

I urge colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. Breast cancer is an issue that has touched almost every family I know, and this is one way Congress can react to it.

Mr. Speaker, we are ready to close, and we have no other speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, we are ready to close.

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

I just want to say again thank you to my good friend for allowing me to be a part of this. I know how important it is to her and, again, thousands and thousands like her; and, again, to my friend Fannie Godwin back home, Fannie has touched so many lives. She is a teacher, she is a wife and a mother, and she is involved in her church and her community.

On Christmas Eve, she will be at First Presbyterian Church in Dunn playing the bells in the choir. I always see a smile on Fannie's face, and today, I want to make that smile even bigger.

Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you so much for allowing this to move forward today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5185, 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.

PROPANE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2014

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5705) to modify certain provisions relating to the Propane Education and Research Council.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5705

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 "Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE PROPANE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH COUNCIL.

(a) FUNCTIONS OF PROPANE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH COUNCIL.—Section 5(f) of the Propane Education and Research Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6404(f)) is amended in the first sentence by inserting "to train propane distributors and consumers in strategies to mitigate negative effects of future propane price spikes," after "to enhance consumer and employee safety and training."

(b) MARKET SURVEY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION PRICE ANALYSIS.—Section 9(a) of the Propane Education and Research Act of 1996 (15 U.S.C. 6408(a)) is amended in the first sentence by striking "only data provided by the

Energy Information Administration" and inserting "the refiner price to end users of consumer grade propane, as published by the Energy Information Administration".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5705, the Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act of 2014, which I introduced along with Congressman WALZ. This important, bipartisan legislation directs the U.S. Department of Commerce to more accurately calculate consumer propane costs. It also enables the propane industry to use its resources to mitigate price spikes.

Last winter in my home State of Ohio, as well as across 26 other States across the country, the lives and livelihoods of many Americans were threatened due to the propane shortages that were being experienced. Access to heat is a requirement for survival and employment, and we want to make sure that Americans do not face the same hardships again this winter or in future winters.

This bill would take the necessary steps to allow the propane industry to adequately address propane supply in pricing issues so consumers are not negatively impacted this coming winter.

□ 1415

In 1996, Congress enacted the Propane Education and Research Act, PERA, authorizing the propane to collect and use its own resources for safety, training, research and development, and education for the benefit of propane consumers and the public. The law also established the Propane Education and Research Council, PERC, to accomplish these goals.

To prevent this program from creating a disproportionate demand for propane, the Department of Commerce is required to annually calculate the price for consumer grade propane and compare it with an index of prices of specified competing fuels. If the price of propane exceeds a certain threshold, PERC is restricted from conducting its educational outreach activities.

In 2009, due to a misinterpretation of the law by the Department of Commerce, the restriction was triggered and all educational outreach by PERC

ceased. While the Department of Commerce believes Congress intended PERA to focus only on residential-only propane, the text of the law does not limit it to the residential market.

To correct this discrepancy, the Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act of 2014 would clarify the language in the law to require the Department of Commerce to use the proper data and bring the application of the law back in line with Congress' intent. It would also amend the existing functions of PERC to include training distributors and consumers in strategies to mitigate the negative effects of propane price spikes.

Over the past year, I have been working on this legislation with stakeholders and with Congressman WALZ to help mitigate having another propane shortage. This legislation is an important step in helping to achieve this, and I urge full support by my colleagues for H.R. 5705.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, and a special thank you to my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

This is a commonsense piece of legislation, but I think it is important to note, for many of us, and my colleague mentioned, last year when the propane shortage came, folks can prepare—and we understand out in Ohio and Minnesota with our harsh winters that you prepare for these things—but the situation with propane came so quickly and so fast that the imposition that it made in some cases could have become life threatening, where propane tanks were running empty and families were counting on it to heat their homes. We have a lot of agricultural uses in drying our row crops where it is critically important, and I think it is important to note that at that time the gentleman from Ohio stood up and became a national leader on this issue and I think helped not only alleviate at the time but start doing things like this looking to the future.

This is what we should be doing. This is smart, making sure that our markets work correctly and making sure that the intent of Congress is followed and making sure that our consumers are well served. I thank you for that. I think this is exactly what our constituents expect. I know there are a lot of folks in southern Minnesota who have benefited from this.

This is a fairly simple fix. It comes from a misinterpretation. But I think the point that the gentleman has brought up that is critically important, markets are starting to function. We are seeing this, but this is an education piece. I think when we educate the public right on this, and you heard some of the implications of that, by not doing that, when they stopped all education on this, the propane shortage of last winter came quickly. It

came fast, and it had immediate repercussions.

I would say once we correct this deficiency, amend it, it will make a difference. It will enable the propane industry to use its resources to mitigate price spikes, and it will more accurately let consumers know what the price of propane is.

So I think this is a fairly simple fix. But nothing is simple in Congress, as we know, and nothing is simple when you are dealing with a complex commodity such as propane. But I do think that as we move into this winter, knocking on wood is one thing, but leadership like the gentleman from Ohio has shown is also helping us.

I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense piece of legislation and move this forward. Again, this is what we are sent here to do, to try to make things a little bit better and make sure our markets function correctly and make sure our constituents are being educated correctly.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5705, the Propane Education and Research Act.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 5705, the Propane Education and Research Enhancement Act.

Today, tens of millions of Americans rely on propane and heating oil.

Propane and propane accessories are used in everyday life from cooking to commercial agricultural uses are vital to farmers in the Midwest that use propane to dry corn and feed the world.

Heating oil is used throughout the Northeast to heat homes and water during the long New England winter.

Personally, in years past, I've relied on propane when I didn't have access to the vast network of pipelines that supply natural gas.

Unfortunately, like many important commodities, unless you've run out of propane or heating oil, most people probably don't know or understand the vast importance of this product.

In the early 2000s, the Energy and Commerce Committee passed legislation that authorized the Propane Education and Research Council and the National Oilheat Research Alliance.

These two national entities implement consumer education, research and development, and safety and training programs related to the use of propane and heating oil.

While PERC and NORA are federally-authorized, these two organizations cost the federal government absolutely nothing.

But they play an important role in the communities they serve.

H.R. 5705 amends the Propane Education and Research Act of 1996, the original legislation, and expands the ability of PERC to educate distributors and consumers in strategies to deal with future propane price spikes.

Last winter, the United States faced a propane emergency.

The industry has stepped up to ensure that we don't face another crisis like that.

But we always need to be prepared and armed with knowledge of how to better deal with any situation.

With preparation legislation like H.R. 5705, we can assist Americans, all over the country, by sharing the best information possible.

I lend my support to H.R. 5705 and I am pleased my colleagues do the same.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, as the gentleman from Minnesota pointed out, we had a great shortage last winter that affected small family farms and large farms across the country. We had situations where businesses were being affected and having to shut down. So this is a very important bill that will help folks make sure that hopefully we don't have that situation occur again.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 5705.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5705.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE ACT OF 2014

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5764) to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5764

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 "Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE.

Section 118(c) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1268(c)) is amended by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following:

"(7) GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE.—

"(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Agency a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (referred to in this paragraph as the 'Initiative') to carry out programs and projects for Great Lakes protection and restoration.

"(B) FOCUS AREAS.—The Initiative shall prioritize programs and projects carried out in coordination with non-Federal partners and programs and projects that address priority areas each fiscal year, including—

"(i) the remediation of toxic substances and areas of concern;

"(ii) the prevention and control of invasive species and the impacts of invasive species;

"(iii) the protection and restoration of nearshore health and the prevention and mitigation of nonpoint source pollution;

"(iv) habitat and wildlife protection and restoration, including wetlands restoration and preservation; and

"(v) accountability, monitoring, evaluation, communication, and partnership activities.

"(C) PROJECTS.—Under the Initiative, the Agency shall collaborate with Federal partners, including the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, to select the best combination of programs and projects for Great Lakes protection and restoration using appropriate principles and criteria, including whether a program or project provides—

"(i) the ability to achieve strategic and measurable environmental outcomes that implement the Great Lakes Action Plan and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;

"(ii) the feasibility of—

"(I) prompt implementation;

"(II) timely achievement of results; and

"(III) resource leveraging; and

"(iii) the opportunity to improve inter-agency and inter-organizational coordination and collaboration to reduce duplication and streamline efforts.

"(D) IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Funds made available to carry out the Initiative shall be used to strategically implement—

"(I) Federal projects; and

"(II) projects carried out in coordination with States, Indian tribes, municipalities, institutions of higher education, and other organizations.

"(ii) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—With amounts made available for the Initiative each fiscal year, the Administrator may—

"(I) transfer not more than \$300,000,000 to the head of any Federal department or agency, with the concurrence of the department or agency head, to carry out activities to support the Initiative and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement; and

"(II) enter into an interagency agreement with the head of any Federal department or agency to carry out activities described in subclause (I).

"(E) SCOPE.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Projects shall be carried out under the Initiative on multiple levels, including—

"(I) Great Lakes-wide; and

"(II) Great Lakes basin-wide.

"(ii) LIMITATION.—No funds made available to carry out the Initiative may be used for any water infrastructure activity (other than a green infrastructure project that improves habitat and other ecosystem functions in the Great Lakes) for which amounts are made available from—

"(I) a State water pollution control revolving fund established under title VI; or

"(II) a State drinking water revolving loan fund established under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-12).

"(F) ACTIVITIES BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Each relevant Federal department or agency shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

"(i) maintain the base level of funding for the Great Lakes activities of that department or agency without regard to funding under the Initiative; and

"(ii) identify new activities and projects to support the environmental goals of the Initiative.

"(G) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Initiative \$300,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.