

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.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5764.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014.

The Great Lakes are an important resource for the United States. More than 30 million people live in the Great Lakes region, and the lakes help support over \$200 billion a year in economic activity.

To help ensure coordination between Federal, State, and private parties in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes, a Great Lakes Interagency Task Force of Federal agencies was created in 2004. In 2010, the task force released an action plan as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

In September of this year, the Federal agencies released an updated Action Plan II, which summarized the actions that the Federal agencies planned to implement during fiscal years 2015 through 2019 using Great Lakes funding. The action plan aims to strategically target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward long-term goals.

Congressman JOYCE introduced H.R. 5764 to amend the Great Lakes program provisions under section 118 of the Clean Water Act to formally authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for 5 years and to carry out projects and activities for Great Lakes protection and restoration.

Under the initiative, the Environmental Protection Agency is to collaborate with other Federal partners, including the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, to select the best combination of projects and activities for Great Lakes protection and restoration. Specified principles and criteria are to be used in selecting projects and activities, including whether they, one, improve the interagency and inter-organizational coordination and collaboration to reduce duplication and streamline efforts; two, provide the ability to timely achieve strategic and measurable environmental outcomes and leverage resources with other Federal and non-Federal partners.

The bill authorizes the initiative for fiscal year 2015 through 2019. I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5764.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014.

Let me start by recognizing the hard work of the bipartisan cosponsors of this legislation, including the retiring dean of the House, Mr. DINGELL, and commend their efforts to move this legislation.

H.R. 5764 would authorize Federal appropriations for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a program initiated by this administration to coordinate the Federal restoration efforts of the Great Lakes.

For the decades leading up to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, many Federal agencies were involved in the cleanup and protection of the Great Lakes. However, their efforts were far from coordinated, resulting in inefficient cleanup activities that made little progress in the overall health of the Great Lakes.

In 2010, this administration launched the initiative to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest fresh surface water system in the world, the Great Lakes. Under the leadership of the former EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, this initiative prioritized five focus areas: cleaning up toxics and the Great Lakes areas of concern; combating invasive species; promoting the near-shore health by protecting watersheds from polluted runoff; restoring wetlands and other habitats; and tracking the progress made, as well as educating and working with strategic partners.

As of August 2013, the initiative has funded more than 1,500 projects and programs of the highest priority to meet immediate cleanup and restoration and protection needs. As a result of these efforts, there is tangible proof that the health of the Great Lakes is improving—from the delisting of two additional U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern to a list of over 30 success stories recently documented by the Healing Our Waters Coalition. Yet additional progress is needed, and the authorization of appropriations contained in H.R. 5764 is a good step forward to continuing this effort.

However, I would note that most of the successes of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative can all be traced back to one factor that I have highlighted over and over again in this Congress: the critical need for robust Federal funding.

As I noted during floor consideration of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013, as well as during numerous other authorization and appropriation bills this Congress, to see real progress in the programs we establish, we need also to provide the critical funding to our Federal agencies that implement these programs.

Too often these days we seem driven to cut Federal spending for programs that provide a real benefit to our Nation without an awareness of the consequences of these actions. This Chamber will recognize that there are places where the Federal Government can help and should be making increased investments, such as to repair our

crumbling infrastructure or to protect our fragile natural environment. Yet later this week, I fear that we will again be asked to vote on an appropriations package for the Federal Government that woefully underfunds critical investments in our Nation's future, from building the transportation infrastructure that will keep our country competitive into the next century, to investing in the water-related infrastructure that protects communities, families, and businesses, to making targeted improvements to our natural environment to ensure the protection of human, economic, and environmental health for generations to come.

We need to do better. We need to recognize that the expenditure of Federal money to invest in our Nation is not inherently a bad thing. We need to understand that the Federal Government needs to be an active partner in addressing many of the complex challenges facing our States, our communities, and our everyday lives. And we need to support the missions of those Federal agencies we have charged with ensuring the long-term economic and environmental health of this Nation. These are only some of the ongoing challenges that face this Nation, and we need a Congress that is serious about taking on the hard questions and making the right investments, not only for our own lives and livelihoods, but for those generations of Americans to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the bipartisan sponsors of this legislation for ensuring that the new authorization shows some willingness to provide robust funding for these restoration efforts rather than simply and mindlessly cutting these programs. I urge support of H.R. 5764.

I reserve the balance of my time.

DECEMBER 8, 2014.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE GREAT LAKES HOUSE DELEGATION: We are writing to convey our support for H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014, bipartisan legislation recently introduced by Representatives David Joyce, Louise Slaughter, Sander Levin, and John Dingell. We understand the bill may be considered this week under suspension of the rules and urge you to support it. This is a top regional priority for the Great Lakes states, local communities, tribes, conservation organizations, and business and industry.

This legislation provides formal authorization for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), an ambitious regional restoration program for the Great Lakes that is cleaning up degraded "toxic hotspots," halting Asian carp and other invasive species, and preventing polluted runoff that closes beaches and causes harmful algal blooms. It provides a solid legislative platform to ensure our region continues to work together successfully to implement a science-based and outcomes-focused plan of action for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes.

The bill directs U.S. EPA to collaborate with the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and state and local partners to select the best combination of projects to protect and restore the Great Lakes. It focuses on restoration projects that can be implemented quickly, will achieve environmental outcomes outlined in the new Great Lakes

Action Plan and Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and that leverage other funding.

Passing this legislation now will clarify the focus and accountability of our restoration efforts and ensure the program continues to achieve effective results. We recently worked with federal agencies to re-write the GL RI Action Plan, which lays out our region's restoration goals and objectives, and revises how we measure progress. The new plan addresses the Government Accountability Office's review, which found no major deficiencies in the GLRI program.

Restoring the Great Lakes creates jobs, stimulates economic development, and protects fresh drinking water for 30 million people. The lakes currently generate over 1.5 million jobs and \$60 billion in wages annually, and provide the foundation for a \$30 billion tourism economy. Clearly, the Great Lakes are an invaluable resource worth restoring and protecting, and this legislation is critical to our collective efforts toward this end. We urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

TIM EDER,
*Executive Director,
Great Lakes Com-
mission.*

TODD AMBS,
*Director, Healing Our
Waters—Great Lakes
Coalition.*

WILLIAM TAYLOR,
*Chair, U.S. Section,
Great Lakes Fishery
Commission.*

DAVID A. ULLRICH,
*Executive Director,
Great Lakes and St.
Lawrence Cities Ini-
tiative.*

JANE A. TENEYCK,
*Executive Director,
Chippewa Ottawa
Resource Authority.*

KATHRYN A. BUCKNER,
*President, Council of
Great Lakes Indus-
tries.*

ED WOLKING, JR.,
*Executive Director,
Great Lakes Metro
Chambers Coalition.*

HEALING OUR WATERS—
GREAT LAKES COALITION,
December 8, 2014.

House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the Healing Our Waters—Great Lakes Coalition, we write today to ask you to vote for H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014. The legislation is vital in the ongoing effort to restore the Great Lakes, which supplies drinking water to more than 30 million people.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act helps achieve our region's restoration goals by formally authorizing the popular Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a successful, bipartisan response to protecting and restoring one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water. Our region's recent restoration efforts started when President George W. Bush asked for a restoration blueprint, which the 1,500 stakeholders that were a part of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration produced in 2005. President Barack Obama continued this effort when he recommended funding in his fiscal year 2010 budget for the implementation of this strategy through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The GLRI is an innovative, action-oriented approach targeting the region's biggest environmental problems like invasive species, legacy contaminants, habitat loss,

and polluted runoff from farms and cities. It allows the Environmental Protection Agency to enter into interagency agreements with other federal agencies to utilize their existing competitive grant programs allowing the region to quickly and effectively undertake restoration work throughout the Great Lakes basin.

Because of this coordinated effort between federal agencies and non-federal stakeholders, we are seeing tremendous results. Since 2010, three U.S. Areas of Concern (Presque Isle Bay, PA; Deer Lake, MI; White Lake, MI) have been cleaned up and taken off the list of contaminated sites. Before the GLRI, only one site had been delisted since 1987 (Oswego River, NY). The management actions necessary for delisting the Sheboygan River (WI), Waukegan Harbor (IL), and Ashtabula River (OH) AOCs have also been completed. The GLRI has accelerated the cleanup of regional toxic sites. Between 2010 through 2013, the GLRI removed 42 impairments—from drinking water restrictions to swimming advisories—from 17 contaminated sites. The number of so-called "beneficial use impairments" that have been removed across the region has quadrupled under the GLRI. In fact, more impairments have been removed since the GLRI began in 2010 than in the preceding 22 years.

In addition, from 2004 to 2009, the Great Lakes region was the only area in the country to show a gain in wetland acreage. Now the GLRI is building on that foundation with a goal to restore one million acres in the basin. So far, the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (among others) restored, protected, or enhanced over 115,000 acres of wetlands and other habitat. More than 1,900 river miles were cleared of over 250 barriers resulting in fish swimming into stretches of river where they had been absent for decades. Based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service monitoring, GLRI-sponsored actions are increasing self-sustaining populations of native species important to the Great Lakes, like lake sturgeon—as well as supporting the region's multi-billion dollar outdoor recreation economy. For example, efforts in the Saginaw River watershed have contributed to the now self-sustaining wall-eye population in Saginaw Bay, MI.

However, there is still much work that needs to be done. Aging sewers, invasive species, and toxic pollutants are just a few of the pervasive threats that impact the region, endangering human and wildlife health, lowering property values, and hurting the region's economy. Without support restoration efforts will slow allowing problems to get worse and more expensive to solve. Ultimately, reducing investment in the Great Lakes won't save money—it will cost the nation more. As the source of drinking water for 30 million people, the nation cannot afford to stop protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

We hope you will vote for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014. This bill is important to ensure accountability, transparency, and results. It sets a permanent programmatic stage from which the GLRI can continue to succeed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Chad Lord, our coalition's policy director.

Sincerely,

LYNN MCCLURE,
Co-chair.

KRISTY MEYER,
Co-chair.

NICOLE BARKER,
Co-chair.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. JOYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my full support for H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2014. The reason is simple, Mr. Speaker: the Great Lakes are a national and economic treasure in the U.S., which contains one-fifth of the world's freshwater supply.

The GLRI is the most important, significant, and productive effort to date to protect these five lakes that provide drinking water and jobs for millions of people. It is crucial that the GLRI be formally authorized at \$300 million for the next 5 years to ensure that the great work already done is not lost.

□ 1430

This does not add any new spending and will continue to make sure necessary resources are available.

GLRI is an action-oriented, results-driven initiative targeting the most significant problems within the basin, including invasive species like Asian carp, toxins and contaminated sediment, nonpoint source pollution, and habitat and wildlife protection and restoration.

The programs are working, and the GLRI will ensure we have healthy Great Lakes, while boosting the economies in this vast region.

The Great Lakes are one of the jewels of the United States. When I talk about the Great Lakes to people who are not from the region, I make sure to point out their benefits are twofold: economic and environmental.

Let me give you a couple of statistics that will illustrate how important it is that we make this critical investment.

Six quadrillion. We are not talking about a little freshwater here. There are six quadrillion gallons of water in the Great Lakes basin. Let's let that number soak in.

\$62 billion. The Great Lakes basin supports a diverse range of industries and small businesses, and that is how much is generated by wages in the industry in the Great Lakes region.

Thirty million. That is the number of people who live within the Great Lakes basin and rely on them for safe drinking water, transportation, and recreation.

\$14 million. That is how much money in GLRI funds that was spent to clean up the Ashtabula River, in the heart of my district. Because these programs are working, I was able to see the Ashtabula River taken off the EPA's designated list of places that are "areas of concern" a couple of months ago. That is a really big deal for northeast Ohio.

1.5 million. That is how many jobs are directly related to the Great Lakes.

3,500. That is how many diverse species of plant and wildlife call the Great Lakes home.

Finally, the last and most telling statistic for you today is the number three. Three is the number of days that residents of Toledo in my home State of Ohio were unable to drink the water in their homes because of the harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie. The water

in Lake Erie was literally green. That is unacceptable.

This is a clear reason why we need to pass this bill and authorize GLRI—with bipartisan support—because no American should ever be afraid to drink the tap water in their own home.

Supporting this bill will lock in the programs that work to ensure our Nation's largest bodies of freshwater are protected and will continue to be protected in the future.

Before I close, I want to thank Chairman SHUSTER, as well as my colleague and dear friend from Ohio, Representative GIBBS, and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for their help on this bill. We have spent a lot of time working on this issue, and I am very grateful for their assistance.

I would also like to thank Majority Leader MCCARTHY for scheduling this important bill for floor consideration.

I am very excited the GLRI enjoys so much bipartisan support from Great Lakes Members here in Congress. When we make these investments in our Great Lakes, results are produced for our constituents, the environment, and businesses throughout the vast region.

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. JOYCE. It is critical we formally authorize GLRI so that people who live in Toledo or Mentor or Conneaut in my district don't have to worry about days ahead without fresh drinking water.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), who is a cosponsor of the bill.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member Mr. BISHOP for yielding and thank the chairman Mr. GIBBS, and, obviously, my colleague Mr. JOYCE, who just spoke.

I rise in support strong support of H.R. 5764.

Since the creation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, our Nation has made great strides in reviving and protecting our Nation's greatest freshwater treasure, our Great Lakes.

Still, despite progress, this past summer presented a stark reminder of the unfinished challenge, as a toxic algal bloom shut off the fresh drinking water to over half a million people and businesses in Ohio and Michigan for 3 days across Lake Erie's western basin, the largest watershed in the entire Great Lakes.

The public, though shocked, was orderly and beneficent. We didn't have riots or civil disorder.

During that 3-day crisis, astoundingly, we learned communities along the lake were not equipped locally to test the water so vital to their own survival. Two precious days were wasted sending and resending vials and samples 5 hours away to EPA labs, and then back and then back again. This simply is unacceptable. Proper testing equipment on Lake Erie is fundamental, fundamental to a response

time commensurate with the challenge that remains before us.

The Lake Erie community needs its own water testing equipment and certified lab. Already local universities and health departments have been assembling key components of necessary equipment for a certified lab. It is incumbent upon the GLRI to help us find a way to provide the remaining \$147,000—not million—\$147,000 we have to deliver.

To date, the lack of response from our Federal agencies is astounding. Lake Erie's water quality is an emergency due to the toxic algal blooms.

When we see Federal agencies diverting hundreds of millions of dollars abroad to dams in Afghanistan to deliver freshwater, yet somehow our own EPA can't identify funds to protect the American people who live along Lake Erie and Lake Michigan and draw their life source from it, I stand aghast.

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman another 1½ minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. When our water crisis occurred, the U.S. EPA didn't even show up or have personnel on the ground. I asked, "Where is Homeland Security funding to help during the crisis and after?" No show. As far as I am concerned, they are asleep at the wheel. Wake up.

As we prepare for a new spring thaw and the increasing rains that will come, feeding the algal blooms, the GLRI presents the hope that I still have that a solution can be found to counter the agency dithering that our region has experienced throughout this harrowing environmental crisis.

Surely, America can do better. I really think the chairman Mr. GIBBS, from the State of Ohio, and my dear colleague Mr. JOYCE, from the State of Ohio, they live at the other end of the lake, but they get the problem. God bless you. And I thank the ranking member, Mr. BISHOP from the east coast, who understands how important freshwater is to sustain life in this country. It shouldn't be this hard.

Thank you so very much for this bill. I rise in strong support.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio, but I would also like to thank a lady and a Member, whom I have begun to call our "lady of our lakes." Ms. KAPTUR, thank you so much for speaking out the way you do about the Great Lakes, and also Mr. JOYCE, a very good colleague and a friend, because we all understand what it is that makes the Great Lakes great. I think that is the whole point of what we are talking about. This is a gift from God.

Now, you have heard Mr. JOYCE talk about some of the statistics. But when you think about it, if you just close

your eyes for 1 minute and visualize in your mind's eye the continental United States, the land mass. The volume of freshwater contained in our Great Lakes would cover that land mass by 9½ to 10 feet. It is an incredible amount of water. But, more importantly, it is an incredible gift from God. We have to protect this area. Why would we not?

The statistics that we talk about are overwhelming. We thank a lot of people for being involved in this. But do you know who I want to thank more than anybody else? The hardworking American taxpayers. By our Constitution, we are granted the authority to tax them, but we are also given the responsibility to spend their money the right way. Why would we have a situation where we can't imagine that we would fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative? It just doesn't make sense.

One-fifth of the world's freshwater, not one-fifth of Pennsylvania, not one-fifth of the United States, not one-fifth of North America, but one-fifth of the world's freshwater resides in our Great Lakes. I would suggest to people that talk about energy, you can go a lot longer without oil than you can without drinking water. We have an opportunity to do something that just makes sense to each and every one of us. We can get this done.

If I may, just for a minute, to paraphrase Luke 12:48:

To whom much is given, much is required.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this is not an option, this is a moral obligation on behalf of the people of this great country to look at one of the assets that we have, a gift from God, and make sure that we preserve it for future generations.

I thank both gentlemen from Ohio, the lady from Ohio, and everybody else who was involved in this. I especially want to do a shout-out to a young man who works in the Northeast-Midwest Coalition, a guy by the name of Sam Breene, who lives and breathes the lake's initiatives. I want to thank him for his hard work, and I want to thank everybody involved in getting this taken care of.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN), who is a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and a cosponsor of the bill.

(Mr. NOLAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, my district includes Duluth, Minnesota, the headwaters of the Great Lakes, and, of course, the magnificent North Shore. I encourage you all to come and visit the first chance you get.

I, too, rise in strong support of this important bipartisan Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and I, too, would be remiss if I didn't compliment our chairman, Mr. GIBBS, and our ranking

member, Mr. BISHOP, for bringing this legislation forward, and, of course, our chief sponsor of the legislation, DAVID JOYCE, our good Republican friend. Thank you for your leadership in convincing the Office of the President and our budget operatives around here that in this particular case we need a little bit more than what they wanted or recommended.

I would also remind my colleagues that this is not just about preservation; this is about taking responsibility for some of the neglect out of past. As I can tell you, back in Duluth, there was a time when we had to haul drinking water in for the citizens of Duluth because the water out of Lake Superior wasn't drinkable. I remember a time when the Great Lakes were so polluted they were catching on fire in some places because of neglect. So in many respects we are stepping up and we are assuming responsibility for neglect in the past.

I don't mind telling you how important it has been to us up in the Lake Superior area. We have had over 100 projects funded over the years accomplishing so many things: combating invasive species, mitigating pollution of the past, identifying toxins that represent a threat to the basin and our public health and our public safety, protecting wild rice—I am an old wild rice picker; you can't have enough good native wild rice—and protecting wildlife in general. What a difference these projects have made.

Last, but not least, I would be remiss if I didn't thank our Appropriations Committee members—MARCY KAPTUR and BETTY MCCOLLUM, in particular—for your stepping up in your leadership in this.

But there is still so much more to be done. That is why I stand here today and strongly urge my colleagues to give their full support to this important legislation.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, certainly, protecting and preserving the Great Lakes has always been a principal advocacy of mine through my entire tenure in public office and even before I came into public office. I actually grew up on the Great Lakes. My family was in the marina business. So the lakes were more than just a source of recreation for us. They put food on the table in our family. Like so many from the region, the Great Lakes are a proud part of our identity. We have heard from so many of the various States in the Great Lakes basin today the passion that we all have for these magnificent, magnificent Great Lakes.

As has been said, they generate billions of dollars each and every year through fishing, through the shipping industry, and recreational activities as well. They are 20 percent of the fresh-water drinking supply on the entire planet, quite frankly.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have not been the best stewards of these magnificent lakes, and we do owe it to future generations to help assure that they are protected and that they are preserved. One great way to do this for the Great Lakes is through this continued funding and support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that we are debating here on the floor today.

Over the years, Mr. Speaker, I have seen firsthand the impact the GLRI is having on our lakes. From dredging to beach and shoreline restoration to fighting against invasive species, these projects are critical to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes ecosystems.

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Actually, in October, I was at a place called Harsens Island in my district where I saw an effort underway to control phragmites, which is sort of an odd name. It is a huge, invasive plant that has been actually choking wetlands throughout the Great Lakes Basin, but funding through this program is eradicating them and letting Mother Nature breathe again.

Along the shoreline of the St. Clair River, GLRI funded the restoration of natural habitats, improved stormwater drainage, and improved water quality, but there is so much more to do. For example, the Clinton River, which flows through a very major metropolitan area in southeast Michigan, is in need of similar restoration projects.

We also need to look at ways that can better detect toxins in our waterways with real-time water quality monitoring systems, some of which we have in my area as it comes through Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, into Lake St. Clair, and down the Detroit River. It is not happening in Lake Erie, and it has to be part of the notification protocol there as well. We also are having some of these green-blue algae blooms in our area.

As was mentioned, these are a gift from God. God gave us these magnificent lakes that have provided us with so much, but we do need to be better stewards of them, and quite frankly, we have a lot of making up to do to Mother Nature.

Mr. Speaker, we can start that certainly today by strongly supporting H.R. 5764, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act. I certainly rise in strong support of this bill from the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE), and I urge all of my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation. I think it is good, solid bipartisan legislation that is necessary, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize today that we lose some institutional knowledge at

the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, specifically the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. Today is the last hurrah on the floor as we lose our longtime staff director, John Anderson, to the outside world.

John is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina. He joined the Memphis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in early 1970 as a biologist. Later, he moved on to the Savannah District and finally to the Army Corps of Engineers headquarters here in Washington, D.C.

John joined the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in 1999 on detail from the Corps, and he never left. In 2005, he was promoted to staff director of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

In John's more than 40 years of service to the Nation, he has in some fashion, either at the Corps level or here in Congress, been part of every single WRDA law since 1990. He is widely respected in the world of transportation and infrastructure policy and is a renowned expert in the Nation's water resources policy.

We wish John the best in his departure from Congress. He and his wife, Guimar, are the proud parents of three boys: John Alexander, Patrick, and Richard Anderson. They are also the proud grandparents of three Anderson grandchildren.

It has been a privilege to work with John Anderson in my last 4 years as the chairman of the subcommittee. I wish him well and thank him. Good luck.

I also urge support of the bill.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GIBBS. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I, too, want to add a word of both thanks and congratulations to John Anderson for his service in the Congress over a great many years. I came to see firsthand his skill and dedication when we were working so cooperatively together on passing the Water Resources Development Act of 2013. His involvement was essential.

That bill stands as one of the few substantive pieces of bipartisan legislation that this Congress has passed, and we were able to get it in done in part because of John's efforts.

I thank you, and I wish you a well-earned retirement.

Mr. GIBBS. Reclaiming my time, I would also be remiss not to say a few words about my good friend, Mr. BISHOP from Long Island, New York. It has been a privilege having you serve as my ranking member on the subcommittee for the last 4 years. I wish you well in your endeavors in the future.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I appreciate that very much.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act, and I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting for this needed legislation.

In Michigan, we're blessed to be surrounded by the Great Lakes. In so many ways, the Lakes define our state, and our region, as well. For many years, though, we did not treat them as if they were very great. For the better part of a century, the Lakes and their tributaries were polluted to the point that they were dying.

A century of environmental harm cannot be undone overnight, but we've made considerable progress. That's where the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative comes in. Through the GLRI, we are finally addressing longstanding problems, such as toxic hotspots, invasive species like the Asian carp, habitat restoration, and runoff pollution.

The GLRI was created by the Obama Administration and, since 2010, Congress has widely funded it. Now it is time for Congress to take the next step and formally authorize this vital program. Congress must remain a full partner in the restoration effort in the Great Lakes, and authorizing GLRI is the best way to do that.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of my colleagues who have worked so hard to support GLRI over the last five years, especially Representative JOYCE, LOUISE SLAUGHTER, and my good friend JOHN DINGELL. I would also like to underscore the longstanding efforts of Senator CARL LEVIN and his staff in the area of Great Lakes restoration.

As we continue to make meaningful progress on restoration of the Great Lakes, this will be a hopeful sign that other difficult environmental redemptions are also achievable. Let us move forward together today by passing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, as a co-Chair of the House Great Lakes Task Force, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5764, The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act.

This bipartisan legislation authorizes the popular Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. This program is critical to restoring and protecting the Great Lakes, which hold over 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and are the source of drinking water, jobs, and recreation for millions of Americans.

I have represented districts that span the southern coast of Lake Ontario all the way to the City of Buffalo on Lake Erie and I know first hand the special bond the people of the Great Lakes basin share with these lakes. These magnificent bodies of water are truly unique and we must do all that we can to protect these national treasures for future generations. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GIBBS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5764.

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.

RELEASE OF RESTRICTIONS, CONDITIONS, AND LIMITATIONS ON THE USE, ENCUMBRANCE, CONVEYANCE, AND CLOSURE OF THE ST. CLAIR REGIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2759) to release the City of St. Clair, Missouri, from all restrictions, conditions, and limitations on the use, encumbrance, conveyance, and closure of the St. Clair Regional Airport.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2759

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RELEASE OF RESTRICTIONS, CONDITIONS, AND LIMITATIONS ON THE USE, ENCUMBRANCE, CONVEYANCE, AND CLOSURE OF THE ST. CLAIR REGIONAL AIRPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The United States, acting through the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, shall release the City of St. Clair, Missouri, from all restrictions, conditions, and limitations on the use, encumbrance, conveyance, and closure of the St. Clair Regional Airport, as described in the most recent airport layout plan approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, to the extent such restrictions, conditions, and limitations are enforceable by the Administrator.

(b) LIMITATION.—The release under subsection (a) shall not be executed before the City of St. Clair, or its designee, transfers to the Department of Transportation of the State of Missouri—

(1) the amounts described in subsection (c), to be used for capital improvements within the meaning of airport development (as defined in section 47102(3) of title 49, United States Code) and consistent with the obligations of the Department of Transportation of the State of Missouri under the State block grant program of the Federal Aviation Administration; and

(2) for no consideration, all airport and aviation-related equipment of the St. Clair Regional Airport owned by the City of St. Clair and determined by the Department of Transportation of the State of Missouri to be salvageable for use.

(c) AMOUNTS DESCRIBED.—The amounts described in this subsection are the following:

(1) An amount equal to the fair market value for the highest and best use of the St. Clair Regional Airport property determined in good faith by an independent and qualified real estate appraiser on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) An amount equal to the unamortized portion of any Federal development grants other than land paid to the City of St. Clair for use at the St. Clair Regional Airport, which may be paid with, and shall be an allowable use of, airport revenue notwithstanding section 47107 or 47133 of title 49, United States Code.

(3) An amount equal to the airport revenues remaining in the airport account for the St. Clair Regional Airport as of the date of the enactment of this Act and otherwise due to or received by the City of St. Clair after such date of enactment pursuant to sections 47107(b) and 47133 of title 49, United States Code.

(d) REQUIREMENT TO REMOVE RUNWAY LIGHTING SYSTEM.—The Federal Aviation Administration shall remove the runway end indicator lighting system at St. Clair Regional Airport.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the applicability of—

(1) the requirements and processes under section 46319 of title 49, United States Code;

(2) the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(3) the requirements and processes under part 157 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations; or

(4) the public notice requirements under section 47107(h)(2) of title 49, United States Code.

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.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 2759.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 2759 releases the city of St. Clair, Missouri, from all restrictions, conditions, and limitations on the use, encumbrance, conveyance, and closure of the St. Clair Regional Airport.

The bill will require the city to pay fair market value for the airport property to the Missouri Department of Transportation, repay the unamortized value of Federal grants to the Missouri Department of Transportation, and transfer any remaining revenue to the Missouri Department of Transportation.

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I wish my Republican colleagues were not rushing to consider this bill without more deliberation. The other body just passed this bill last week. We have had no hearings on the bill, no committee meetings, no markups.

I understand that several general aviation groups have expressed concerns about the bill, and I would have liked the opportunity to hear from them and study their specific reservations.

Each of the Nation's federally-assisted airports is part of a system—a national system—that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Federal Government invests \$3.35 billion a year in airport improvements because each airport in the system not only drives economic growth, but also is a safe harbor for a pilot in distress.

For those reasons, the general rule is that we invest in airports, not close them; nevertheless, I understand that the airport in St. Clair, Missouri, which this bill would allow to close, presents some unique circumstances.

Although the Federal Government has invested almost \$1.1 million in the