

are schools in need of upgrades and improvements to their facilities.

In its most recent Infrastructure Report Card, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the condition of our Nation's schools a grade of D-plus.

Now, what this bill proposes are enhancements that improve the state of our schools, our economy, and our environment by implementing economically and environmentally sustainable changes so school administrators can address short-term and long-term needs. In reducing their energy bills, schools can put the savings toward other educational priorities.

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

Moreover, 43 percent of schools, according to a Department of Education survey, indicated that the poor condition of their facilities interferes with the delivery of instruction. In fact, high-performance schools can lower a school district's operating costs by up to 30 percent.

Now, 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, difficult, and costly for schools to identify and take full advantage of these programs. We are talking about harried, busy school administrators that don't have the time to dive in to do that kind of research.

These programs exist for schools to utilize them. We should make every effort to assist schools in enacting sensible upgrades that help our students learn and help our schools run smoothly and efficiently.

This bipartisan Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act aims to provide a coordinating structure for schools to help schools better navigate available Federal programs and financing options. Now, this legislation does not spend any additional money, and it keeps decisionmaking authority with the States, the school boards, and the local officials.

The bill establishes a clearinghouse through the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. The clearinghouse 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 program to streamline communications and promote available Federal programs. For example, outreach may provide a sin-

gle website where school officials can learn, with one-stop shopping, about the relevant programs.

This is commonsense legislation that will ensure that schools can more easily take advantage of energy efficiency programs. It is a strategic and cost-saving investment to relieve the fiscal pressure felt by school districts across the Nation while bringing us closer to energy security.

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

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on our side that I am aware of, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), my colleague and friend.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member; the chairman; and the sponsor of this bill, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, in persistent advocacy.

What Mr. CARTWRIGHT said really makes sense. It is pretty bad, the condition of many of our schools throughout the country. About 43 percent are in substandard condition. It has a real impact on learning, but it also has an impact on expense. It means that kids are in cold and drafty schools or it is too hot; it is one or the other.

Energy efficiency programs can make a huge difference, and there are some that are available.

As Mr. CARTWRIGHT said, the teachers and the principals want to focus on instruction and taking care of the kids. They don't have time to manage and investigate what are all of the programs out there that may allow them to rehab their schools.

This allows the Secretary to essentially provide a blueprint so that, whether you are in a small town like Norwich, Vermont, where I am from, where we have got a population of about 3,000, or you are in an urban district in the middle of Chicago, you are going to be able to get the information you need without absorbing a lot of staff time.

And then, by the way, kids are getting involved in this question of climate change. This is a big deal because, at our schools and our high schools, there is a lot of leadership that is saying we have got an obligation to protect our planet. What is going to happen when we embrace energy efficiency on a large scale but start locally is that it is going to reduce carbon emissions.

In fact, when we passed the Waxman-Markey bill in the House—it didn't get through the Senate—where the goal was 80 percent carbon reductions by 2050, 40 percent of those carbon reductions were coming from energy efficiency.

It is what Mr. TONKO says. It is our fuel of choice. It is the cheapest way to reduce carbon emissions.

The other thing is, every time you are doing energy efficiency, it means local tradesmen and -women are doing

the work. So it is those kids who are going to have a warmer or a cooler school, and it is their moms and dads who are going to be doing the work to make that happen. So this really makes a lot of sense.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsor of this legislation and leadership on the committee for their work in bringing it forward.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I encourage our colleagues to support this measure. Obviously, H.R. 762 enables us to make certain that we target wastefulness and energy efficiency. It is a good way to make certain that resources that can be committed to education are not wasted through inefficient use of energy—a good, strong message for the development of our children.

So it is a great bill. I applaud Representative CARTWRIGHT and his co-sponsors for moving us forward and ask that our colleagues support this measure.

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 New York (Mr. TONKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 762.

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.

□ 1615

RESPONSIBLE DISPOSAL REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 347) to extend the authorization of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 relating to the disposal site in Mesa County, Colorado.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 347

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 "Responsible Disposal Reauthorization Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION.

Section 112(a)(1)(B) of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 7922(a)(1)(B)) is amended by striking "September 30, 2023" and inserting "September 30, 2031".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TONKO. 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. 347.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, last September the House approved an identical bill, H.R. 2278, in the 115th Congress by a voice vote. Unfortunately, that bill did not move in the Senate, so we are back to reconsider H.R. 347, introduced by Mr. TIPTON and cosponsored by my Energy and Commerce colleague, Ms. DEGETTE.

The Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act established a process for remediating inactive uranium-ore processing sites, such as the one in Grand Junction, Colorado.

To protect public health and safety from potential risks, uranium mill tailings must be disposed at a site that is licensed and that meets standards established by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The continued operation of the Cheney Disposal Cell is critical. Last year, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provided the following for the RECORD: "Given that this is the only DOE uranium mill tailings disposal site left in the country, it is critical that this facility remains open to receive and dispose of the uranium mill tailings that are discovered in our communities. This action will ensure the continued protection of human health and the environment."

The cell receives approximately 2,700 cubic yards of additional waste per year, and has sufficient space to receive an estimated 235,000 cubic yards, which represents 86 more years of operation at current rates.

H.R. 347 would authorize the Department of Energy to continue to operate the Cheney Disposal Cell through September 2048 or until it is filled to capacity. Currently, DOE is authorized to operate this cell through September 2023.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good, bipartisan bill, and I hope we can move it forward today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) will control the time for the minority.

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, first, with apologies to our official reporter, and directed at you, "let the good times roll," "laissez les bons temps rouler."

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 347, the Responsible Disposal Reauthorization Act of 2019, was introduced by our Colorado colleague, SCOTT TIPTON, and cosponsored by my Energy and Commerce

Committee colleague from Colorado, DIANA DEGETTE.

H.R. 347 extends the authorization of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 site in Mesa County, Colorado. The legislation was passed by the House last September, and the bill today is identical to what we passed last year, save a change in dates.

The legislation was considered by the Subcommittee on Environment and marked up through regular order. It was reported by the full committee with a bipartisan amendment by a voice vote.

Mining and processing of uranium generates a byproduct known as uranium mill tailings. Congress passed the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act 4 years ago to establish the framework for DOE to dispose of mill tailings, which are left over from nuclear defense activities and the development of our commercial nuclear industry.

The act also authorized the Grand Junction, Colorado, site to serve as a disposal location. This is the only DOE uranium mill tailings disposal site remaining open in the Nation, so it is necessary for the final disposition of mill tailings discovered in communities.

H.R. 347 extends the site's current authorization until 2031. The extension will enable the site to plan long-term operations to protect public health and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers on my side, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON), the author of the legislation.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Illinois for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Energy's Cheney Disposal Cell in Mesa County, Colorado, is a critical component of the DOE legacy management mission to protect public health and the environment.

The cell receives radioactive waste materials that were produced decades ago during the uranium milling process. The waste materials continue to be uncovered during road construction, bridge replacement, home foundation excavation, and other construction activities in several towns in western Colorado. Once the waste materials are discovered, they must be properly disposed of at the Cheney Disposal Cell.

The authorization for the Cheney Disposal Cell expires at the end of 2023, or when the site is filled to capacity. Currently, the remaining capacity in the cell is approximately 234,000 cubic yards, therefore, an extended authorization is required. H.R. 347 would extend the authorization until 2031.

As my colleague from Illinois noted, we passed this legislation in the last

Congress, but this bill is now coming up at a critically important time. According to the Department of Energy, if the disposal cell is not reauthorized this year, DOE will have to take steps to begin to decommission the site. This means no more materials will be accepted in 2019 and we will lose a critical component of the DOE's legacy management program.

I thank my colleague from Colorado, Ms. DIANA DEGETTE, for her support on this bill, and for her leadership on the Energy and Commerce Committee for recognizing the need to bring this bill up now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 347.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I, too, for the reasons that this legislation would allow for the only disposal site of its kind in the country, it is important that we pass this important infrastructure concept, and I encourage our colleagues to support the bill.

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 New York (Mr. TONKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 347.

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.

REAUTHORIZING WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1138) to reauthorize the West Valley demonstration project, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1138

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

SECTION 1. WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 3(a) of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act (Public Law 96-368; 42 U.S.C. 2021a note) is amended by striking "\$5,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1981" and inserting "\$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2026".

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(1) the volumes, origins, and types of radioactive waste at the Western New York Service Center in West Valley, New York;

(2) what options have been identified for disposal of each such type of radioactive waste;

(3) what is known about the costs of, and timeframes for, each such option;