

Nevertheless, the Conference Report includes several broad new categorical exclusions from the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. These new exclusions lack flexibility or adequate standards and will limit public participation and careful consideration of transportation projects that can have devastating impacts on neighborhoods and our natural, cultural and historic resources. In the end, the purpose of these provisions is to speed up highway construction, not by cutting alleged "red-tape" but by making it harder for local communities to gather information and have input in projects that may go right through their backyards.

Unbelievably, the Conference Report also includes a radical new idea that agencies should be fined, through rescission of up to 7 percent of their budgets, for missing arbitrary deadlines for environmental reviews. Given that the main reason agencies struggle to complete these reviews quickly is a lack of funding and staff, cutting their budgets as punishment will only make the problem worse.

Inclusion of funding for the Secure Rural Schools and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes programs are positive steps, while removal of divisive, unrelated provisions on coal ash and the Keystone Pipeline are welcome improvements, compared to the House Republican bill.

Finally, the process used to develop this Conference Report was unfortunate. Conferees have been asked to sign an agreement we have had little or no time to review and the substance of the agreement was negotiated largely without input from most conferees.

This Conference Report will harm those living and working near transportation projects in the future and fails to address some of the most pressing conservation needs facing this nation. We can and should do better.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST.
PAUL YACHT CLUB

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Saint Paul Yacht Club in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the organization. For a century, this venerable institution has been providing safe and affordable boating opportunities to residents of Saint Paul and surrounding communities.

Since 1912, the Saint Paul Yacht Club has played a central role promoting and providing access to Minnesota's premier waterways. Originally known as the Saint Paul Motorboat Club, the early club served an active and growing speed boating population on all three of Minnesota's major rivers, the Mississippi, the Minnesota, and the Saint Croix. Early members could rent boat slips for 10 cents per foot, and purchase gasoline for 10 cents per gallon. To retrieve the gasoline, 5 gallon cans were lowered by a rope from the Wabasha Bridge to the boaters on the water.

In addition to providing helpful services to its members, the Saint Paul Yacht Club organized picnics, boat races and other social and recreational events. Boat races were particularly popular in the 1920s and 1930s. On one occasion, Christopher Columbus Smith—

founder of the iconic Chris Craft boat company—set a world water speed record at a club organized boat race.

The Saint Paul Yacht Club has remained in continuous operation since 1912, and currently manages two state of the art harbor facilities within the jewel of the Saint Paul public parks—Harriet Island Regional Park—on the Mississippi River in the city's downtown. Today, the harbor remains a hub of activity, hosting 230 boat slips for vessels that are up to 50 feet long, and serving as home to a thriving year-round live-aboard and seasonal boating community. Boaters come from near and far to enjoy the tremendous views of Saint Paul and the surrounding natural beauty of the Mississippi River National River Recreation Area.

Throughout its century of service to the boating public, the Saint Paul Yacht Club has served as a model of responsible stewardship to Minnesota waterways. By promoting safe and accessible boating activities, the club has provided a tremendous service to many Saint Paul residents and visitors. The Saint Paul Yacht Club is truly an exemplary asset to our city and state.

Mr. Speaker, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Saint Paul Yacht Club, it is a privilege to submit this statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5972) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chair, later this week, the House is scheduled to consider H.R. 5972, the Transportation & Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2013. This bill funds the agencies that address our nation's housing and transportation needs, and is one of the most important pieces of legislation the House will consider this year. The THUD bill represents a tremendous opportunity to improve our economic competitiveness and ensure the wellbeing of working Americans, and I rise to offer some preliminary observations on the bill that will be debated over the next several days.

I serve as a proud Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and my home district is home to some of the busiest freeways, railways and ports in the country. I also have the privilege of representing many economically disadvantaged individuals who benefit from the fair housing initiatives and grant programs covered in this bill.

I have long advocated, and will continue to advocate, on behalf of the 37th Congressional

District of California for an enlightened transportation policy that will position the United States to compete and win in the global economy of the 21st Century. Since many amendments will have to be considered before the vote on final passage, I am reserving my final judgment as to how I will cast my vote. Nevertheless, I would like to take a moment to commend Mr. LATHAM and Mr. OLVER, the Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, for their work, including nine major funding requests that I submitted to the Committee in the bill reported to the House. Specifically the bill includes the following:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG is the centerpiece of the federal governments efforts to help more than 1200 cities, counties and states meet the needs of their low and moderate-income people and communities. It revitalizes communities—with proven results. CDBG helps fund a wide range of activities including housing investments, public infrastructure improvements, public services, and local economic development projects where the private market is absent. The Committee recommended \$3.344 billion, which was \$44 million above my request.

Fair Housing Initiatives Program. FHIP is a competitive grant program and is the primary source of funding for fair housing education and enforcement activities at the local level. Local fair housing organizations funded by FHIP protect the housing rights of the public and educate people about their fair housing rights. The program is vital given the extreme fragility that currently exists in the housing market. The Committee met my request by continuing funding at the FY12 level of \$42.5 million.

Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program. HUD's Section 8 programs help low-income elderly, families with children, and people with disabilities secure and maintain decent, affordable homes. In both urban and rural communities, Section 8 rental assistance provides the foundation for millions of individuals and families to live with dignity, maintain steady work, and improve the lives of their children. The Committee recommended approximately \$19.1 billion for this program, or \$60 million above my request.

Community Planning and Development from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD's The Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) seeks to develop viable communities by promoting integrated approaches that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons. The primary means towards this end is the development of partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and non-profit organizations. The Committee recommended \$103.5 million. Although this was slightly below my request, it exceeded the FY12 level of funding by \$3.5 million.

Indian Community Development Block Grant. The Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program provides competitive grants to Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages for housing, community facilities, and economic development. ICDGB funds community infrastructure like roads and sewer systems that improve the quality of available housing units while making new housing more affordable and accessible. The Committee met my request of \$60 million.

Native American Housing Block Grants. Indian Housing Block Grants go directly to tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) for housing development, housing services for eligible families, crime prevention and safety, and demonstration projects that provide creative approaches to solving affordable housing shortages. TDHEs must submit an Indian Housing Plan each year they receive funding, followed by an end-of-year Annual Performance Report to report on progress towards meeting their goals. The Committee recommended \$650 million for these grants, thereby meeting my request.

HUD–VASH Program. HUD–VASH is the only program that supports the permanent housing and rehabilitation of homeless veterans. HUD–VASH is a joint HUD and VA initiative that provides specially designated Section 8 “Housing Choice” vouchers, case management, and supportive services to homeless veterans. Vouchers are used to assist with the payment of rent for veterans and their families. The goal of the program is to support veterans’ permanent housing in the community. The Committee’s recommendation was equal to my request of \$75 million.

Maritime Security Program. The Maritime Security Program ensures that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available to crew the government and privately-owned vessels needed by the Department of Defense in time of war or other international emergency. The Committee matched my request of \$184 million, which increased funding over FY12 levels by \$10 million.

Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Capital Advance Program. Capital advances finance construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of structures that will serve as supportive housing for very low-income elderly persons. Section 202 provides rent subsidies for projects to help keep them affordable for these vulnerable populations. We recommend reinstating funding to allow affordable special needs housing developers to provide supportive housing options for the elderly, particularly within AANHPI enclaves. The Committee exceeded my request for funding by allocating \$425 million.

Mr. Chair, I again extend my sincere thanks to Chairman LATHAM and Ranking Member OLVER for their careful consideration of my appropriations requests. While I reserve my final judgment on this bill, I do believe that the full funding of these programs and departments will make a real difference in boosting the economy and improving the lives of vulnerable communities.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRESNO COUNTY FARM BUREAU

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my sincerest congratulations to the Fresno County Farm Bureau which is celebrating its 95th anniversary this year. Since its establishment in 1917, the organization has continued to evolve. It began as general farm orga-

nization as an arm of the Agriculture Extension Service, and is now at the forefront of farming in California. As it nears the end of its first century, it continues to lead the agriculture industry and the community in addressing issues that result in long-term economic viability for agriculture and promoting the economic vitality of the region as we move forward in the 21st Century.

The Farm Bureau started shortly after the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Agriculture Extension Service. The Act stipulated that before a county could obtain farm advisor services, it had to form a general farm organization through which the Extension Service could disseminate information and promote better farming methods. In the fall of 1917, George Fever, J.A. Poytress, Sam Heisinger, H.W. Wrightson and Charles Parlier were among a group of farmers that met with Leroy Smith, the first Extension Service farm advisor assigned to Fresno County, to lay the groundwork for a Fresno County Farm Bureau organization.

Fresno County Farm Bureau, like many other County Farm Bureau organizations, was originally set up in joint offices within the University of California Agriculture Extension Service. The Farm Bureau membership rose and fell in the pre-World War II days, dropping to 350 during the Depression. The largest growth in membership occurred around the Farm Bureau’s 50th anniversary, between 1945 and 1967 when it rose from 1,000 to 4,500 members. Today, the Fresno County Farm Bureau represents more than 4,000 members. In the early 1960s, Fresno County took first place in total production value of agriculture commodities. Fresno County remains the number one agricultural county in the country, bringing in \$5.94 billion in 2010.

The Farm Bureau has played an integral role in many projects throughout its history, including: presenting President Franklin D. Roosevelt a program to strengthen agriculture during the Great Depression years in 1931; partnering with the Madera, Tulare and Kings County Farm Bureaus to organize the California Farm Bureau Marketing Association in 1918; starting a pilot program to sell tree-ripened fruit to southern California consumers in 1966; and playing a major role in the development and implementation of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986.

Today, the Farm Bureau is a grassroots, nationwide network of Farm Bureaus organized on county, state and national levels. The county Farm Bureau is the center of the organization and is one of 53 county Farm Bureaus currently representing a combined membership of over 4,000 family members in Fresno County. Collectively, Farm Bureau is California’s largest farm organization with memberships from 76,500 farm families in 56 counties.

The Farm Bureau continues to lead the agriculture industry and the community in addressing issues that result in long-term viability for agriculture and promoting the economic vitality of the region. Farm Bureau spends countless hours researching agriculturally-related legislation; testifying in front of local, state and federal government; and conducting meetings with elected officials. In addition, it fields hundreds of calls, providing education and outreach to the community, which has continued to be a centerpiece of the Farm Bureau. Through Coffee Talk meetings, which

provide the opportunity for farmers to share information in an informal setting and discuss current, local issues with special guest speakers, the Bureau has continued to make community outreach a top priority. It is also involved in promoting the Blossom Trail, the Fruit Trail and the Big Fresno Fair, and annually recognizes deserving reporters and editors for conveying accurate and objective reporting about agricultural issues and the industry.

On top of these important efforts, the Farm Bureau offers valuable agriculture education and leadership development assistance in the community. The annual Farm and Nutrition Day is put on for more than 1,500 third-graders, providing facts about food and fiber production in Fresno County. In addition, representatives from the Farm Bureau are on-hand during the annual Fair Education Program to conduct mini-presentations about agriculture for students. The Fresno County Farm Bureau also works with local universities and conducts classroom presentations. In addition to this, the Future Advocates for Agriculture Concerned about Tomorrow (FAACT) Leadership Development Program provides community leaders with a comprehensive eight-month class, highlighting specific issue areas in agriculture. FAACT offers a balanced, factual presentation of several issue areas specific to agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Fresno County Farm Bureau as it celebrates its 95th anniversary and prepares to continue to provide outstanding leadership for the agriculture industry throughout the Central Valley, the State of California, and our nation.

DORIT AND SHAWN EVENHAIM

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to Dorit and Shawn Evenhaim for their generosity and dedication to help the less fortunate as well as provide the highest possible quality of education in our community.

Dorit and Shawn Evenhaim are Israeli Angelenos that own and operate California Home Builders. Both Dorit and Shawn grew up in Southern Israel where they learned the Jewish value of tzedakah, the act of charitable giving and helping the less fortunate. They came to the United States following their service in the Israeli military and continued to practice this philanthropy. They have contributed countless hours of community service and provided leadership to many charitable organizations throughout the San Fernando Valley such as the Israeli Leadership Council, the Jewish Federation, and StandWithUs.

In 2004, Kadima, a 34-year-old Solomon Schecter Conservative day school in the West San Fernando Valley, had to relocate when LAUSD needed the campus that Kadima had been leasing. The Evenhaim’s generous donation provided the resources for Kadima to purchase a former hospital about a mile away from the previous campus.

The Evenhaim’s involvement did not end with their donation. They were also instrumental in locating the site for the new campus,