

Fourth and lastly, I would tell you that it is about international security. What do I mean by that? Think with me for a moment, Mr. Speaker. When the world has a catastrophe, whether it is a hurricane, a tsunami, whether it is war or floods, pestilence, famine, whatever it is, when the world has a catastrophe and dials 911, who is it that answers? It is us, isn't it, with our military might.

We have to have a strong America. NASA ensures that we have a strong America. A strong America ensures that we have a safe world. When America is that strong, safe world leader militarily and in innovation, this world will be a safer place.

NASA is critical, Mr. Speaker, and so are the brave, innovative men and women of NASA, and they deserve a clear mission and a roadmap from the administration and from us, the United States Congress.

That is why I support this legislation. As a member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I look forward to continue working to ensure that precious taxpayer resources at NASA are not wasted, but prioritized in support of NASA's core mission so that it can remain the world's premier space exploration agency.

I am RANDY WEBER. There you have it.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for yielding.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4412, the NASA Authorization Act of 2014, and to applaud the commitment made by my colleagues, Ranking Member EDWARDS and Chairman PALAZZO, to work so hard to find common ground on these complex issues.

The process of reauthorizing NASA's important research and exploration has historically been bipartisan, with space and the wonder it instills in our constituents unifying both sides of the aisle. Now, as budgets become tighter and we are evaluating Federal investments to find places to cut back, authorizing significant resources for NASA research and the operations that research supports has become more challenging.

When the markup process of the original NASA authorization bill began about a year ago, I joined several of my colleagues on the Science Committee to raise concerns about proposed cuts to important programs like NASA's Earth science research. I am pleased to see that important programs like Earth science, space technology, education, and environmental compliance are authorized in this legislation at levels that mirror their appropriation for fiscal year 2014.

As I have learned through my work on the Environment Subcommittee, bipartisan solutions are possible as long

as both sides are committed to achieving an outcome and mindful of the impact that our efforts have on our constituents. Chairman PALAZZO and Ranking Member EDWARDS have embraced this spirit when drafting the NASA Authorization Act of 2014, and though the bill before us today might not be perfect, it is a positive step forward and worthy of our support.

I would also like to acknowledge the role of Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member JOHNSON for supporting the subcommittee leadership in their efforts to arrive at a bipartisan consensus. I know that Ms. EDWARDS and I both appreciate this approach to leadership, as do our constituents.

I encourage support for this important legislation.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other individuals who wish to speak on this bill on this side. If the ranking member is willing to yield back her time, I am as well.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4412, 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. SMITH of Texas. 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 motion will be postponed.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM AND HYPOXIA RESEARCH AND CONTROL AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2014

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1254) to amend the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1254

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 Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO THE 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. INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS AND HYPOXIA.

Section 603(a) is amended—

(1) by striking "the following representatives from" and inserting "a representative from";

(2) in paragraph (11), by striking "and";

(3) by redesignating paragraph (12) as paragraph (13);

(4) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

"(12) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and"; and

(5) in paragraph (13), as redesignated, by striking "such".

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

The Act is amended by inserting after section 603 the following:

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

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, the Under Secretary, acting through the Task Force, shall maintain and enhance a national harmful algal bloom and hypoxia program, including—

"(1) a statement of objectives, including understanding, detecting, predicting, controlling, mitigating, and responding to marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events; and

"(2) the comprehensive research plan and action strategy under section 603B.

"(b) PERIODIC REVISION.—The Task Force shall periodically review and revise the Program, as necessary.

"(c) TASK FORCE FUNCTIONS.—The Task Force shall—

"(1) coordinate interagency review of the objectives and activities of the Program;

"(2) expedite the interagency review process by ensuring timely review and dispersal of required reports and assessments under this title;

"(3) support the implementation of the Action Strategy, including the coordination and integration of 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;

"(4) support the development of institutional mechanisms and financial instruments to further the objectives and activities of the Program;

"(5) review the Program's distribution of Federal funding to address the objectives and activities of the Program;

"(6) promote the development of new technologies for predicting, monitoring, and mitigating harmful algal bloom and hypoxia conditions; and

"(7) establish such interagency working groups as it considers necessary.

"(d) LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY.—Except as provided in subsection (h), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall have primary responsibility for administering the Program.

"(e) PROGRAM DUTIES.—In administering the Program, the Under Secretary shall—

"(1) promote the Program;

"(2) prepare work and spending plans for implementing the research and activities identified under the Action Strategy;

"(3) administer peer-reviewed, merit-based, competitive grant funding—

"(A) to maintain and enhance baseline monitoring programs established by the Program;

"(B) to support the projects maintained and established by the Program; and

"(C) to address the research and management needs and priorities identified in the Action Strategy;

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

"(5) coordinate with the Secretary of State to support international efforts on marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia information sharing, research, prediction, mitigation, control, and response activities;

"(6) identify additional research, development, and demonstration needs and priorities relating to monitoring, prevention, control, mitigation, and response to marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, including methods and technologies to protect the ecosystems affected by marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(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) facilitate and provide resources to train State and local coastal and water resource managers in the methods and technologies for monitoring, preventing, controlling, and mitigating marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(9) support regional efforts to control and mitigate outbreaks through—

"(A) communication of the contents of the Action Strategy and maintenance of online data portals for other information about harmful algal blooms and hypoxia to State, tribal, and local stakeholders; and

"(B) overseeing the development, review, and periodic updating of the Action Strategy;

"(10) convene at least 1 meeting of the Task Force each year; and

"(11) perform such other tasks as may be delegated by the Task Force.

"(f) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES.—The Under Secretary shall—

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

"(2) carry out marine and Great Lakes harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events response activities;

"(3) develop and enhance, including with respect to infrastructure as necessary, critical observations, monitoring, modeling, data management, information dissemination, and operational forecasts relevant to harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events;

"(4) enhance communication and coordination among Federal agencies carrying out marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia activities and research;

"(5) to the greatest extent practicable, leverage existing resources and expertise available from local research universities and institutions; and

"(6) increase the availability to appropriate public and private entities of—

"(A) analytical facilities and technologies;

"(B) operational forecasts; and

"(C) reference and research materials.

"(g) COOPERATIVE EFFORTS.—The Under Secretary shall work cooperatively and avoid duplication of effort with other offices, centers, and programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, other agencies on the Task Force, and States, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations concerned with marine and freshwater issues to coordinate harmful algal bloom and hypoxia (and related) activities and research.

"(h) FRESHWATER.—With respect to the freshwater aspects of the Program, the Administrator, through the Task Force, shall carry out the duties otherwise assigned to the Under Secretary under this section, except the activities described in subsection (f).

"(I) PARTICIPATION.—The Administrator's participation under this section shall include—

"(A) research on the ecology and impacts of freshwater harmful algal blooms; and

"(B) forecasting and monitoring of and event response to freshwater harmful algal blooms in

lakes, rivers, estuaries (including their tributaries), and reservoirs.

"(2) NONDUPLICATION.—The Administrator shall ensure that activities carried out under this title focus on new approaches to addressing freshwater harmful algal blooms and are not duplicative of existing research and development programs authorized by this title or any other law.

"(i) INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM.—The collection of monitoring and observation data under this title shall comply with all data standards and protocols developed pursuant to the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.). Such data shall be made available through the system established under that Act."

SEC. 5. COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH PLAN AND ACTION STRATEGY.

The Act, as amended by section 4 of this Act, is further amended by inserting after section 603A the following:

"SEC. 603B. COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH PLAN AND ACTION STRATEGY.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, the Under Secretary, through the Task Force, shall develop and submit to Congress a comprehensive research plan and action strategy to address marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia. The Action Strategy shall identify—

"(1) the specific activities to be carried out by the Program and the timeline for carrying out those activities;

"(2) the roles and responsibilities of each Federal agency in the Task Force in carrying out the activities under paragraph (1); and

"(3) the appropriate regions and subregions requiring specific research and activities to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

"(b) REGIONAL FOCUS.—The regional and subregional parts of the Action Strategy 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 detect, predict, monitor, control, mitigate, respond to, and remediate harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;

"(3) ways to reduce the duration and intensity of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, including deployment of response technologies in a timely manner;

"(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 ecosystems that may be or have been affected by harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events;

"(6) mechanisms by which data, information, and products may be transferred between the Program and the State, tribal, and local governments and research entities;

"(7) communication and information dissemination methods that State, tribal, and local governments may undertake to educate and inform the public concerning harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; and

"(8) roles that Federal agencies may have to assist in the implementation of the Action Strategy, including efforts to support local and regional scientific assessments under section 603(e).

"(c) UTILIZING AVAILABLE STUDIES AND INFORMATION.—In developing the Action Strategy, the Under Secretary shall utilize existing research, assessments, reports, and program activities, including—

"(1) those carried out under existing law; and

"(2) other relevant peer-reviewed and published sources.

"(d) DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION STRATEGY.—In developing the Action Strategy, the Under Secretary shall, as appropriate—

"(1) coordinate with—

"(A) State coastal management and planning officials;

"(B) tribal resource management officials; and

"(C) 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

"(2) 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.

"(e) FEDERAL REGISTER.—The Under Secretary shall publish the Action Strategy in the Federal Register.

"(f) PERIODIC REVISION.—The Under Secretary, in coordination and consultation with the individuals and entities under subsection (d), shall periodically review and revise the Action Strategy prepared under this section, as necessary."

SEC. 6. REPORTING.

Section 603 is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(j) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date the Action Strategy is submitted under section 603B, the Under Secretary shall submit a report to Congress that describes—

"(1) the proceedings of the annual Task Force meetings;

"(2) the activities carried out under the Program, including the regional and subregional parts of the Action Strategy;

"(3) the budget related to the activities under paragraph (2);

"(4) the progress made on implementing the Action Strategy; and

"(5) any need to revise or terminate research and activities under the Program."

SEC. 7. NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO HYPOXIA.

Section 604 is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 604. NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO HYPOXIA.

"(a) INITIAL PROGRESS REPORTS.—Beginning not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, and biennially thereafter, the Administrator, through the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force, shall submit a progress report to the appropriate congressional committees and the President that describes the progress made by activities directed by the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force and carried out or funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and other State and Federal partners toward attainment of the goals of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan 2008.

"(b) CONTENTS.—Each report required under this section shall—

"(1) assess the 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;

"(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. 8. GREAT LAKES HYPOXIA AND HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS.

Section 605 is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 605. GREAT LAKES HYPOXIA AND HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS.

"(a) INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, the Task Force, in accordance with the authority under section 603, shall complete and submit to the Congress and the President an integrated assessment that examines the causes, consequences, and approaches to reduce hypoxia and harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes, including the status of and gaps within current research, monitoring, management, prevention, response, and control activities by—

- "(1) Federal agencies;
- "(2) State agencies;
- "(3) regional research consortia;
- "(4) academia;
- "(5) private industry; and
- "(6) nongovernmental organizations.

"(b) PLAN.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, the Task Force shall develop and submit to the Congress a plan, based on the integrated assessment under subsection (a), for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia and harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes.

"(2) CONTENTS.—The plan shall—

"(A) address the monitoring needs identified in the integrated assessment under subsection (a);

"(B) develop a timeline and budgetary requirements for deployment of future assets;

"(C) identify requirements for the development and verification of Great Lakes hypoxia and harmful algal bloom models, including—

"(i) all assumptions built into the models; and

"(ii) data quality methods used to ensure the best available data are utilized; and

"(D) describe efforts to improve the assessment of the impacts of hypoxia and harmful algal blooms by—

"(i) characterizing current and past biological conditions in ecosystems affected by hypoxia and harmful algal blooms; and

"(ii) quantifying effects, including economic effects, at the population and community levels.

"(3) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the plan, the Task Force shall—

"(A) coordinate with State and local governments;

"(B) consult with representatives from academic, agricultural, industry, and other stakeholder groups, including relevant Canadian agencies;

"(C) ensure that the plan complements and does not duplicate activities conducted by other Federal or State agencies;

"(D) identify critical research for reducing, mitigating, and controlling hypoxia events and their effects;

"(E) evaluate cost-effective, incentive-based partnership approaches;

"(F) ensure that the plan is technically sound and cost effective;

"(G) utilize existing research, assessments, reports, and program activities;

"(H) publish a summary of the proposed plan in the Federal Register at least 180 days prior to submitting the completed plan to Congress; and

"(I) after submitting the completed plan to Congress, provide biennial progress reports on the activities toward achieving the objectives of the plan."

SEC. 9. APPLICATION WITH OTHER LAWS.

The Act is amended by adding after section 606 the following:

"SEC. 607. EFFECT ON OTHER FEDERAL AUTHORITY.

"(a) AUTHORITY PRESERVED.—Nothing in this title supersedes or limits the authority of any agency to carry out its responsibilities and missions under other laws.

"(b) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this title may be construed as establishing new regulatory authority for any agency."

SEC. 10. DEFINITIONS; CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Act, as amended by section 9 of this Act, is further amended by adding after section 607 the following:

"SEC. 608. DEFINITIONS.

"In this title:

"(1) ACTION STRATEGY.—The term 'Action Strategy' means the comprehensive research plan and action strategy established under section 603B.

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

"(3) HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM.—The term 'harmful algal bloom' means marine and freshwater phytoplankton that proliferate to high concentrations, resulting in nuisance conditions or harmful impacts on marine and aquatic ecosystems, coastal communities, and human health through the production of toxic compounds or other biological, chemical, and physical impacts of the algae outbreak.

"(4) HYPOXIA.—The term 'hypoxia' means a condition where low dissolved oxygen in aquatic systems causes stress or death to resident organisms.

"(5) PROGRAM.—The term 'Program' means the national harmful algal bloom and hypoxia program established under section 603A.

"(6) 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.

"(7) TASK FORCE.—The term 'Task Force' means the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia under section 603(a).

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

"(9) UNITED STATES COASTAL WATERS.—The term 'United States coastal waters' includes the Great Lakes."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 603(a) is amended by striking "(hereinafter referred to as the 'Task Force')".

SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The Act is further amended by adding after section 608 the following:

"SEC. 609. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Under Secretary to carry out sections 603A and 603B \$20,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018.

"(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. For each fiscal year, the Under Secretary shall publish a list of all grant recipients and the amounts for all of the funds allocated for research purposes, specifying those allocated for extramural research activities."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on S. 1254, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, reauthorizes oceanic and freshwater research activities. It also improves and streamlines existing activities at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Federal agencies.

I want to thank Senator BILL NELSON of Florida and Senator ROB PORTMAN of Ohio for their work on this legislation.

Harmful algal blooms are a significant problem that affects rivers, lakes, and tidal areas around the country. Known most often as "red tide," harmful algae hurts local economies that are dependent on fishing, recreation, and tourism.

Sometimes referred to as "dead zones," hypoxia harms ecosystems in fish populations by decreasing oxygen levels in the water. Our current understanding and response to these problems is inadequate.

In my home State of Texas, red and brown tides often affect our bays and coastlines. This damages tourism, harms our fishing industry, and impacts public health.

This bill strengthens scientific research about these phenomena, fosters collaboration between Federal agencies, States, and localities, and advances technological solutions to better understand and respond to outbreaks when they occur.

This bipartisan legislation passed the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology by a unanimous voice vote last month.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY) and our Environmental Subcommittee ranking member, Ms. BONAMICI from Oregon, for the bipartisan amendment they offered in committee to improve this legislation.

I want to thank Chairman HASTINGS and Chairman SHUSTER for working with me to bring this legislation to the floor. I will insert our letters of exchange in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,

Washington, DC, May 22, 2014.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to review the relevant provisions of the text of S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013. As you are aware, the bill was primarily referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, while the Committee on Natural Resources received an additional referral.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner, and, accordingly, I agree to discharge S. 1254 from further consideration by the Committee on Natural Resources. I do so with the understanding that

by discharging the bill, the Committee on Natural Resources does not waive any future jurisdictional claim on this or similar matters. Further, the Committee on Natural Resources reserves the right to seek the appointment of conferees, if it should become necessary.

I ask that you insert a copy of our exchange of letters into the bill report filed by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, as well as in the Congressional Record during consideration of this measure on the House floor.

Thank you for your courtesy in this matter and I look forward to continued cooperation between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

DOC HASTINGS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, May 22, 2014.

Hon. DOC HASTINGS,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HASTINGS: Thank you for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013.

I agree that forgoing further action on this bill does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your Committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include our letters into the report filed on S. 1254. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Natural Resources as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, June 4, 2014.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning S. 1254, Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013, as ordered reported by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on May 21, 2014. S. 1254 contains provisions that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring S. 1254 before the House in an expeditious manner and, accordingly, I will not seek a sequential referral of the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding, and would request that you insert our exchange

of letters on this matter into the committee report on S. 1254.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, June 4, 2014.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,

Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013.

I agree that forgoing further action on this bill does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your Committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will insert this exchange into the report filed on S. 1254. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair wishes to clarify that the gentleman's motion is for the bill, as amended.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will re-report the title of the bill.

The Clerk re-reported the title of the bill.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014.

S. 1254 is a bipartisan bill, and I want to thank my colleagues, Ms. BONAMICI and Mr. POSEY, for their hard work to advance this important legislation. It authorizes an interagency program led by NOAA to improve our understanding and response to harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events.

Unfortunately, over the past decade, the distribution and frequency of harmful algal blooms—or HABs—has increased steadily. Today, nearly every State is threatened by this toxic algae.

HABs can have serious economic and public health effects. Shellfish beds along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific coasts are often closed during a major event to protect the public from significant respiratory distress, shellfish poisoning, and other illnesses.

The economic impact these closures can have on the shellfish industry and tourism is quite large. A single event can cost a coastal community tens of millions of dollars in lost revenue.

While NOAA and the research community have made great strides since the establishment of this program, the need for continued research and tools to lessen the impact of these events is greater than ever before.

More accurate and efficient tools for detecting toxins, early warning of blooms, better predictions of bloom movement, methods for controlling outbreaks, and the development of local and regional partnerships will all allow for a more effective response.

For instance, in 2009, NOAA-funded scientists from Texas A&M University developed and deployed a sensor in Galveston Bay that can detect algae responsible for shellfish poisoning.

The sensor now provides an early warning to Texas State health officials, allowing them to temporarily close the bay to oyster harvesting. This early warning capability is a perfect example of how this program can minimize economic impacts and protect human health.

Addressing the many dimensions of HABs requires a coordinated multi-agency approach, and passage of S. 1254 and the reauthorization of this program will result in practical and innovative approaches to addressing hypoxia and HABs events in U.S. waters.

The health of our coast and waterways is critical to our economy, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), a member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events occur throughout the United States. They are damaging to water bodies, and are harmful to plant and animal life. They also cost local communities millions of dollars and many hours of recreational enjoyment. The adverse effects are both near-term and long-term.

The continued need for advancing research on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events is very apparent. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation will continue robust funding for this important research, leading us to a better understanding of the causes, effects, and steps we can take to prevent harmful algae and hypoxia events in the future.

Reported to the floor with bipartisan support from the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014, includes provisions that Representative BONAMICI and I were privileged to advance. As amended, this bill will better streamline and coordinate existing harmful algae bloom and hypoxia research activities at NOAA and other Federal agencies.

We place a high priority on using research to create implementable action plans to minimize the economic, ecologic, and human health impacts from harmful algae blooms.

By incorporating provisions to encourage collaborative research between local, State, and Federal agencies, we

will be able to avoid costly duplicative research, which will stretch every dollar further and significantly advance this important research.

In my congressional district, the Indian River Lagoon has experienced algae blooms each year from 2011 to 2013, leading to the loss of nearly half of all the sea grass beds—the primary means of measuring health in the Indian River Lagoon. Prior to 2011, sea grass beds in the lagoon had been on a steady increase for nearly 15 years. The devastating economic and ecologic impacts of these blooms over the past 3 years can be felt across the entire length of the 156-mile lagoon.

The economic impact of the Indian River Lagoon is approximately \$3.5 billion. A healthy lagoon is vital to the economic well-being of the Treasure Coast and the Space Coast. I raised my family on the lagoon, so I can speak from personal experience about the changes we have seen and the benefits of our lagoon to our communities.

Our bill gives researchers another tool to help us better understand, anticipate, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms like those we have seen in the Indian River Lagoon and in communities across the country.

I would like to thank Chairman SMITH and the majority and minority staff who worked together to shepherd this bill through committee. I would also like to thank the ranking member of the Environmental Subcommittee, Ms. BONAMICI. It was a pleasure to work with you and your staff to make several bipartisan perfecting changes to the Senate bill so that this bipartisan measure can make it here to the House floor.

I would encourage my colleagues to support the bill before us so that we can reauthorize this important program and continue to advance this research that is so important for communities, like the coastal community I am privileged to live in and represent in Congress.

□ 1700

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. I thank the ranking member of the Science Committee for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation, and I am glad the House is considering it today. I would like to begin by thanking the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), for his willingness to work with me on an amendment to S. 1254 that was adopted in committee and made some modifications to the legislation we are considering today.

I would also like to thank the full committee chairman, Mr. SMITH, and our ranking member, Ms. JOHNSON, for supporting us as we developed the amendment and moved the bill forward. This was truly a team effort, and our constituents are well served by this

collaboration. I want to join Mr. POSEY, also, in thanking our staff on both sides of the aisle for their hard work on this bill.

Authorization for the programs under the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act expired in 2012, so this reauthorization is long overdue. The rapid overproduction of algae can have devastating effects on aquatic plants and animals, as well as on human health.

For coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems and communities that depend on fishing and tourism to sustain their economies, the effect of algae blooms is a threat to their livelihood. The cost of these blooms has been estimated to be close to \$82 million each year, a significant hit to the economy in areas that are still struggling to recover.

This issue was first brought to my attention by Oregon State University scientists and the crab industry in Oregon, where business was struggling when Dungeness crabs were dying because of low oxygen levels in the water, a hypoxic event caused by algal blooms.

I do want to stress, however, that the effect of these blooms is not only felt in coastal communities. Last year, in my home State of Oregon, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs experiencing hypoxic events were closed to protect public health for a combined total of more than 700 days.

Research has helped advance our understanding of and response to harmful algal blooms, but we need to continue to invest in this research. The frequency and duration of these events and subsequent hypoxic conditions are on the rise, and our constituents need us to act.

In order to equip ourselves with the tools we need to manage these events and reduce the environmental and economic damage they cause, we need to better understand how and why algal blooms occur and how they respond to a changing environment.

The bill before us today directs NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to develop and implement a national strategy that takes a regional approach to helping communities understand, predict, and mitigate harmful algal bloom and hypoxic events.

It will not only improve coordination, but also assess the program's activities to ensure that we are prepared for these events and are able to respond in an effective and efficient manner.

This will become increasingly important as coastal populations increase and changes in the environment, such as warmer water temperatures, have the potential to alter the growth, toxicity, and geographic distribution of algal blooms.

The stakeholder community has been calling for the reauthorization of this critical program, and they are eager to see NOAA continue its work on this important issue.

The amendment that Mr. POSEY and I included responds to a number of sug-

gestions offered by our colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee, which has joint jurisdiction over these programs; and the amendment clarifies that the bill does not establish any new programs or regulatory authority.

The amendment also ensures that State and local governments, along with other stakeholder groups, are involved in efforts to reduce harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

Because freshwater ecosystems are also susceptible to HABs, the amendment makes certain that the plan also addresses harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events in the Great Lakes in a cost-effective and technically feasible manner.

NOAA researchers and the academic community have established a strong partnership to lead this effort, and I applaud their work. Now, Congress needs to reauthorize these important programs, so that work can continue; and this bill accomplishes that goal.

I urge our colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1254, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEMANDING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2014

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2072) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2072

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 "Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. SCORING OF 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 House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.