bill passed out of committee, and I hope that in the future, we can make necessary changes while bills are still in committee so that all Members can weigh in before bills go to the floor.

Finally, I have concerns about the authorization levels in the bill. Given this era of fiscal constraint, we must be mindful of how we spend taxpayers' dollars. This bill authorizes funding that is almost three times the amount that has been appropriated in recent years. The authorization levels are 50 percent higher than the last reauthorization in 2004. The Federal Government did not spend more than \$15 million per year when the authorization level was at \$26 million per year, so it's hard for me to support raising the level to \$41 million per year in 2011.

Harmful algal blooms and hypoxia are growing threats to our economy and to our economic prosperity and impact coastal gulf and even inland States. While I support the overarching goals of research into these issues and the development of technologies and procedures to lessen their harmful consequences, I remain concerned that this bill is too expensive and does not protect against unfunded mandates.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, at this point, I want to acknowledge that, as is so often the case, H.R. 3650 was a collaborative effort, not just with my minority colleagues on the Science and Technology Committee, but also with the Natural Resources Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as well. I would like, here, to insert a letter of exchanges with those committees into the RECORD, and I want to also thank both Chairmen RAHALL and OBERSTAR for their efforts on this legislation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, November 12, 2009.
Hon. BART GORDON,
Chairman, Committee on Science and Technology, Rayburn H.O.B., Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009, which was referred to the Committee on Science and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources.

Because of the continued cooperation and consideration that you have afforded me and my staff in developing these provisions, and knowing of your interest in expediting this legislation, I am willing to waive further consideration of H.R. 3650 by the Committee on Natural Resources at this time. Of course, this waiver is not intended to prejudice any future jurisdictional claims over the provisions of this legislation or similar language. I also reserve the right to seek to have conferees named from the Committee on Natural Resources on these provisions, and request your support if such a request is made.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 3650 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

With warm regards, I am
Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, November 12, 2009.

Hon. NICK J. RAHALL, II,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RAHALL: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009. Your support for this legislation and your assistance in ensuring its timely consideration are greatly appreciated.

I agree that provisions in the bill are of jurisdictional interest to the Committee on Natural Resources. I acknowledge that by discharging the Committee on Natural Resources from further consideration of 3650, your Committee is not relinquishing Its jurisdiction and I will fully support your request to be represented in a House-Senate conference on those provisions over which the Committee on Natural Resources has jurisdiction. A copy of our letters will be placed in the Committee Report on H.R. 3650 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

I value your cooperation and look forward to working with you as we move ahead with this important legislation.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, December 14, 2009.

Hon. BART GORDON,
Chairman, Committee on Science and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GORDON: I write to you regarding H.R. 3650, the "Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009".

H.R. 3650 contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner and, accordingly, I will not seek a sequential referral of the bill. However, I agree to waive consideration of this bill with the mutual understanding that my decision to forgo a sequential referral of the bill does not waive, reduce, or otherwise affect the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure over H.R. 3650.

Further, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reserves the right to seek the appointment of conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation on provisions of the bill that are within the Committee's jurisdiction. I ask for your commitment to support any request by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the appointment of conferees on H.R. 3650 or similar legislation.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's jurisdictional interest in the Committee Report on H.R. 3650 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure in the House.

I look forward to working with you as we prepare to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. OBERSTAR, M.C.,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, December 14, 2009.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OBERSTAR: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009. Your support for this legislation and your assistance in ensuring its timely consideration are greatly appreciated.

I agree that provisions in the bill are of jurisdictional interest to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I acknowledge that by forgoing a sequential referral, your Committee is not relinquishing its jurisdiction and I will fully support your request to be represented in a House-Senate conference on those provisions over which the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has jurisdiction in H.R. 3650. A copy of our letters will be placed in the Committee Report on H.R. 3650 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

I value your cooperation and look forward to working with you as we move ahead with this important legislation.

Sincerely,

BART GORDON,
Chairman.

If I may, at this point, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. KRATOVIL).

Mr. KRATOVIL. I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3650 and urge my colleagues to support it.

Maryland's First Congressional District, my district, is a district defined by the water that surrounds it. Healthy water in our district means commerce, recreation, and, most importantly, jobs.

A harmful algal bloom is a rapid overproduction of certain species of algae that produce toxins which are detrimental to plants and animals. These outbreaks are commonly referred to, as you have heard, as red or brown tides and have the potential to kill fish and other aquatic life by decreasing sunlight available to the water and by using up available oxygen in the water.

In recent years, many of the Nation's coastlines, near-shore marine waters and freshwaters have experienced an increase in the number, frequency, duration, and types of HABs. If we continue to allow this problem to persist, bodies of water like the Chesapeake Bay in my district will see a detrimental decline in water quality which will affect the thousands of species that call the bay home.

More importantly, perhaps, the thousands of men and women who rely on the bay to pay their bills will be put out of work. Watermen, commercial fishermen, charter boat captains, and any number of similar professions have been part of the Eastern Shore culture for decades. If gone unchecked, these professions will become less and less prominent, and an entire segment of our local economy will be hurt.

H.R. 3650 is a good bill that takes important steps in the fight against red tides and other harmful algae by creating a coordinated national strategy to deal with HABs while at the same time allowing for flexibility so that different regions can best address their unique concerns.

I am also pleased, again, as was mentioned, that funding will actually be directed to control and prevention of this problem in addition to, simply, research. This will no doubt limit the severity and frequency of this dangerous environmental concern.

Madam Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. HALL of Texas. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. I want to thank the gentleman from Maryland. He has been a tireless champion of this. The watermen in his district and the others who depend on this great natural resource owe him, I am certain, a great debt of gratitude.

I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), who has also been a tireless champion of clean water and of this issue.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. BAIRD from Washington for his leadership. He has been a real champion on behalf of clean water and clean beaches. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Science and Technology Committee for their terrific work on what I call the "red tide bill."

This is a jobs bill because, let me tell you, coming from the great State of Florida, the Sunshine State, we depend on folks from all across the country coming to vacation in Florida, to swim and to fish. There is nothing like a vacation in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. And I see my friend and colleague here who represents the Florida Keys. There is nothing like a vacation there where you can spend time unwinding on our beautiful beaches.

But there is a real threat to our tourism economy and jobs in the State of Florida, like there is in other parts of the country, and it's these very harmful algal blooms that cause red tide. In a State that employs over 1 million Floridians and where tourism has a \$65 billion impact on our State's economy, when the red tide rolls in, it's a serious threat, because what the red tide does is it causes you difficulty breathing. It burns your eyes. Dead fish will roll up on the beaches. It's really bad news.

The problem is we don't know what causes it, and that's why this bill is so important. And it's tied to jobs because, if we can do a little bit of research and determine what the causes are, we will be able to protect our tourism economy and make sure that we have clean and healthy beaches for folks who need that vacation.

□ 1500

By some estimates, red tide outbreaks cost coastal communities \$82

million a year. We have got to find out what is happening here. I also want to recognize my colleague and good friend Congressman CONNIE MACK, who represents some of the most beautiful beaches in the country down in Naples and Sanibel Island. Two years ago we were able to authorize \$90 million for a 3-year period for peer-reviewed science research on red tide.

But today's legislation builds on that bipartisan effort. And Representative BAIRD's bill, which I cosponsored, creates a new initiative on red tide, and will dedicate some monies to over 5 years of finding a solution that will give our Federal and State agencies a real leg up.

Like I said, red tide is a significant threat to jobs, our tourism economy, our health, and our environment. So I am pleased to urge that we all join together to protect our coastal resources and the tourism-related jobs that come with having healthy beaches by learning more about harmful algal blooms and adopting H.R. 3650.

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

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I want to commend Ms. CASTOR for her comments, and join her in acknowledgement of the incredible leadership of CONNIE MACK from Florida. We talk about the costs of this legislation. Consider the costs to Florida's economy, to the Gulf economy if a red tide comes in at the height of tourist season. You can't swim in this; it's toxic. You can't fish in it, you can't collect shellfish. The fishing industry out in the coast when a hypoxic zone comes in, it kills hundreds of thousands of fish overnight. Shore birds are affected. And on and on the list goes.

As Ms. CASTOR pointed out and as Mr. MACK has pointed out in our discussions, making sure that we understand what causes this and finding ways to remediate it and prevent it is not only in the interests of human health, it is in the interests of our economy as well.

I am particularly pleased also that the Puget Sound area, which is near and dear to my heart and near to my home, has received recognition. We have got a serious problem off the coast in terms of red tide. But within the Puget Sound region, particularly Hood Canal, there is a growing annual development of a dead zone. And these things seem to be developing earlier, lasting longer, and growing in size. This bill will help us understand why.

The bill has support from a broad group of stakeholders, including Ocean Champions and the PURRE Water Coalition. And again, I am pleased that it has been a bipartisan effort. Dr. EHLERS, as I mentioned earlier, has been instrumental for many years on this. And of course CONNIE MACK has been as well. I thank the gentlemen for their input. Mr. HALL has offered some constructive suggestions. And of course as we move this forward and work with the Senate, we will try to make sure

we incorporate as many of those as we can. Finally, I would also like to recognize the staff who worked so diligently on this bill: Shimere Williams and Katrina Lassiter on the majority side, and Tara Rothschild on the minority side.

Ongoing research, development, and implementation of an action strategy are key components to addressing this environmental challenge, and H.R. 3650 helps move us forward in each of these areas. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3650.

One last thing I will say. Understanding the impact of harmful algal blooms in freshwater is absolutely critical. If a major metropolitan area develops a toxic algal bloom, as I mentioned earlier, it will be extraordinarily difficult to remove the toxins from the waterway. It has happened in some smaller communities. It is extremely costly, and can present an urgent and immediate and hugely expensive health crisis. We need to understand how to prevent this, and we need to understand how to treat it. This legislation will help us do that both in the saltwater and in the freshwater environment. I urge its passage, and thank my colleagues.

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act. I would like to thank Congressman BAIRD who took the lead this Congress, along with Congresswoman KATHY CASTOR and Congressman ALLEN BOYD, for their work on this important issue. Passing this important piece of legislation is the first step in increasing research for harmful algal blooms while ensuring that scientists and experts in the field, and not politicians, determine where research money is spent.

Last Congress, I introduced the Save Our Shores Act to increase our commitment to researching harmful algal blooms. Since then, my colleagues and I have worked together to tackle red tide and other harmful algal blooms. The committee has crafted new language to improve the legislation by including freshwater harmful algal blooms and instituting regional action plans.

These are important efforts and it is time we recognize that although harmful algal blooms affect our entire Nation, they are different throughout the country. I represent the coastal areas of southwest Florida. If you haven't been there, it's a beautiful part of the country, with miles and miles of white sandy beaches. For southwest Florida, like many communities, a healthy environment and a healthy economy go hand-in-hand. As a kid growing up in Cape Coral red tide blooms were short-lived nuisances that lasted just a few days. Today, however, these blooms continue for months at a time, and they have long-lasting implications that threaten the environment, people's health, and our overall quality of life. It is imperative that we do more to understand and combat this problem.

These blooms cause dangerous respiratory distress and burning eyes, as well as the potential for severe food poisoning from contaminated shellfish. Harmful algal blooms not only affect our personal health, they also affect the health of our economy. Red tide and other

toxic blooms cost approximately \$80 million annually to communities across the United States of America. From New England to the Great Lakes, from California to South Carolina, these toxic blooms affect us all.

Madam Speaker, by passing this legislation today, the House of Representatives is giving this important issue the attention it deserves. I salute Congressman BAIRD and all the other Members who cosponsored this legislation for bringing this matter to the forefront and making this research a priority. I urge all of my colleagues to support this vital legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3650, the "Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2010".

This legislation, which is an amendment to the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, provides additional focus on Federal efforts to understand, detect, predict, control, mitigate, and respond to both marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events.

I applaud the work of the principal sponsors of this legislation, my colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Washington, Mr. BAIRD, and the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. EHLERS, and their bipartisan efforts to improve the overall understanding and control of harmful algal blooms and hypoxic conditions.

Over the past two Congresses, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has held numerous hearings on the impact of excessive nutrients on water quality—most notably in connection with nonpoint sources of pollution, coastal water quality protection, under the BEACH Act, and in the Great Lakes.

These hearings highlighted the strong scientific evidence that excessive discharges of nitrogen and phosphorous can result in the growth of harmful algal blooms and hypoxic, low-oxygen, conditions in receiving waters. According to testimony from the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, the most significant sources of nutrients come from agricultural runoff, as well as commercial or residential fertilizers, animal waste, sewage treatment plants, and air deposition from utilities and vehicles. As is evident from the ongoing "dead-zone" in the Gulf of Mexico and the emergence of a similar "dead-zone" in Lake Erie, additional efforts are warranted to reduce the adverse impacts of excessive nutrients on national water quality.

EPA has statutory authority under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, more commonly known as the Clean Water Act, as well as other Federal authorities, to implement programs designed to provide protections for oceans, coastal waters, and freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams.

Through the Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, NPDES, permitting program under section 402, the establishment of water quality standards by individual States, and other Clean Water Act authorities, both EPA and the States have statutory tools available to target ongoing sources of nitrogen and phosphorous and to minimize the potential for harmful algal bloom outbreaks or the creation of hypoxic conditions in the Nation's waters. Unfortunately, there has been mixed success in equally addressing both point sources, e.g., publicly owned treatment

works and urban stormwater, and nonpoint sources, e.g., runoff from urban lawns, construction sites, and agricultural areas.

I believe that more needs to be done to meet the goals of the Clean Water Act "to restore and protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters." We should not be complacent with the fact that one-third of the Nation's assessed waters still do not meet "fishable and swimmable" standards—as called for almost 40 years ago in the 1972 Clean Water Act.

I believe that the authorities contained in H.R. 3650 can complement ongoing efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency and other Federal partners, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, to address these remaining water quality challenges. However, this legislation should not be interpreted as allowing other Federal agencies to overtake or otherwise supplant ongoing efforts by EPA, including efforts pursuant to the Clean Water Act.

I thank the Chairman of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. GORDON, and the Ranking Member of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. HALL, for their commitment to continue to work with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to enhance the implementation of the Federal harmful algal bloom program.

As this legislation goes to conference with the Other Body, I will continue to work with the chairman and ranking member to ensure that this legislation complements, not supplants, ongoing efforts by EPA to control harmful algal blooms and hypoxic conditions in the Nation's waters.

Increased Federal attention and accountability to harmful algal bloom and hypoxic condition control efforts is important. This legislation provides an opportunity for increased coordination between various Federal agencies, States, and other stakeholders, while building on the strong foundation of Federal efforts to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxic conditions to date.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009. As a cosponsor of this bill I strongly support the development of a national strategy to address and respond to marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events.

Coastal regions across the country are reporting increases in the occurrence of devastating harmful algal blooms. It is believed that excess nutrients from upstream cause what are normally naturally occurring algae in our coastal waters to rapidly increase in number causing a bloom.

These increased levels of algae have devastating environmental, economic, and human health impacts along our coastlines.

Harmful algal blooms produce powerful toxins that kill fish, shellfish, mammals and birds. In 2007, a devastating harmful algal bloom along the California coastline—from San Luis Obispo to Los Angeles—resulted in hundreds of marine mammal and seabird deaths.

Toxins from harmful algae also accumulate in shellfish causing commercial shellfish industries to close during blooms, which in turn leads to significant economic losses to fishing

families. Decreased tourism and recreation during a bloom event can also result in the loss of millions of dollars to local coastal economies. Even worse, if contaminated shellfish are consumed it could result in paralysis or even death. Increased cases of respiratory distress, especially among seniors and children, have been reported in areas affected by these blooms.

Madam Speaker, I support the directive in H.R. 3650, which establishes a Federal task force that would develop regional action plans to address and respond to harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events around the country. Currently, hypoxic areas, or dead zones, have been recurring over large areas of the Pacific Northwest coastline for the last several years.

H.R. 3650 is a critical first step for developing strategies to mitigate the impacts of harmful algal blooms on regional coastal water quality, marine mammals and harvestable shellfish.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3650 to protect human health and coastal economies.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 3650, the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2009, which recognizes the growing problem of harmful algal blooms in coastal and freshwater environments.

Unfortunately, I know all too well the need for this legislation. In September of 2009, a fish kill occurred in Dunkard Creek, a 38-mile creek on the border of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. According to news reports, this massive fish kill eliminated more than 160 species of fish, salamanders and endangered mussels from one of the most biologically-diverse streams in either State. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection determined that golden algae caused the kill, but much remains unknown. How did the algae arrive in West Virginia? What factors contributed to the bloom? How can blooms be contained from moving throughout the watershed? More information is needed to develop a thoughtful process to mitigate and control the growth and spread of harmful algae.

Fortunately, the legislation under consideration today recognizes the increasing number of freshwater algal blooms, and establishes a partnership between NOAA and EPA to research, monitor and respond to those freshwater blooms. Ultimately, this legislation will put West Virginia in a better position to address existing blooms in the State and prevent further spread of golden algae.

For West Virginia, this is an ecological and economic issue. Our rivers, creeks and watersheds are recreation destinations, modes of transportation, and are critical to local economies. I am pleased to support this measure, and look forward to its enactment.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3650, "The Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendment Act of 2009." This bill requires the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to utilize the resources of the Inter Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Task Force to establish and maintain a National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program. This program will help to develop and promote a national strategy to address and respond to one of the major problems facing our marine and freshwater ecosystems: algal blooms.

The need to address the ongoing harmful blooms and hypoxic events that increase daily, in our oceans, lakes, rivers and waterways, is long overdue. I applaud the fact that this bill allows for closer coordination between state and federal agencies through the use of innovative demonstration projects. Similarly, I also support provisions in this legislation that focus our efforts to educate our citizens about the causes and harmful environmental effects of pollution and algal blooms in our oceans, rivers, lakes, and waterways.

Water is our most critical natural resource and this legislation will improve our Nation's ability to provide safe water to all. As we continue to experience climate change, the threat posed by algal blooms will be a continuing challenge. This legislation addresses this threat in a measured, scientific manner and will improve our ability to address this issue in the future. I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. BAIRD. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3650, 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. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO CHILE EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1144) expressing condolences to the families of the victims of the February 27, 2010, earthquake in Chile, as well as solidarity with and support for the people of Chile as they plan for recovery and reconstruction.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1144

Whereas, on February 27, 2010, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake, one of the largest ever recorded, struck off the coast of Chile;

Whereas casualty estimates, which number in the hundreds and continue to grow, as well as the destruction of entire coastal villages and extensive damage to highways, bridges, apartments, and infrastructure, have led to the Government of Chile's declaration of a "state of catastrophe";

Whereas an estimated 2,000,000 people, including upwards of 1,500,000 displaced persons, have been directly affected by the earthquake, the tsunami, and its aftermath;

Whereas aftershocks numbering over 100, including 8 aftershocks registering above a 6.0 magnitude, continue to affect the coast and the rest of the country after the initial 120-second tremor, the strongest and most damaging earthquake in Chile in the last 50 years;

Whereas Chile had already overcome the trials of more than a dozen previous 7.0-magnitude or greater earthquakes since the 1960 Valdivia 9.5-magnitude quake, the largest ever measured, which left thousands dead;

Whereas the tsunami caused by the earthquake, which came shortly after, with waves measuring over 19 feet, slammed 124 miles of Chile's coast and accounted for a significant percentage of the casualties and missing;

Whereas the threat of potential tsunamis across the "Ring of Fire" earthquake area prompted warnings and advisories issued from Hawaii to as far as the California coast and Alaska;

Whereas according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), Concepcion, Chile's second largest city, was 70 miles from the earthquake's epicenter and suffered some of the worst damage, and its hundreds of thousands of residents initially remained largely cut off from the remainder of the country without many basic necessities, including running water and electricity;

Whereas the coastal town of Dichato and its 4,000 residents were among the hardest hit, and is reportedly 80 percent destroyed;

Whereas 80 percent of Talcahuano's 180,000 residents living on the Chilean coast were left homeless by the earthquake;

Whereas initial estimates of the damage costs range from \$15,000,000,000 to \$30,000,000,000;

Whereas basic necessities across the country, including electricity, clean water access, telephone access, and communication systems, continue to be restored on a progressive basis in many zones;

Whereas the Government of Chile continues to deliver aid to affected citizens to the best of its ability, including airlifting supplies to remote towns;

Whereas the Government of Chile has taken significant measures to maintain order and public security in the streets to prevent more widespread panic and chaos as damage assessments are made and relief is delivered;

Whereas Chile is a political and economic leader and a close ally of the United States in Latin America;

Whereas the people and Government of Chile have stood resolute and steadfast in the face of a long history of destructive earthquakes;

Whereas Chile's stringent building codes, which one local architect called "our proud building standards", as well as the Government of Chile's ability to implement them, greatly mitigated the impact of this catastrophic natural event both in terms of casualties and physical damage to the infrastructure of the country;

Whereas Chile showed its deep generosity and responsibility as a regional ally when it deployed Chilean earthquake rescue teams, which Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has described as among the best in the world, to Haiti following its devastating earthquake earlier this year;

Whereas these search and rescue teams continue to work tirelessly to save more lives from collapsed buildings and neighborhoods struck by the earthquake in Chile;

Whereas several international urban search and rescue teams remain prepared to deploy to Chile if the need arises;

Whereas sitting Chilean President Michelle Bachelet declared the natural disaster "a catastrophe of such unthinkable magnitude that it will require a giant effort to recover";

Whereas incoming Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, to be sworn in March 11, 2010, expressed that "The future government is working tirelessly and will continue to confront the emergency that Pres. Bachelet is facing, because the emergency will not be