

can get through the backlog more quickly, and it can help save money, as well.

In fact, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials estimate that utilizing drones reduces the cost of infrastructure inspections by 74 percent and the time needed to conduct the inspection by 88 percent.

Not only that, but drone inspections are much safer for the workers than having a human hang under a tall bridge. It is an easy way to improve job safety.

In my home State, the Arizona Department of Transportation has been using drones for several years to inspect hard-to-reach areas on bridges, and survey near highways where falling rocks or ground movements are potential hazards.

What this bill does is simple: It gives more States, Tribes, and local governments the opportunity to use drones. It creates competitive grants to purchase, contract for services, or develop program capability for American-made, small, unmanned aircraft systems to perform critical infrastructure inspection, maintenance, operation, or repair projects. And it provides resources to train the next generation and upskill our existing workforce.

This bill has broad support from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Association of State Aviation Officials, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, and many, many others.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan bill.

□ 1500

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5315, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL AVIATION PREPAREDNESS PLAN ACT OF 2022

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 884) to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a national

aviation preparedness plan for communicable disease outbreaks, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 884

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 “National Aviation Preparedness Plan Act of 2022”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL AVIATION PREPAREDNESS PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the heads of such other Federal departments or agencies as the Secretary of Transportation considers appropriate, shall develop a national aviation preparedness plan for communicable disease outbreaks.

(b) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—The plan developed under subsection (a) shall, at a minimum—

(1) provide airports and air carriers with an adaptable and scalable framework with which to align the individual plans, including the emergency response plans, of such airports and air carriers and provide guidance as to each individual plan;

(2) improve coordination among airports, air carriers, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, other appropriate Federal entities, and State and local governments and health agencies with respect to preparing for and responding to communicable disease outbreaks;

(3) to the extent practicable, improve coordination among relevant international entities;

(4) create a process to identify appropriate personal protective equipment, if any, for covered employees to reduce the likelihood of exposure to a covered communicable disease, and thereafter issue recommendations for the equipping of such employees;

(5) create a process to identify appropriate techniques, strategies, and protective infrastructure, if any, for the cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitization of aircraft and enclosed facilities owned, operated, or used by an air carrier or airport, and thereafter issue recommendations pertaining to such techniques, strategies, and protective infrastructure;

(6) identify and assign Federal agency roles in the deployment of emerging and existing technologies and solutions to reduce covered communicable diseases in the aviation ecosystem;

(7) clearly delineate the responsibilities of the sponsors and operators of airports, air carriers, and Federal agencies in responding to a covered communicable disease;

(8) incorporate, as appropriate, the recommendations made by the Comptroller General of the United States to the Secretary of Transportation contained in the report titled “Air Travel and Communicable Diseases: Comprehensive Federal Plan Needed for U.S. Aviation System’s Preparedness”, issued in December 2015 (GAO-16-127);

(9) consider the latest peer-reviewed scientific studies that address communicable disease with respect to air transportation; and

(10) consider funding constraints.

(c) CONSULTATION.—When developing the plan under subsection (a), the Secretary of Transportation shall consult with aviation industry and labor stakeholders, including representatives of—

(1) air carriers, which shall include domestic air carriers consisting of major air car-

riers, low-cost carriers, regional air carriers and cargo carriers;

(2) airport operators, including with respect to large hub, medium hub, small hub, and nonhub commercial service airports;

(3) labor organizations that represent airline pilots, flight attendants, air carrier airport customer service representatives, and air carrier maintenance, repair, and overhaul workers;

(4) the labor organization certified under section 7111 of title 5, United States Code, as the exclusive bargaining representative of air traffic controllers of the Federal Aviation Administration;

(5) the labor organization certified under such section as the exclusive bargaining representative of airway transportation systems specialists and aviation safety inspectors of the Federal Aviation Administration;

(6) trade associations representing air carriers and airports;

(7) aircraft manufacturing companies;

(8) general aviation; and

(9) such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the plan is developed under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that includes such plan.

(e) REVIEW OF PLAN.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which a report is submitted under subsection (d), and again not later than 5 years thereafter, the Secretary shall review the plan included in such report and, after consultation with aviation industry and labor stakeholders, make changes by rule as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(f) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall conduct and submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a study assessing the national aviation preparedness plan developed under subsection (a), including—

(1) whether such plan—

(A) is responsive to any previous recommendations relating to aviation preparedness with respect to an outbreak of a covered communicable disease or global health emergency made by the Comptroller General; and

(B) meets the obligations of the United States under international conventions and treaties; and

(2) the extent to which the United States aviation system is prepared to respond to an outbreak of a covered communicable disease.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term “covered employee” means—

(A) an individual whose job duties require interaction with air carrier passengers on a regular and continuing basis and who is an employee of—

(i) an air carrier;

(ii) an air carrier contractor;

(iii) an airport; or

(iv) the Federal Government; or

(B) an air traffic controller or systems safety specialist of the Federal Aviation Administration.

(2) COVERED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.—The term “covered communicable disease” means a communicable disease that has the potential to cause a future epidemic or pandemic of infectious disease that would constitute a public health emergency of international concern as declared, after the date of enactment of this Act, by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319

of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. 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. 884, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the National Aviation Preparedness Plan Act of 2022, legislation sponsored by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN).

If there is one lesson of the coronavirus pandemic, it is that we were not prepared for a pandemic and must be prepared for the next one.

While a number of mitigation efforts were eventually implemented in aviation, they should not have taken almost a year to put in place. In fact, in 2015, the Government Accountability Office issued a recommendation to develop a national aviation preparedness plan for communicable disease outbreaks.

The Government Accountability Office has since found that had the Department of Transportation implemented such a plan, it “could have improved coordination between public health and aviation sectors during COVID-19 to address issues like passenger screening.”

H.R. 884 seeks to resolve this oversight by requiring the Department of Transportation, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security, to develop a national aviation preparedness plan.

That plan, at a minimum, would lay out the responsibilities of airports, airlines, and government entities in responding to future pandemics, improve coordination among stakeholders, and identify appropriate equipment to protect frontline aviation employees, among other things.

This means we could establish the necessary procedures and methodologies to combat pandemics prior to their onset and eliminate the confusion surrounding who should take action.

Fortunately, we have come a long way since the start of the pandemic. Vaccines are widely available, daily COVID hospitalizations and death rates have decreased, and air travel is returning to prepandemic levels.

But we could have done better. This bill, which received overwhelming bipartisan support in committee, will ensure the lessons learned from the cur-

rent pandemic are not forgotten during the next one.

For these reasons, I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 884, the National Aviation Preparedness Plan Act, responds to a 2015 Government Accountability Office recommendation and looks to establish clear roles and responsibilities among Federal agencies and air transportation operators in the event of a communicable disease outbreak.

I want to be clear that this bill only applies to future disease outbreaks, and it is intended to guarantee that the confusion we have seen among Federal agencies and air carrier operators is addressed and does not repeat itself as we saw in the past few years.

America’s aviation sector is absolutely critical to our economy. It is critical to moving travelers for business, travelers to visit family, and for tourism purposes. Goods must be transported all across the United States and the globe.

We have to make sure that we are able to limit, contain, and reduce the impact of these disease outbreaks in a timely, decisive, and coordinated manner.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LARSEN and Chairman DEFAZIO for working on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, again, I reiterate that this bill is only for future outbreaks. It only applies to future communicable disease outbreaks. What is more, it grants no additional pandemic-related authority to Federal agencies. It simply ensures there is a plan in place among U.S. carriers so they can develop a timely and decisive response plan in the event of a future outbreak.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 884, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPEDITING DISASTER RECOVERY ACT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 5774) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to ensure that unmet needs after a major disaster are met, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5774

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 “Expediting Disaster Recovery Act”.

SEC. 2. UNMET NEED ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 431. UNMET NEEDS ASSISTANCE.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—After the declaration of a major disaster, the President may direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide to the State, subject to amounts made available from appropriations, assistance necessary for meeting unmet needs as a result of such disaster.

“(b) FUNDING.—

“(1) AMOUNT OF FUNDING.—Subject to appropriations and not later than 30 days after a declaration is made under section 401, the President acting through the Administrator may allocate an amount that equals up to 10 percent of the estimated aggregate amount of the grants to be made pursuant to sections 406 and 408 for the major disaster in order to provide technical and financial assistance under this section and such set aside shall be deemed to be related to activities carried out pursuant to major disasters under this Act.

“(2) ESTIMATED AGGREGATE AMOUNT.—Not later than 180 days after each major disaster declaration pursuant to this Act, the estimated aggregate amount of grants for purposes of paragraph (1) shall be determined by the President and such estimated amount need not be reduced, increased, or changed due to variations in estimates.

“(3) NO REDUCTION IN AMOUNTS.—The amount set aside pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not reduce the amounts otherwise made available for sections 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 410, 416, and 428 under this Act.

“(c) UNMET NEEDS.—Financial assistance provided under this section may be used to provide assistance, in addition to other amounts made available under this Act, for the following unmet needs:

“(1) Disaster-related home repair and rebuilding assistance to families for permanent housing purposes, including in conjunction with eligible expenditures under section 408.

“(2) Disaster-related unmet needs of families who are unable to obtain adequate assistance from other sources.

“(3) Other services that alleviate human suffering and promote the well-being of disaster victims.

“(4) Economic and business activities (including food and agriculture) after a disaster to implement post-disaster economic recovery measures, including planning and technical assistance for long-term economic recovery plans, infrastructure improvements, business or infrastructure financing, market or industry research, and other activities authorized under a comprehensive economic development strategy.

“(d) ACCOUNTING AND FISCAL CONTROLS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after receipt of funds and every 6 months thereafter until all such funds are expended, a State shall submit a report to the Administrator that includes—

“(A) the criteria established for determining how the funds are spent;