

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 2734 would designate the Federal building and the United States courthouse located in Laredo, Texas, as the George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

Judge Kazen was appointed to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas by President Carter in 1979. He served as chief judge from 1996 to 2003, and assumed senior status in 2009. In March of this year, he retired from the bench.

Prior to his appointment as a Federal judge, Judge Kazen was in private practice for 14 years. Earlier in his career, he served in the United States Air Force as a captain and judge advocate. In addition, Judge Kazen has been an adjunct professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law and served as judge on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

Given Judge Kazen's service, I think it is more than fit to name this Federal building and courthouse after him.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of S. 2734 which designates the Federal building and United States courthouse located in Laredo, Texas, as the George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

I would like to commend Congressman CUELLAR, our colleague from Texas, who introduced the House companion to this bill, H.R. 5280, that also has bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), to share with us the impressive story of Judge Kazen's legal and public career.

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to thank the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) for the great leadership that she has provided in the committee and in the House also.

I also want to thank my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) for his leadership and for the great service that he has provided the country here in the U.S. Congress.

This particular bill means a lot to my district. I also want to thank, before I forget, the members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for unanimous support of this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2734, a bill which would designate the Federal courthouse located in my district at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

□ 1745

Judge Kazen was born in Laredo, Texas, on February 29—a leap year—in 1940. He received his law degree with honors from the University of Texas

School of Law in 1961. Shortly after graduation, he served a term as a brief attorney for the Texas Supreme Court and entered the United States Air Force as a JAG officer, where he was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal also.

Judge Kazen would return back to the city of Laredo in 1965, where he practiced law until he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to become a United States district judge in 1979 for the Southern District of Texas.

During his many years of service in the courtroom, he was known as an honest, humble, and dedicated individual.

He was also among the most respected judges in the State and in the country, and consistently ruled with class and fairness, all while still making time to serve numerous civic organizations throughout south Texas.

Judge Kazen recently retired after almost 40 years of service on the bench.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to honor him and say that this is an outstanding individual and a very noble individual. Dedicating this Federal building and courthouse would serve as a reminder to all of us of this great man of character who served his community and his country for so many years.

Also, I want to convey my legislative intent for this bill that the central jury assembly room on the first floor of this courthouse be known as the Marcel C. Notzon II Jury Room.

Judge Notzon was born on August 24, 1935, in Laredo. His love for the law and justice spanned a legal career over 39 years, with almost a quarter century on the bench as the United States magistrate judge for the Southern District of Texas. Judge Kazen, the man whom this building will be named after, would call Judge Notzon the “heart of the courthouse.”

Judge Notzon, who just recently passed away, will be most remembered as a portrait of a beloved and compassionate public servant and for a full life he served in accordance with the rule of law.

In particular, I want to thank Senator JOHN CORNYN and Senator CRUZ for helping to bring this bill to the floor in the Senate and successfully passing the Senate, and all my Texas colleagues, all 36 Members from Texas in the House, for also supporting this piece of legislation that would honor George P. Kazen throughout this earned gesture.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to show their support for this bill to name the Federal courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

I want to thank Ms. TITUS and Mr. BARLETTA for their work and their support, and their staff also, and the committee.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague Mr. CUELLAR for helping ex-

plain why it is even more important for us to name this building for Judge Kazen.

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

Mr. BARLETTA. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2734.

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.

PROMOTING FLOOD RISK MITIGATION ACT

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5846) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study regarding the buyout practices of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5846

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 “Promoting Flood Risk Mitigation Act”.

SEC. 2. GAO STUDY REGARDING BUYOUT PRACTICES.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section—

(1) the term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(2) the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives;

(3) the terms “buyout practice” and “buyout program” mean a practice or program, as applicable, under which the Administrator provides assistance to State and local governments so that those entities may acquire flood-damaged properties committed to open space use in perpetuity in accordance with section 404(b)(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c(b)(2));

(4) the term “eligible property owner” means a policyholder under the National Flood Insurance Program with a household income that is not more than 120 percent of the mean household income for the community in which the primary residence of the policyholder is located;

(5) the term “National Flood Insurance Program” means the program established under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.);

(6) the term “repetitive loss structure” has the meaning given the term in section 1370(a) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4101(a)); and

(7) the term “severe repetitive loss structure” has the meaning given the term in section 1366(h) of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104c(h)).

(b) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to assess—

(1) the efficacy of buyout practices, as in effect on the date on which the study is conducted; and

(2) ways to streamline the buyout practices described in paragraph (1) in order to provide more timely assistance to a larger number of State and local governments.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS AND ANALYSIS.—The study conducted under subsection (b) shall consider and analyze the following:

(1) To the extent possible, current (as of the date on which the study is conducted) and future trends with respect to repetitive loss structures and severe repetitive loss structures that are insured under the National Flood Insurance Program, including, with respect to both inland and coastal areas—

(A) changes in flood risk, flood frequency, and flood magnitude since the inception of the National Flood Insurance Program; and

(B) projections for changes in flood risk, flood frequency, and flood magnitude by 2025, 2050, and 2075.

(2) To the extent possible, buyout practices (as of the date on which the study is conducted), including—

(A) the availability of funding sources for buyout programs through various grant programs;

(B) the total number of properties acquired through buyout programs;

(C) the average length of time for a State or local government to acquire a flood-damaged property under a buyout program, with that period beginning on the date on which the State or local government, as applicable, begins participating in the buyout program;

(D) an estimate of the number of flood-damaged properties that could be acquired from willing property owners under buyout programs with the full cooperation of State and local governments;

(E) the socioeconomic status of recipients of buyouts under buyout programs; and

(F) examples of successful buyout programs, including best practices employed.

(3) Administrative, financial, or temporal constraints that may impede the timely acquisition of properties under a buyout program, including—

(A) a lack of communication or cooperation between the Administrator and the State and local governments that purchase properties under a buyout program;

(B) pressures to redevelop a property after acquiring a property through a buyout program; and

(C) a lack of adequate funding.

(4) Potential options, methods, and strategies to address the constraints identified under paragraph (3), including evaluating the feasibility of—

(A) a pilot program under which—

(i) an eligible property owner may agree, before a flood event occurs, to have the primary single-family residence of the eligible property owner purchased after the residence has been substantially damaged by a flood;

(ii) the Administrator may provide—

(I) financial assistance to State and local governments that are willing to participate in the program to purchase and acquire the properties of owners that have incurred substantial damage from a flood event; and

(II) a premium credit as an incentive to eligible property owners to agree to participate in the program;

(iii) properties that are acquired—

(I) shall be maintained as open space in accordance with section 404(b)(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c(b)(2)); and

(II) may be used for non-structural mitigation, conservation, and recreational purposes; and

(iv) not fewer than 5 and not more than 10 State and local governments shall participate; and

(B) the role that nonprofit organizations could play in making buyouts more readily

available or more efficient, similar to the role that those organizations play in the acquisition of properties for conservation purposes.

(5) The ecological, financial, and flood risk reduction benefits that buyout practices, as in effect on the date on which the study is conducted, provide, which shall—

(A) take into account the differences between inland and coastal areas; and

(B) include—

(i) examples in which ecosystem restoration and other nature-based approaches have enhanced the reduction of flood risk; and

(ii) recommendations for best practices.

(6) To the extent possible, an assessment of how the Administrator may use buyout programs to reduce future flood disaster recovery costs that are attributable to future projections of flood risk as a result of sea level rise, population changes, subsidence, and other factors.

(7) A cost-benefit analysis of mitigation and buy-out projects and programs, including an assessment of opportunities and challenges for leveraging different Federal resources and funding to maximize the value of Federal investment in disaster mitigation.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress and the Administrator a report that sets forth the analysis, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from the study conducted under subsection (b).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall detail the feasibility of the Administrator establishing, and the processes required for the Administrator to establish, an alternative buyout program, such as the pilot program described in subsection (c)(4)(A).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. 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 materials on H.R. 5846, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5846, as amended, the Promoting Flood Risk Mitigation Act, requires the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study and issue a report to Congress regarding the flood buyout practices of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The removal of homes and buildings that have been repeatedly flooded to avoid future disaster damages and losses is a critical mitigation technique.

These mitigation measures not only save lives but also reduce disaster costs by minimizing the risk of future damage from disasters. Studies have shown that for every \$1 invested in mitigation, there is a potential savings of \$4 to \$8, because of damages avoided.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5846, the Promoting Flood Risk Mitigation Act, as amended.

This bill was brought to us by my colleague from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

The bill requires the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of the efficacy of buyouts of flood-prone property acquired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and examine ways to streamline funding to provide more timely assistance to a larger number of State and local governments.

One only needs to look at last year's hurricane season to see the devastating impacts of these intense storms that were caused by climate change and what they did to our communities. Unfortunately for many residents, the damage and destruction caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria were not occurring for the first time but for a second or third time. These homes have been flooded and then had to be repaired with Federal assistance.

In order to stop this endless repairing and rebuilding of homes in floodplain areas, we must find ways to encourage more homeowners to agree to having their homes bought out, as well as ways to encourage State and local governments to purchase more of these properties.

The bill before you requires the GAO to assess the feasibility of a pilot program that, in exchange for a credit on their flood insurance premiums, property owners would be able to agree, before a flood occurs, to have their residence bought out if their residence is later substantially damaged by flood. The study would also examine the role that nonprofit organizations could play in making buyouts more readily available and more efficient.

We must stop the cycle of destroy, rebuild, destroy, rebuild. This study is a good first step to assess the benefits of buyouts and the feasibility of potential solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), who is the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to further discuss this.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member and the gentlewoman from Nevada from the committee of jurisdiction on this issue.

During the markup of the National Flood Insurance Program, a number of us suggested that perhaps there is a way to help this bankrupt program save substantial funds. Right now, the program is \$20 billion in debt, and we have a temporary extension from the March omnibus that expires in July.

The issue is that 2 percent of the properties in America have accounted for 24 percent of the spending by the National Flood Insurance Program. More than 30,000 of them have flooded five times each and been rebuilt by the

bankrupt Federal Flood Insurance Program. Some have flooded more than 30 times.

This is insanity, that we would keep rebuilding in these flood-prone areas, rebuilding, rebuilding, rebuilding, and piling up debt and raising the insurance premiums for everybody else on the program who presents way less risk.

So we decided that a way to go would be to provide a significant incentive to these people, and the incentive would be that they would have an agreed-upon contract with FEMA to purchase their property at pre-flood market value, and they would also get a discount on their Federal flood insurance. So they get the discount on the insurance and have entered into an agreement to sell the property to FEMA at the full market price. FEMA would remove the structures, and it would be turned into open space that would continue to flood repeatedly, but we wouldn't have to pay anything to rebuild it.

We proposed that. The House Republicans said, oh, they thought it would be too expensive. We don't know if it would be too expensive. It is 2 percent and 24 percent of the costs. I don't think it is going to be more expensive. I think it is going to save a heck of a lot of money.

So this bill would have the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, study this proposal and set up a pilot program to see if, indeed, it would facilitate cost savings and avoid the repeated rebuilding of flood-prone structures and have willing takers on the other side.

The other real incentive is that, if someone has finally tired of it the fifth time their house was flooded and they want out, that process now takes 2 to 5 years and involves a whole lot of negotiations over value, pre-flood value, and all that sort of thing. Here you get an agreed-upon pre-flood value; you get a discount on your flood insurance; and you just walk away. FEMA will take care of the rest, the removal of the rubble and turning that into open space.

So I think this would be one thing we need to do to help the Federal Flood Insurance Program, which is critical. Thirty-four thousand people in my State have it. I have had Federal insurance; I don't have it anymore. But this is a critical program for many, many people who are only very, very occasionally going to be flooded, but they can't get a mortgage unless they have flood insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend this bill strongly to my colleagues.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his work on this bill. I thank the gentlewoman from Nevada for her work on this bill. It is a bipartisan bill because it makes common sense. So whether it is DEFAZIO or BLUMENAUER or DUFFY—go down the list of

different people who have worked on it—they have worked on something that makes eminent commonsense, and I want to thank them for their efforts.

The saying is: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

But the corollary to that is: If it is broken, fix it.

What we have just heard are any number of different conversations about the degree to which the buyout program is not just a little bit broken but a whole lot broken.

First off, just at an individual level, it captures people in a hamster wheel that they can never get out of. If you look at the average buyout time, it is about 5 years. In that 5-year time period, people are stuck there waiting and waiting and waiting as their house, in many cases, refloods.

I have been to Shadowmoss in the West Ashley section of Charleston. I remember going in there after a flood. Those people who had a second story had carried stuff up to the second story. Those who didn't were just dealing with the flooding as it occurred on the first floor. But they had been repeatedly flooded.

So at an individual level, this makes sense for the remedy that it offers an individual, so they are not stuck in a house that is repeatedly flooding, as they are trapped in dealing with that.

It makes sense based on what Mother Nature is telling us.

My colleague from Nevada mentioned this notion of climate change. I don't know exactly what is going on, but I know that in Charleston, South Carolina, if you compare the 1950s with the present day, there is 10 times more flooding in what they call king tides, and it has become regular. Something is going on out there that says this buyout program needs to be adjusted, and it needs to be adjusted now.

The final point I would make is that this makes, as has been registered thus far, a whole lot of sense for the taxpayer, because if you look at the numbers, again, 30,000 homes in America have been flooded five or more times with substantial consequence to the taxpayer. We are talking about \$5.5 billion being spent by the taxpayer in rebuilding and repairing. Destroy and repair is the term my colleague from Nevada used. The destroy-and-repair, destroy-and-repair cycle is destructive for the taxpayer.

It is for that reason that everybody from the State floodplain managers to the National Association of Realtors to the Nature Conservancy has supported this measure. I cannot endorse it enough, and I thank the gentleman for his work on it.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I, once again, urge passage of this legislation and all the bills that we have brought before you today from this subcommittee.

I want to thank our chairman, Mr. BARLETTA, for working with us across the aisle on these bipartisan bills.

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

□ 1800

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 5846, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5846, 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.

REINSTATING AND EXTENDING DEADLINE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT INVOLVING GIBSON DAM

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 490) to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 490

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

SECTION 1. REINSTATEMENT AND EXTENSION OF TIME FOR FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION PROJECT INVOLVING GIBSON DAM.

(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 12478-003, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (referred to in this section as 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, and the procedures of the Commission under, that section, extend the time period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of the project for not more than 3 consecutive 2-year periods from the date of the expiration of the extension originally issued by the Commission.

(b) REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the period required for the commencement of construction of the project described in subsection (a) has expired prior to the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission may reinstate the license effective as of that date of expiration.

(2) EXTENSION.—If the Commission reinstates the license under paragraph (1), the first extension authorized under subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of that expiration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) 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.