

of the Federal system and take full advantage of these programs.

The bill creates a simple one-stop shop to get all the needed information and help school districts participate more fully in these programs. The bottom line is that the Nation's schools will, in fact, reduce their energy costs.

As it is, energy use in American K-12 schools totals \$6 billion every year, and reducing this figure can certainly save taxpayer dollars or free up funds that schools can use on things other than energy bills.

This bill, H.R. 627, has no cost since it merely sets up a system under which existing school energy efficiency programs can work better.

A similar bill was passed under suspension of the rules at the end of the last Congress, and I would hope that we can do it today, at the beginning of this Congress, so that the Senate can follow suit and get this to the President's desk.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to voice my strong support for H.R. 627, Mr. CARTWRIGHT's Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act. This is a great bill that will provide a coordinated structure for our Nation's schools to help them better navigate available Federal programs and financing options.

Across the country, K-12 school districts spend literally billions of dollars on their energy bills each year while an estimated 14 million American children attend deteriorating public schools. By upgrading these systems, we can increase efficiency and focus school funding to achieve better educational outcomes.

This legislation passed the House previously with broad bipartisan support, and I urge everybody to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT), the author of the bill.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership and Chairman UPTON for bringing this bill up under suspension today, and I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for yielding me the time.

I thank the entire Energy and Commerce Committee, which, once again, voted unanimously in committee in favor of this bill—a bill that has passed the House twice under suspension in each of the past two Congresses. Both times it passed during the final days of the Congress, and the Senate did not have a chance to take the bill up. I am glad the House is considering it now in plenty of time for the Senate to consider it and act.

I would also thank Congressman PETER WELCH from Vermont for his leadership on the bill. It is no secret that he is one of the great champions

in the House on the issue of energy efficiency, and it has been my pleasure to work with him.

Mr. Speaker, so many schools across the country are in need of upgrades and improvements to their facilities. In its most recent 2017 Infrastructure Report Card, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the condition of our Nation's schools a grade of D-plus.

As school administrators undertake badly needed improvements, they have an opportunity to substantially improve their facilities' energy efficiency, producing benefits for both the environment and the economy. In reducing their energy bills, schools can put the savings to use on other educational priorities.

According to the EPA and the Department of Energy, K-12 school districts nationwide spend approximately \$8 billion on their energy bills every year—second only to personnel costs—exceeding the costs of textbooks and supplies. An estimated \$2 billion of that cost could be saved by improving energy efficiency, an amount that could pay for, for example, 40 million textbooks.

Energy expenses are one of the few costs that can be reduced while at the same time improving classroom instruction. In fact, high-performance schools can lower a school district's operating costs by up to 30 percent.

There are numerous Federal initiatives already available to schools to help them become more energy efficient, but these programs are spread across the Federal Government, making it challenging, time consuming, and costly for schools to identify and take full advantage of these programs.

In addition, schools can use several different general purpose programs for energy efficiency projects if they know how to locate and apply for them.

Introduced in the Senate as S. 383 by Senator SUSAN COLLINS, this bipartisan Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act aims to provide a coordinating structure for busy school administrators to help them better navigate available Federal programs and financing options.

This legislation does not spend an additional dime and keeps its decision-making authority with the States, the school boards, and local officials.

This bill establishes a clearinghouse through the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, which will disseminate information on Federal programs and financing mechanisms that may be used to develop energy efficiency, distributed generation, and energy retrofitting projects for schools.

The bill also directs the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to coordinate with Federal agencies and develop an outreach effort to streamline communications and promote available Federal programs. Such outreach may include a single website where school officials can learn more about the relevant programs.

Overburdened school administrators should not have to spend hours and

hours wading through the Federal bureaucracy as they look for ways to improve energy efficiency. This common-sense legislation will ensure that schools can more easily take advantage of existing energy efficiency programs.

It is a strategic and cost-saving investment to relieve the fiscal pressure felt by school districts across the country, supported by overburdened homeowners, while bringing us closer to energy security in America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this great, bipartisan bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. 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 Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 627.

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.

□ 1600

EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT NUMBERED 12642

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 951) to extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 951

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the time period specified in section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) that would otherwise apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project numbered 12642, the Commission may, at the request of the licensee for the project, and after reasonable notice, in accordance with the good faith, due diligence, and public interest requirements of that section and the Commission's procedures under that section, extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence the construction of the project for up to 3 consecutive 2-year periods from the date of the expiration of the extension originally issued by the Commission.

(b) REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.—If the period required for commencement of construction of the project described in subsection (a) has expired prior to the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission may reinstate the license effective as of the date of its expiration and the first extension authorized under subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of such expiration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. 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 material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 951, introduced by the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the distinguished chair of the Education and the Workforce Committee, authorizes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, to extend up to 6 years the time period during which construction must commence on the W. Kerr Scott Hydropower Project located on the Yadkin River in Wilkes County, North Carolina. Additionally, FERC may reinstate the construction license if it is expired.

A similar bill was passed under suspension in the last Congress, and I hope that we can pass it again today, urging the Senate to take this legislation up.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us, sponsored by the gentlewoman from North Carolina, would authorize FERC to extend for 6 years the date by which the licensee for the W. Kerr Scott Hydropower Project is required to commence construction. This is necessary because the project's licensee was not able to commence construction by the already-extended deadline of July 17, 2016.

Similar legislation authored by Ms. FOXX passed the House during the 114th Congress by a vote of 406-3. I hope my colleagues will support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Michigan (Mr. UPTON).

I rise in support of H.R. 951, a bill I authored to extend the license authorizing the Wilkesboro Hydroelectric Company's construction of its hydropower project at W. Kerr Scott Dam.

The project has required exhaustive coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and there have been delays in the review process for the design plans. As the Wilkesboro Hydroelectric Company takes steps to comply with statutory mandates and requirements by Federal regulators, the shot clock for action on breaking ground dwindles. As has often happened with these projects, delays in the review process and coordination efforts precluded the start of construction.

I ask my colleagues to support a new authorization for this project, along with the other projects the House is considering today. Furthermore, I ap-

plaud Representative MCMORRIS RODGERS and the House Energy and Commerce Committee for working on comprehensive reform legislation to address the statutory framework and FERC processes pertaining to these projects.

I am a proud supporter of our Nation's renewable energy resources. Congress should optimize the use of our Nation's clean, renewable hydropower potential by bringing regulatory and permitting certainty to the process.

Given North Carolina's growth and demand for electricity, my State needs Congress to explore every opportunity to meet our energy demands, provide for job growth, and sustain our environment. As chair of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I will work tirelessly with the other committees in the House and the Trump administration to achieve this.

I thank Chairman WALDEN, Majority Leader MCCARTHY, and former Chairman UPTON for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

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

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, this is important legislation, and I would like to think that we can pass it again this afternoon.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 951.

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.

FEDERAL POWER ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1109) to amend section 203 of the Federal Power Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1109

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

SECTION 1. CLARIFICATION OF FACILITY MERGER AUTHORIZATION.

Section 203(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 824b(a)(1)(B)) is amended by striking "such facilities or any part thereof" and inserting "such facilities, or any part thereof, of a value in excess of \$10,000,000".

SEC. 2. NOTIFICATION FOR CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.

Section 203(a) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 824b(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(7)(A) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Commission shall promulgate a rule requiring any public utility that is seeking to merge or consolidate, directly or indirectly, its facilities subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission, or any part thereof, with those of any other person, to notify the Commission of such transaction not later than 30

days after the date on which the transaction is consummated if—

"(i) such facilities, or any part thereof, are of a value in excess of \$1,000,000; and

"(ii) such public utility is not required to secure an order of the Commission under paragraph (1)(B).

"(B) In establishing any notification requirement under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize the paperwork burden resulting from the collection of information."

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendment made by section 1 shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. 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 material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 1109, is, again, a bipartisan bill introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG). It was reported by unanimous consent from the Energy and Commerce Committee. It amends the Federal Power Act with respect to the prohibition regarding mergers or consolidations by a public utility.

Any merger or consolidation of a public utility whose value exceeds \$10 million must first be authorized by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. In addition, FERC is required to promulgate a rule within 180 days that mandates any public utility seeking to merge or consolidate to notify FERC within 30 days of transaction consummation if the value of such merger or consolidation exceeds \$1 million but, in fact, is less than \$10 million.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 1109, sponsored by Representatives WALBERG and DINGELL, which would add a \$10 million threshold to trigger FERC review of a merger or consolidation. This is a significant change to current law as established through the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Obviously, FERC should not have to rely on trade publications or on word of mouth to know that merger or consolidation activity involving regulated utilities is occurring. This bill, as reported by the Energy and Commerce Committee, includes language requiring FERC to undertake a rulemaking to develop a short, simple, notification process for transactions above the \$1