

RESTORE THE HARMONY WAY
BRIDGE ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3245) to transfer a bridge over the Wabash River to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3245

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 “Restore the Harmony Way Bridge Act”.

SEC. 2. TRANSFER OF BRIDGE AND LAND.

Notwithstanding any provision of the Act of April 12, 1941 (55 Stat. 140, chapter 71), not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the White County Bridge Commission shall convey, without consideration, to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority, any and all right, title, and interest of such Commission in and to the bridge across the Wabash River at or near New Harmony, Indiana, in the approaches thereto, and in land underneath or adjacent to such bridge and its approaches.

SEC. 3. REPEAL.

The Act of April 12, 1941 (55 Stat. 140, chapter 71) is repealed effective on the date that the White County Bridge Commission completes the conveyance described in section 2.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEFAZIO. 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. 3245.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3245, introduced by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON).

The legislation is very similar to a bill, H.R. 6793, which passed the House by unanimous consent during the 115th Congress but failed to achieve the consideration of the United States Senate.

H.R. 3245 conveys the Harmony Way Bridge to the New Harmony River Bridge Authority in Illinois and the New Harmony and Wabash River Bridge Authority in Indiana.

The bridge currently remains owned by the Federal Government under the White County Bridge Commission, but the commission is no longer active.

The bridge, which was constructed in 1930, connects White County, Illinois, with Posey County, Indiana, across the Wabash River. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007 but has been closed since 2012 when

an engineer’s inspection discovered structural integrity issues, which made the bridge unsafe for vehicular traffic.

This legislation allows the States of Indiana and Illinois to jointly work together to restore the Harmony Way Bridge and determine the future of this historic landmark.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman DEFAZIO for helping make this bill a bipartisan success, and I rise in support of H.R. 3245.

I really want to thank my colleague, the ranking member of the committee, Mr. GRAVES, and also our other colleague, my former boss, Congressman JOHN SHIMKUS, who allowed me to work on this project as one of his staff members back in the early 2000s.

To be able to stand on the House floor and see this solution be put forth by my other colleague from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), with the support of Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. GRAVES, and the Illinois and Indiana delegations in a very bipartisan way, it is a privilege for me to be able to manage this bill today.

Who would have thought that two kids from Christian County, Illinois, would one day stand here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and have a bipartisan bill that is going to help both the constituents of Indiana and Illinois, but that is exactly where we are today with my good friend Mr. BUCSHON, who grew up about 8 miles from where I grew up.

This bill is a long time coming. It is going to convey the Harmony Way Bridge from the Federal Government to the designated entities within the States of Illinois and Indiana. This is what the States of Illinois and Indiana have asked us for.

The bridge is currently managed by the White County Bridge Commission, which was created by Federal legislation in 1941. In 2012, this bridge was closed because of the inability of that commission to support its safety measures and to support the improvements that were necessary.

By conveying this bridge and repealing the 1941 legislation, the two States are going to work together for a new vision, which serves as a very important link between Illinois and Indiana as it crosses the Wabash River.

A companion bill has already been introduced by the four Senators from Illinois and Indiana. Last week, that bill, S. 1833, was approved by unanimous consent. Additionally, the House passed a similar bill last Congress by unanimous consent.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES), my good friend and the ranking member.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3245, and I thank Representative BUCSHON for his hard work on this important issue.

H.R. 3245 is going to enable entities within the States of Illinois and Indiana to chart a whole new course for the Harmony Way Bridge, which is closed currently.

The bridge is not only a critical link between these States, but it is also representative of that strong bond between the people of Illinois and Indiana. That connection is further demonstrated by the fact that all members of the Indiana and Illinois delegations cosponsored this bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, again, this bill is a bipartisan success story and a bistate success story.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3245, legislation sponsored by my colleague, friend, and fellow Hoosier, Dr. LARRY BUCSHON.

The Harmony Way Bridge connects Indiana to Illinois over the Wabash River. The bridge is currently managed by the White County Bridge Commission, which was created by Federal legislation in 1941.

The bridge closed in 2012 due to structural deficiencies, and current Federal law blocks local officials from taking action to repair the bridge.

I am proud to join my colleagues in both the Indiana and Illinois delegations as a cosponsor on this critical legislation.

H.R. 3245 would allow the two States to determine the future of the bridge.

Madam Speaker, supporting this bill is common sense.

A companion bill, S. 1833, was introduced by the four Senators from Indiana and Illinois and passed by unanimous consent.

Last year, the House passed a similar bill overwhelmingly. In addition, both Indiana and Illinois created State commissions to manage the bridge, and now it is our responsibility to complete the transfer.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3245 and allow the States of Illinois and Indiana, and the community residents surrounding the Harmony Way Bridge, to determine the future of this treasured landmark.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, again, I am proud to stand here next to my good friend Dr. BUCSHON, who was born in my hometown of Taylorville, Illinois, raised in Kincaid, Illinois, and went on to become a heart surgeon.

I don’t know if I would trust him operating on me, but, hey, I know a lot of patients in Indiana did.

This is a guy who promised to get things done. This project, I can tell you firsthand, was not moving anywhere until Mr. BUCSHON took the lead. This is why I am proud to be able to recognize him now and thank him very much for his support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON).

Mr. BUCSHON. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to rise today in support of H.R. 3245, the Restore the Harmony Way Bridge Act.

The Harmony Way Bridge is a local landmark and was an engineering marvel when it opened in 1930. Throughout the 20th century, the bridge connected Posey County, Indiana, and White County, Illinois, creating an access point for commerce and recreation for Hoosiers from the New Harmony and surrounding communities, as well as those from White County, Illinois.

Unfortunately, in 2012, the bridge was permanently closed due to safety concerns related to structural issues. While the community has pushed to refurbish and reopen the bridge, until now, Federal law has stood in the way.

That is why the Restore the Harmony Way Bridge Act is important. It will convey the bridge to the Indiana and Illinois bridge authorities and remove the Federal conditions set out on the bridge.

I am glad to see this bill on the floor today, and I want to give thanks to all those who have helped in the effort. First, I thank Susie Davis, from my staff, for her work on this bill. I thank Lora Arneberg from the New Harmony, Indiana, community, whose hard work has been invaluable in promoting the bridge restoration.

I also thank Indiana State Senator Jim Tomes and State Representative Wendy McNamara for their efforts at the State level.

Furthermore, I thank my colleagues: Congressman SHIMKUS, Indiana Senators BRAUN and YOUNG, Illinois Senators DURBIN and DUCKWORTH, and all the members of the Indiana and Illinois House delegations, who are all cosponsors of this bill, for helping me lead this effort in Congress and finally solving this problem.

The Restore the Harmony Way Bridge Act will breathe life once more into the Harmony Way Bridge.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me on this monumental occasion and support this bill.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, again, this is a bipartisan success story. This is an issue so many of us have worked hard on together. To see it pass today with the support of Republicans and Democrats is something that I can tell you a few years ago I didn't think would happen.

This is an opportunity, too, for me, again, to thank the hardworking people in Congressman SHIMKUS' office.

I remember learning about this project from my fellow staffer who lived right near the New Harmony Way Bridge, Holly Healy, who gave me the lowdown on why it was important to pass this legislation. That was back in 2003.

I am proud to thank Holly today for her dedication and the hard work that she has done on behalf of Congressman SHIMKUS over the years. Today is the day we finally get to make this happen so that bridge can be repaired and that bridge can be reopened.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I urge that the House do support and pass this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TORRES of California). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3245.

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.

POST-DISASTER ASSISTANCE ONLINE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1307) to provide for an online repository for certain reporting requirements for recipients of Federal disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1307

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 "Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act".

SEC. 2. SUBPAGE FOR TRANSPARENCY OF DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REPOSITORY FOR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the head of each covered Federal agency, shall establish a subpage within the website established under section 2 of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (31 U.S.C. 6101 note) to publish the information required to be made available to the public under this section.

(b) SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Not later than 30 days after the end of a calendar quarter, each covered Federal agency that made disaster assistance available to an eligible recipient during such quarter shall, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, make available to the public on the

subpage established under subsection (a) the information described in subsection (c), and ensure that any data asset of the agency is machine-readable.

(c) INFORMATION REQUIRED.—The information described in this subsection is, with respect to disaster assistance provided by the covered Federal agency—

(1) the total amount of disaster assistance provided by the agency during such quarter;

(2) the amount of disaster assistance provided by the agency that was expended or obligated to projects or activities; and

(3) a detailed list of all projects or activities for which disaster assistance dispersed by the agency was expended, obligated, or used, including—

(A) the name of the project or activity;

(B) a description of the project or activity;

(C) an evaluation of the completion status of the project or activity;

(D) any award identification number assigned to the project;

(E) the Catalog for Disaster Assistance number assigned by the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(F) the location of the project, including ZIP codes; and

(G) any reporting requirement information being collected by a covered Federal agency with respect to that agency's disaster assistance.

(d) GUIDANCE.—Each covered Federal agency, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Secretary of the Treasury, shall issue such guidance as is necessary to meet the requirements of this Act.

(e) AGREEMENT WITH PRIVATE ENTITY.—The Director, if necessary for purposes of transparency, may enter into an agreement with a private entity, including a nonprofit organization, to develop the subpage required under this section.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) COVERED FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term "covered Federal agency" means—

(A) any agency providing assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.);

(B) the Small Business Administration; and

(C) the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(2) DISASTER ASSISTANCE.—The term "disaster assistance" means any funds that are made available by the Federal Government in response to a specified natural disaster, including—

(A) any assistance provided by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration as a result of a disaster declared under section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b));

(B) any assistance provided by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for—

(i) activities authorized under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, and economic revitalization in the most impacted and distressed areas resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.); and

(ii) flood insurance coverage provided under the National Flood Insurance Program pursuant to the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.); and

(C) any assistance provided under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

(3) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—The term "eligible recipient"—