

Kelly
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kissell
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Landry
Lankford
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
Meehan
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mulvaney

NOES—175

Ackerman
Amash
Andrews
Baldwin
Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boswell
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke (MI)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Deutch
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel

Myrick
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Pence
Peterson
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quayle
Reed
Rehberg
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rigell
Rivera
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross (AR)
Ross (FL)
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Scalise

Schilling
Schmidt
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (SC)
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southernland
Stearns
Stivers
Stutzman
Sullivan
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner (NY)
Turner (OH)
Upton
Walberg
Walden
Walsh (IL)
Webster
West
Westmoreland
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky

Walz (MN)
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman

Welch
Wilson (FL)
Woolsey
Yarmuth

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Shuler

NOT VOTING—11

Bass (CA)
Cantor
Lee (CA)
McIntyre

Meeks
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Paul

Payne
Rangel
Whitfield

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1836

Ms. BROWN of Florida changed her vote from "aye" to "no."
So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 91, I was unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1912

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Congressman ED ROYCE be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1912.

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

There was no objection.

CRASH OF USCG MH-65C HELICOPTER

(Mr. BONNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I bring to the attention of the House the news that a United States Coast Guard helicopter crashed last night in Mobile Bay during a training mission.

Early this morning I spoke by phone to Coast Guard Sector Commander Captain Don Rose in Mobile, where he informed me that one crew member had lost his life, and three others are missing. Search efforts for the missing crew have been under way through last night and today, and they are ongoing at this time near the crash site off Point Clear, Alabama.

Naturally, I offered to Captain Rose the praise and heartfelt sympathies of the Congress, as well as our entire Nation, not only to those immediate families of those brave Coasties, but to the entire Coast Guard family.

Whether during a hurricane, an oil spill, or one of their daily encounters with danger when conducting a search and rescue mission, the United States Coast Guard plays a vital role that we too often take for granted.

It is at times like this when we are reminded of the dangers they face in

their service to our Nation. They are truly on the first line of protecting our country, and we can never thank them enough.

Mr. Speaker, I ask, at this time, that all Americans lift a prayer to the Good Lord for the loss of life that has occurred. May God's blessings and healing hand be on those left behind.

TORNADO IN HARRISBURG, ILLINOIS

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I too come to the well to address a tragedy that happened this morning. Early this morning, an F-4 tornado hit the city of Harrisburg, Illinois, in my district. There was extensive damage, and six residents lost their lives.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost family and friends, those who were injured, and those who lost their homes.

I plan to visit Harrisburg personally tomorrow and thank all those first responders who have been working tirelessly to care for the injured and to begin the long road back to clean up. The mutual aid provided by the surrounding communities is also very heartwarming.

I pledge to work with Mayor Eric Gregg and other local officials to rebuild the Harrisburg we all know and love.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DESJARLAIS). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

□ 1840

ST. CROIX RIVER CROSSING PROJECT AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1134) to authorize the St. Croix River Crossing Project with appropriate mitigation measures to promote river values.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1134

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "St. Croix River Crossing Project Authorization Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF PROJECT WITH MITIGATION MEASURES.

Notwithstanding section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1278(a)), the head of any Federal agency or department may authorize and assist in the construction of a new extradosed bridge crossing the St.

Croix River approximately 6 miles north of the I-94 crossing if the mitigation items described in paragraph 9 of the 2006 St. Croix River Crossing Project Memorandum of Understanding for Implementation of Riverway Mitigation Items, signed by the Federal Highway Administration on March 28, 2006, and by the National Park Service on March 27, 2006 (including any subsequent amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding), are included as enforceable conditions.

SEC. 3. OFFSET.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, amounts made available for items 676, 813, 3186, 4358, and 5132 in the table contained in section 1702 of the SAFETEA-LU (119 Stat. 1288, 1380, 1423) shall be subject to the limitation on obligations for Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs distributed under section 120(a)(6) of title I of division C of Public Law 112–55 (23 U.S.C. 104 note; 125 Stat. 652).

(b) RESCISSION.—Any obligation authority made available until used to a State as a result of receipt of contract authority for the items described in subsection (a) that remains available to the State as of the date of enactment of this Act is permanently rescinded.

SEC. 4. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) and the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. McCOLLUM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill before us.

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

There was no objection.

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

The passage of this bill, which was adopted by the Senate earlier this year by unanimous consent, will remove the last remaining roadblock to construction of a new bridge over the St. Croix River, a bridge that has been identified for replacement by the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota for nearly 60 years and a project that has actively been worked on for more than 30 years.

Support for this new bridge is bipartisan and bicameral. The Governors of Wisconsin and Minnesota support it. The entire Senate delegations from the two States support it. With few exceptions, the members of the House delegations from Minnesota and Wisconsin support it. We just need this final action in order to finally proceed with the bridge.

The longer we delay, the more unsafe the current lift bridge becomes, con-

gestion continues to worsen, and costs just continue to rise. It's time to end the gridlock.

I urge passage of the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

The bill before the House today, S. 1134, is a controversial bill that represents wasteful government spending, bad transportation policy, and bad environmental policy.

A new bridge across the protected St. Croix River between my State of Minnesota and Wisconsin needs to be built. The aging Stillwater Lift Bridge needs to be replaced and everyone agrees on that, but I support a more affordable and more appropriately scaled replacement bridge.

This bill is controversial because it does much more than authorize a replacement bridge. This bill mandates construction of an exotic and massive extradosed style bridge some 219 feet above the St. Croix River at a cost of \$700 million for only 18,000 cars per day.

This \$700 million extradosed megabridge will connect Oak Park Heights, Minnesota—population 4,700—and Houlton, Wisconsin—population 386.

I quote from the St. Paul Pioneer Press, January 25, 2012, about Houlton, Wisconsin, it “is not big enough for a stop sign on its main street.”

Houlton, Wisconsin, may not have a stop sign, but Congress could give it a \$700 million bridge.

This bill is controversial because, if you look at page 2, line 10 of the bill, you will see that the bill dictates the location of this \$700 million megabridge, and I quote from the bill, “approximately 6 miles north of the Interstate-94 crossing.” In other words, this bill mandates a 65-mile-per-hour interstate freeway bridge connecting a town of 368 people and builds it only 6 miles from an existing interstate crossing on the same river.

What would the Tea Party call an effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars? Would they call this that? The fiscal watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense calls the bill, and I quote from them, “A massive misuse of taxpayer money.”

In a letter to Congress opposing this bill, the Taxpayers for Common Sense said:

In an era of trillion-dollar deficits and a \$15 trillion national debt, it is simply unacceptable to spend \$700 million on a bridge to carry so few vehicles when an interstate bridge exists nearby.

This bill is controversial because it is opposed by the Interior Department, which testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on July 28, 2011, opposing S. 1134. I quote from the Director of the National Park Service, when he stated:

The Department cannot support this legislation as the National Park Service is determined that the St. Croix River Project would have a direct and adverse impact to the river and these impacts cannot be mitigated.

To be very clear, I asked Interior Secretary Salazar 2 weeks ago during an Interior appropriations subcommittee hearing a direct question. That was on February 16, just this month. I asked:

Does the Interior Department still oppose S. 1134?

Interior Secretary Salazar responded, saying:

Our position remains unchanged. A wild and scenic river is a wild and scenic river. The position of the Parks Service as articulated a year ago is the position of the Department. We have, as you know, Congresswoman McCollum, met with the delegations from the two States and Secretary LaHood and I have offered to work with a work group to see whether or not an alternative can be found.

Unfortunately, despite opposition from the Interior Department, an offer to work on a compromised solution, Congress will now be voting on a \$700 million megabridge.

This bill is controversial because it will directly result in a property tax increase for the residents of Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, a community in which Minnesota's new redistricting map places it in my new congressional district. According to a unanimously passed resolution by the Oak Park Heights City Council, the passage of S. 1134 by Congress will do this to the city of Oak Park Heights. I quote from the city council's resolution:

It will require an estimated \$443 in annual property tax increase for the next 10 years to most city homeowners and businesses.

A vote for S. 1134 will be a tax increase on Minnesotans.

This bill is controversial because it puts Congress in the position of prioritizing spending of \$700 million of taxpayers' money to replace one bridge while Minnesota has more than 1,100 additionally structurally deficient bridges—far less costly—that all are in desperate need of repair or replacement. In fact, dozens of Minnesota State legislators wrote our delegation saying:

We are united in our concern that the current design of the bridge is far too expensive, particularly in light of much more cost effective alternatives.

Those State legislators, many from my congressional district, urge defeat of this legislation. Former Vice President and U.S. Senator Walter Mondale, an original sponsor of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, opposes this bill, saying that the passage, and I quote from Vice President Mondale, “would be a profound mistake.” He urges a vote against the bill.

This bill was even controversial in the Senate. Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Senator MARK UDALL of Colorado, and Senator MARIA CANTWELL of Washington oppose S. 1134, saying:

In our opinion, waiving the protections of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for the lower St. Croix is bad policy and sets a dangerous precedent.

Here in the House, this bill is also controversial. It is controversial because this bill is an earmark, pure and simple. This bill designates a specific project in a specific location and it mandates the construction of a \$700 million extradosed bridge design, and it does that all through an exemption to Federal law. Of course, earmarks are banned in the House except when a bill comes to the floor on suspension of rules and all the rules and points of order are waived, just like this one.

This megabridge was highlighted in a New York Times editorial. The editorial highlights my Minnesota colleague and megabridge champion, Representative BACHMANN, who has called for a redefinition of what an earmark is to accommodate "a bridge over a vital waterway." Today Congresswoman BACHMANN has been successful in bringing this earmark to the floor.

It's not just me. My dear friend from Minneapolis, Mr. ELLISON, and other House colleagues and the U.S. Department of the Interior are opposing this \$700 million bridge. The bill is also opposed by Taxpayers for Common Sense, the Sierra Club, the National Parks Conservation Association, American Rivers, League of Conservation Voters, former Vice President Mondale, and a whole lot of Minnesotans who care deeply about fiscal responsibility, wise transportation investments, and responsible environmental conservation.

Tomorrow we will vote on this bill. The question is: Will the House give a rubber stamp to a \$700 million megabridge or will this Congress reject this bad bill and direct Minnesota and Wisconsin to come up with a smarter plan that would save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars?

Every Minnesotan and every Wisconsin Member of this House supports a replacement bridge, none more than me. But I ask my colleagues to reject this fiscally irresponsible bill. Not one dollar of Minnesota transportation funds will be lost.

I have a Minnesota Department of Transportation document in my hand that outlines how hundreds of millions of dollars could be reprogrammed across our State creating thousands of jobs and rebuilding roads and bridges in great need of repair.

S. 1134 is a bad bill, and it should be defeated by Democrats and Republicans alike.

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

□ 1850

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague from the State of Washington, the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, Representative DOC HASTINGS.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, which has partial jurisdiction on this bill, I support S. 1134.

For over two decades, Wisconsin and Minnesota have been working on a plan to replace this bridge, which is over 80 years old. This two-State project has

been delayed by lawsuit after lawsuit and by the interference of Federal bureaucrats. These nuisance lawsuits and bureaucrat attacks are all based on the fact that the bridge spans the St. Croix River, which was listed in 1972 under the Federal Wild and Scenic River Act. This bipartisan bill simply says that this "wild and scenic" label on the river, under Federal law, cannot stop these States from building a safe, new bridge.

It's as simple as that.

In regards to earmarks, which was brought up by the gentlelady from Minnesota, this bill has been reviewed and is in compliance with the earmark definition in clause 9 of rule XXI. The bill does not contain congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits. The bill is aimed at ensuring the Federal Wild and Scenic River Act doesn't prevent a safer bridge from being built. It affects multiple States.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people of Minnesota and Wisconsin have been waiting decades to build this project. Let's pass this bill and allow them to do so.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 11½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. With that, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't quite know from which side to request time on this issue. You see, I am for legitimate, well-scrutinized, scrubbed, and screened earmarks. Now, unless the GOP leadership can convince me that this is not an earmark, then I will vote "no" on the bill.

We should be here today debating a long-term, robust surface transportation bill that would create jobs and keep our economy moving forward by rebuilding America and by putting Americans to work. Rather, we are considering a bill that authorizes the construction of a specific bridge between Minnesota and Wisconsin with an estimated total project cost of \$574 million to \$690 million—an earmark. Instead of openly acknowledging that this bill is a blatant earmark, the Republican leadership pretends that it is not one. It was quietly added to the schedule less than 48 hours ago, scheduled for this post-sundown debate.

Do not get me wrong. I am not against earmarks, but let's be open, transparent, and honest with the American people. That's why "earmark" got the bad name it did, because we were not open and transparent and honest with the American people. So if there is any doubt whether the bill that the House is now considering today is an earmark, all you have to do is read the bill:

... may authorize and assist in the construction of a new extradosed bridge crossing the St. Croix River approximately 6 miles north of the I-94 crossing.

Then the bill goes on on lines 21 through 23, page 2, section 3. It pro-

vides an offset. Guess where that offset comes from? Earmarks under the SAFETEA-LU, under the previous transportation bill. It's how the majority is funding this bill. That was our last transportation bill, which took so much grief.

It all sounds pretty specific to me. In fact, the bill even tells the States what kind of bridge to build. If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, by golly, it's probably a duck. This is an earmark, and I sincerely hope that the some-90 new Members on the majority side are learning just what an earmark is.

Now, I recognize the need for this new bridge crossing the St. Croix to replace the deficient 80-year-old Stillwater Lift Bridge, but I also recognize the need to move similar transportation projects forward across this great country, including in my own home State of West Virginia. What we ought to be doing is passing a long-term, robust surface transportation bill so that we can address the backlog of deficient bridges, roads, and transit systems in every State across the Nation.

Instead, we're voting on one earmark, and we are doing nothing today to strengthen our Nation's economic competitiveness and quality of life. We are doing nothing to alleviate the congestion that continues to cripple the economy in California. We are doing nothing to fix the bridges that are in disrepair in my home State. We are doing nothing to solve the fact that trains are traveling on outdated tracks across this country. We are doing nothing to address the commerce that is being trapped on turnpikes because these arteries of commerce are being choked by a transportation system ill fit for the country that is leading the global economy.

Last November, the Speaker announced that the House would take up the surface transportation bill by the end of the year. We all know what subsequently transpired, which is that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee produced a bill which slashes \$15.8 billion in highway funding to the States, destroying 550,000 American family-wage jobs.

The bill then proceeded to the Rules Committee, which is where it was divided up into I don't know how many different pieces because there weren't the votes to pass the whole package. Who knows what kind of mishmash we got that time. I'm still trying to figure it out. Then who knows what type of mishmash we'll get the next time before we finally pass, if we are going to, a transportation bill that puts Americans to work, that gets our economy moving, and that helps long-term deficit reduction.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Will the gentleman yield?

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

Ms. MCCOLLUM. In reclaiming my time, I will not yield to the gentleman on my time.

Mr. PETRI. I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

With all due respect to my good friend and colleague from West Virginia, each person may have his own definition of an earmark, but we are governed by the definition in House rules, not by a cavalier “quacking duck” standard. The bill has been reviewed and is in compliance with the earmark definition in clause 9 of House rule XXI. The bill does not contain congressional earmarks. I know the gentleman has been very open about his support for earmarks, but we are governed by the rules of the House, and the “quacking duck” comparison does not stand here.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, in delight of the bipartisan support for the measure before us, I yield 1 minute to my colleague from Wisconsin, Representative BALDWIN.

Ms. BALDWIN. I rise today in strong support of the St. Croix River Crossing Project Authorization Act.

This past November, I had the chance to visit the existing 81-year-old Stillwater Bridge, and I met with local community leaders on the issue. After seeing this bridge for myself and after listening carefully to the arguments on all sides, I am convinced that this legislation is necessary, reasonable, and time-sensitive.

The bridge project will support thousands of construction jobs in both Wisconsin and Minnesota. In addition, the new bridge will help shorten travel times, reduce traffic congestion and, most importantly, improve safety. Perhaps it will even save some lives.

The stories I've heard from the Wisconsinites who use this bridge every day are truly startling. I've heard from some folks who literally fear for their safety and who are afraid something similar to the I-35 bridge collapse could happen to them. I've heard from others about the long delays and frequent spring closures of the bridge.

This is the reality on the ground, and it is woefully unacceptable. We have the power to change this. I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” and to support this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, you heard from Representative MCCOLLUM as to the dimensions of this, as to how close it is to an existing large bridge, as to why this is really a boondoggle. I wanted to talk about how this fits in the national picture of wild and scenic rivers.

This bill would for the first time waive the requirements of the Wild and

Scenic Rivers Act, which is a law that has protected the lower St. Croix for nearly 30 years and that protects 12,000 miles of rivers in 38 States and Puerto Rico, including the Delaware River in my home State of New Jersey. These are special rivers designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers law.

□ 1900

When the Resources Committee marked up the legislation before us now, I offered a simple amendment. My amendment would have ensured that any bridge authorized under this bill be designed and located in a way to minimize the direct and inverse environmental effect. It was defeated.

This is really a bridge too far. It's far too large, it is just, you know, far too expensive. Should Congress pass this bill and waive the Wild and Scenic Rivers protection, it's hard to imagine any future bridge project that won't receive a waiver like this issued by Congress.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, in 1972, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was used on this part of the river, even though there was already an existing bridge on that river. Now the safety of that bridge is creating problems for people, and the traffic buildup is creating problems for people.

Actually, the National Park Service already had met with everybody, found a way to build a new bridge and mitigate the adverse circumstances. An agreement was reached until outside groups, who came in here with this dogmatic reverence for the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, basically took it to court, threw everything away, and we have now exacerbated the problem.

Wild and scenic river? On a clear day, if indeed the traffic does not produce enough smog that has backed up because we are trying to get across this river, you can actually see a marina, the smokestacks of a power plant that is in the neighborhood of a sewage plant, and maybe even the orange jumpsuits of the county jail that is in this area. We are abusing the law to stop this progress, stop this bridge that is needed desperately for safety reasons and for traffic reasons in this particular area.

There is a reason this bill passed by unanimous consent in the Senate. It solves a problem, it's common sense, and it's the right thing to do.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. In response, I don't think my constituents consider me an outside group.

With that, I would yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the legislation. This bill is too controversial and should not be on the suspension calendar.

Last year the majority held a hearing on the issue in the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands. The Park Service testified

against the bill. It was also opposed by a range of national organizations—from fiscal conservatives and tax watchdogs to environmental conservationists.

This bill, it has already been stated, would create the first ever exemption to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for construction of a bridge in a protected river. This has never been done, and the question is, why now? This precedent for a \$700 million mega-bridge that threatens all 203 protected rivers in 38 States should not be allowed to proceed, and it very much violates the no earmark pledge of the Republican majority.

Congresswoman MCCOLLUM and Congressman ELLISON introduced a better bill, H.R. 3434, that removes congressional mandate from this bill that is under consideration and sets a spending cap to protect taxpayers.

I understand the need to create jobs. I understand the need to fix our falling infrastructure. There are over 2,000 bridges in Minnesota and Wisconsin that need immediate dire attention that would create jobs, and it would move the infrastructure needs of this country in a very, very direct way and in a very needed way.

This is a waste of taxpayers' money and a violation of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, this bill has bipartisan support. Other things being equal, I think we tend to listen to the Representative in whose district the project would exist. This project is in the district of my colleague, RON KIND, from the State of Wisconsin, and at this time I would be happy to yield him 4 minutes.

Mr. KIND. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, this bridge is in my congressional district. I have been living and breathing this issue for the last 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to build a bridge. This is a bipartisan bill. It passed the Senate under unanimous consent. This legislation before us today merely exempts this river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It exempts this bridge so that the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota can move forward on this vital infrastructure project.

This is what we have today, Mr. Speaker. It's an 82-year-old lift bridge that's on its last life. Last summer the drawbridge was up for 10 days, prohibiting traffic from crossing because of high water. Every summer, every time a boat travels underneath this bridge, the lift bridge is lifted and we have a traffic jam miles long waiting for the bridge to open up again.

Those cars and trucks are spewing fumes, dropping oil. It is a major environmental problem, not to mention the safety concern that we have with this old lift bridge. It's on its final legs, and there's consensus that we have to build a new bridge.

This is what's recommended by the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

This is what the new bridge would look like. Yes, you will see right next to it is a coal-burning power plant on this so-called part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers. There is very little wild or scenic at this location, and that's exactly why it's being sited along this location, along with two major manufacturing plants.

This is another view of the bridge in relationship to the power plant just south of the Stillwater area, and this is actually the view from downtown Stillwater looking south along the river at this bridge. You can barely see it because of how it's designed to blend into the atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, about 6 years ago I formed a process called "resolve" to get all the stakeholders at the table so that they could discuss and scrub every option and every alternative that was available. At the end of that 5-year negotiating process, 26 of the 27 stakeholders reached an agreement on what needed to be done.

The only holdout was the Sierra Club, and that's why we're having this big debate this evening. Even their proposal that came in at the eleventh hour would cost just as much, it would take another 10 years to build, and it would actually cut into the bluff on the Minnesota side, causing more environmental damage.

Even the local and regional offices of the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service had signed off on this bridge project.

I believe, as do most of the members of the Wisconsin and Minnesota delegation, as well as all four of the U.S. senators, that it's time to build this bridge. Both governors in Wisconsin and Minnesota want to build this bridge. The Departments of Transportation in both Wisconsin and Minnesota want to build this bridge. Ninety-two percent of the residents in Wisconsin want to see this bridge go forward. Eighty-eight percent of the residents in Minnesota in Representative BACHMANN's district, where the bridge is also built, wants this bridge to go forward. It is time to build this bridge.

Every option, every alternative has been considered. This is where we keep coming back to time and time again. They looked at the cost. They looked at the design. They looked at the location. They looked at the environmental impact. They looked at the mitigation that can be done, and 26 of the 27 stakeholders reached this conclusion. It's unfortunate that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is being used to bludgeon a major infrastructure project that will create jobs in this region when we need them the most, not only the short-term jobs in building this bridge but the long-term economic development and the explosion of economic growth and job creation that will result from the creation of this bridge.

Heading south, as my colleague from Minnesota had suggested, to hook up to the interstate highway, was not a viable option. Yet the town of Hudson that lies in between—

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

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, each side is granted 2 additional minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. KIND. Going south to hook up to the interstate bridge down there is not a viable option. That too is under study for expansion, given the increased traffic load that's going through it today. What this bridge that's being proposed considers is not only current traffic flow projections, but future traffic flow projections over the next 20 or 30 years.

I know infrastructure projects can be difficult. I know they can be contentious. But when so many people at the Federal, State, and local level of the agencies, as well as private entities, have been at the table for 5 years negotiating and trying to reach agreement on what bridge is necessary, when they do finally reach an agreement, that tells me it's time to build a bridge.

□ 1910

I want to thank the ranking member and the chair of the Transportation Committee for your support, as well as the chair of the subcommittee and the ranking member on the subcommittee for your support.

Transportation Secretary LaHood has been strongly in favor of moving this project forward. And I also want to thank the administrations, the Governors of both Wisconsin and Minnesota, for their interest and support for this project. One of the reasons it is being brought up at this time is because Governor Dayton from Minnesota says life is short and they need predictability and certainty on what projects are moving forward. He has been a strong advocate of this bridge, but we can't be delaying this and dragging this out for another 16 years, which is the likely outcome if the opposition figures out a way to bring this bill down. Enough is enough.

We have explored this. We have exhausted it, and we keep coming back to the same place as before—this bridge, which makes this legislation necessary, and I encourage my colleagues to support it so we all can move on with our lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair wishes to clarify that each side now has an additional 2 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Could you please tell me how many minutes I have besides the 2.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Minnesota has 6 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 10½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I yield myself 2 minutes.

As I said at the beginning of this debate, this bill, S. 1134, is a bad bill. It reflects our irresponsible fiscal policy, bad transportation policy, and bad environmental policy.

The way the law has been structured into making this moment happen specifies only one type of bridge could be built, and it had to be a bridge that went 65 miles an hour. And then the legislation before us today takes it even farther and for the first time puts in that a bridge that is going to be a replacement bridge in a wild and scenic river must be an extradosed bridge. It mandates the size and the scope of the bridge. Ladies and gentlemen, we just could have had a piece of legislation that would have allowed an exemption without the specification that was added in this legislation. I could have stood here and supported it, but I cannot support a \$700 million interstate bridge when there is one 6 miles away.

The Stillwater bridge needs to be replaced, but it won't be replaced, actually, because the historic lift bridge is going to be used as a bike and pedestrian bridge which in perpetuity the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota will have to maintain and repair and will continue during the summer to be raised and lifted as boats go through.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague from the State of Wisconsin, Representative SEAN DUFFY.

Mr. DUFFY. I appreciate the gentleman from Wisconsin yielding.

I think it is important that we are clear about what this bill truly does. This bill exclusively deems the St. Croix River consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. That's all it does is deem it consistent. There is no appropriations aspect; there's no budgetary authority. All we're doing is deeming this bridge consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

You know, today is a pretty special day. It's a special day because it's leap day. It's February 29. It comes around only once every 4 years. And I have only been in this House for a year and a couple of months; but I have to tell you what, bipartisanship doesn't come around that often. But it is here tonight on the House floor. Bipartisanship, this is what I mean by that: you have two Governors, a Republican and a Democrat, who support this bill. You have Senators from Wisconsin and Minnesota, all four of them, Republicans and Democrats, supporting this bill. You have progressives and conservatives in this Chamber who have all come out in support of this bill. You have Vikings and Packers supporting this bill. This is a remarkable day.

Listen, we go so far, you have the AFL-CIO and local chambers together supporting this bill. This is remarkable. We haven't seen this kind of bipartisanship in the 15 months that I've been here. This is a great bill. This gets the job done because people are doing what their constituents asked them to do, which is work together. It makes sense.

This is working across party lines for a very important reason. It's because we all in this region understand the

importance of bridges and what happens when something goes wrong. We all remember I-35 between Minneapolis and St. Paul that had a sufficiency rating of 50, 50 out of 100. And a few years ago, we remember that bridge collapsed. We remember seeing the devastation of that bridge when it collapsed. But a rating of 50 out of 100.

The bridge we are talking about today, the one that is used across the St. Croix River, has a rating of 32 out of 100. It is less safe than I-35 was when it collapsed. And again, it was built in 1931. It is 81, 82 years old.

Listen, the people in this region they need the bridge. They want the bridge. Everybody is working together. I want to make sure we're clear about the people who use this. I know the gentlelady from Minnesota says it's only serving a small community in Holton, Wisconsin, a community of 386 people. You've got to explain to me, then, how 18,000 people go across that bridge every day.

You are dealing with the largest-growing county in Wisconsin, and the 13th largest metropolitan area in this country. That's what this bridge connects. People use it. This is a bedroom county. They work in St. Croix County over in Minneapolis-St. Paul. They use that bridge to get back and forth to work; 18,000 people a day use this bridge. This is no small feat.

We're talking about the funding component saying that it's \$700 million. I think we have to be clear on what that \$700 million is. It's really only \$292 million when you look at the actual cost of construction of the bridge, \$292 million. If you want to look at the extra cost that gets you upwards of \$600 million, that cost comes from all of the mitigation, the environmental mitigation work that's been requested over the decades of negotiation trying to get this bridge done. It's not the bridge cost. It's the bipartisan effort trying to get people to agree to make this project go forward that increases the cost so dramatically to \$600-plus million.

So I think it's important. You look at this, this is a shovel-ready project. Shovel ready. We hear it is going to create 6,000 new jobs over the course of 3 years. And it is far from rushed. We have talked about this, again, for decades. And I think when people would say it is a bad bill or a controversial bill, it's important to note Republican and Democrat Senators, Governors, Congressmen, communities have rallied around this project.

Let's get it done. Let's finally build the St. Croix River bridge.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to state for the record that I have seven bridges in my congressional district with hundreds of thousands of car trips a day in worse condition than the lift bridge in Stillwater. This mega-bridge also will feed directly into Minnesota State Highway 36. Tens of thousands of my constituents along Highway 36, Oakdale, Maplewood, Roseville, North St. Paul, and Little

Canada will be suffering with crippling traffic congestion and higher property taxes to pay to relieve that congestion. This is a bad piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

I would ask how much time I have remaining and of Mr. PETRI how many more speakers he has left.

□ 1920

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to Representative BACHMANN from the neighboring State of Minnesota, a strong proponent of the legislation before us.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, as Representative BACHMANN approaches the well, the gentleman from Wisconsin has the right to close, and I would like to know how many other speakers he has.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. How many speakers does the gentleman have?

Mr. PETRI. One, who is before us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has one.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. And are you closing or is Representative BACHMANN closing?

Mr. PETRI. I have reserved, I think, 30 seconds.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. I have one other speaker, then, after Mrs. BACHMANN.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to have the RECORD reflect very clearly that if Representative MCCOLLUM gets her way, she will kill building the bridge over the St. Croix River. As we all know, and as our office has been told, this is one of the longest, if not the longest, unfinished bridge projects in the history of the United States. That's why it's come to this point, Mr. Speaker, where we actually have to go to Congress to get permission from the Federal Government so that the State of Minnesota and the State of Wisconsin can build this commonsense bridge at their own expense, and that's the point that we're at.

Not only will Representative MCCOLLUM be acting against the wishes of 86 percent of the people that live and reside in the St. Croix River Valley, the responsibility for the increased costs of building this bridge rests squarely on the shoulders of Representative MCCOLLUM and on her compatriots who have fought for decades to kill the building of this bridge.

The cost? The bridge would have cost \$80 million to complete back in 1992 if her compatriots wouldn't have tied this bridge project up for decades in the Federal courts in nuisance lawsuits. And why? Because they said there was pollution that was involved. And what was this pollution that they asserted? They said it would be visual pollution. Visual pollution? Because a

Federal bureaucrat came out to this river and pointed to the river and said that they didn't think that a bridge would look good built on this river, and that's in spite of the fact that there's already a bridge that's here on this river. This is a wide part of the river. This is the river that is literally the birthplace of Minnesota. As long as people have been in the State of Minnesota, Stillwater is the birthplace.

I've been working on this issue as a young mother living in this community, as an activist citizen who saw what a commonsense project this is. Representative MCCOLLUM has talked about this being a mega-bridge. This is a four-lane bridge. And after all, why wouldn't you build a four-lane bridge when you have a four-lane highway on Minnesota connected to a four-lane highway in Wisconsin? Representative MCCOLLUM is suggesting that we should be building a two or a three-lane bridge. Why would you build a bridge that would be obsolete the day that it's opened? You would build a commonsense, four-lane bridge to connect two four-lane highways.

This is also a center for industry in this region. We have not only the prison, the State prison; we have also one of the largest window manufacturers in the world, we have the sewer treatment plant, the water treatment plant, and we have a marina. This is the place that has been the site that's been selected as the perfect place to build this bridge to connect these two communities.

As we've heard before, this is an area that has a bridge that currently has a safety rating that's far below the safety rating of the bridge that collapsed in Minneapolis in 2007. We have a historic opportunity, a once-in-a-lifetime magic moment when we have Governors that are Republican and Democrat, Senators that are Republican and Democrat, representatives that are Republican and Democrat, saying, for once let's come together and do what the people expect.

And why did we get to this point? Bureaucratic red tape. We are here in foursquare agreement with the administration, saying, let's get this done on behalf of the people of these two States. Let's do what should have been done decades ago, and let's build this commonsense bridge.

Stillwater, Minnesota is the site of Minnesota's birthplace. And now it's the site of what we are told is the longest-running, unfinished bridge project in the Nation. In the 1950s, discussions began for a replacement to the current, 1931 Lift Bridge, connecting Minnesota and Wisconsin, over the St. Croix River.

In 1992, we saw progress. That year, a coalition of residents, businesses, transportation officials and environmental experts, settled on a bridge design to replace the existing Lift Bridge. They proposed a four-lane bridge to connect four-lane highways in both states to be built south of Stillwater.

We are here today for Congressional approval for this project to proceed. Without

Congressional approval, the project will continue to face the government redtape and lawsuits that it's seen over the past 20 years.

The St. Croix River Crossing Project before us is a bipartisan project, with strong bipartisan support. All four Senators from our States, each State's governor and numerous colleagues of mine all publicly proclaim their support for this commonsense project. It doesn't get more bipartisan than this.

A recent survey of residents in the region shows an overwhelming 86% of people support the project.

The bill before us doesn't appropriate a nickel. This is no earmark. Instead, it allows a commonsense, bipartisan project to proceed.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1134 because this is the final hurdle and our magic moment. Together, we can build this.

Ms. McCOLLUM. Is the gentleman from Wisconsin prepared to close after the last speaker that I have on my side?

Mr. PETRI. I am prepared to close after you finish, yes.

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as remains to my colleague from Minneapolis, Mr. ELLISON, who faced firsthand the tragedy of what happens when a bridge collapses. As I pointed out, I have seven bridges that have hundreds of thousands of cars every day on them in worse shape than the Stillwater bridge.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Minneapolis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I stood on a highway called highway 7 on Friday at a bridge that was rated a 23 out of 100 scale. That bridge, 73 years old, in desperate need of repair, is designated structurally deficient. But I could go to another bridge within walking distance of my home over the Mississippi River only a few blocks from where the bridge fell down only a few years ago, but that would be on Plymouth Avenue. And people who know the area know Plymouth Avenue. That bridge, Mr. Speaker was and is shut down. You cannot drive a car over it. Now, that would only be one of about 1,398 other bridges that are structurally deficient in Minnesota that need repair right now.

I'm sensitive to bridges that need repair because it wasn't in somebody else's district that the I-35 bridge fell—it was in my own. Thirteen Minnesotans went to their reward, 100 had severe back and other injuries. I am incredibly sensitive to the need to fix our State's bridges, our Nation's bridges, which is why I am against this project, a \$700 million bridge when we have structurally deficient bridges all over the State of Minnesota and all over the United States. This is not a good use of taxpayer money.

I find it absolutely shocking that all these fiscal conservatives are lining up to throw money at this enormously overly expensive, over-height megabridge. Where are the anti-earmark advocates around here? Where are the

people who call for smaller government? Where are the conservative, small "c," who say, let's build a right-sized bridge that makes sense so that other bridges may be fixed around our State? Well, I guess all of that only matters, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to your own little project or earmark project. Then all of a sudden it gains a whole lot of other kind of credibility undiscovered before.

Mr. Speaker, I think it needs to be pointed out that this proposed bridge, which would carry about 18,000 vehicles a day—that's important. I feel for those folks, and I want them to have their bridge, and I would support a sane and sensible bridge. But the I-35 bridge much talked about tonight carries 140,000 people every day. Eighteen thousand at \$700 million versus the I-35 bridge, which cost us about \$260 million, was built in 1 year—less than a year, and carries 140,000? This is not a good use of taxpayer money. It soaks up resources that other people need. It violates our Scenic and Wild Rivers Act. This is a bad idea.

Mr. Speaker, I would far prefer if this bill were to go back to committee, go through the regular order, be defeated here on suspension, but go back through the committee process so some sensible amendments might be offered so this could be a good, decent project perhaps. But that's not what's happening. Suspension is for things that are supposed to be uncontroversial. We're supposed to be here passing post offices, but here we are dealing with what is absolutely a controversial piece of legislation on a suspension calendar with no chance to amend.

□ 1930

I wish we had that chance, because if we did, I would say we need to come together as a State, as a Nation, and fix all the bridges of this country, all the bridges of this State, and not just one big, fat megabridge.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I would remind the gentleman that we have come together. The legislation before us, S. 1134, passed the United States Senate by unanimous consent. It has a few people who seem to have raised some concerns here, but the fact of the matter is that AL FRANKEN, the Senator from Minnesota, AMY KLOBUCHAR, the Senator from Minnesota, RON JOHNSON, the Senator from Wisconsin, HERB KOHL—Senators from both parties have joined together in recognizing the need and importance and urging their colleagues who unanimously supported this. It's about time we did our job here in the House of Representatives.

This project has been studied for over 20 years. Representative RON KIND, as he said so eloquently in his statement, has consulted with every conceivable interest group in the area. As my colleague, Representative BACHMANN, said, the people in Minnesota and Wisconsin are wondering when we're going to do our job.

This is a major hazard now, an old bridge. We saw what happened with

other bridges in Minnesota, a growing population, commuter populations back and forth in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. It's about time this hazard was removed and we had a bridge that we could be proud of and that was less intrusive than the one that's there now.

So I urge my colleagues to pass the legislation before us, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1134.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SPECIAL ELECTION REFORM ACT

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3902) to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to revise the timing of special elections for local office in the District of Columbia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3902

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Special Election Reform Act".

SEC. 2. TIMING OF SPECIAL ELECTIONS FOR LOCAL OFFICE IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

(a) COUNCIL.—

(1) CHAIR.—The first sentence of section 401(b)(3) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (sec. 1-204.01(b)(3), D.C. Official Code) is amended to read as follows: "To fill a vacancy in the Office of Chairman, the Board of Elections shall hold a special election in the District on the Tuesday occurring at least 70 days and not more than 174 days after the date on which such vacancy occurs which the Board of Elections determines, based on a totality of the circumstances, taking into account, inter alia, cultural and religious holidays and the administrability of the election, will provide the opportunity for the greatest level of voter participation."

(2) MEMBERS ELECTED FROM WARDS.—The first sentence of section 401(d)(1) of such Act (sec. 1-204.01(d)(1), D.C. Official Code) is amended to read as follows: "In the event of a vacancy in the Council of a member elected from a ward, the Board of Elections shall hold a special election in the District on the Tuesday occurring at least 70 days and not more than 174 days after the date on which such vacancy occurs which the Board of Elections determines, based on a totality of the circumstances, taking into account, inter alia, cultural and religious holidays and the administrability of the election, will provide the opportunity for the greatest level of voter participation."