

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the House passed this bipartisan bill on suspension in the 116th, 117th, and 118th Congresses. I look forward to the Senate taking up this bill, given how important it is with the massive natural disasters that we are seeing. I certainly hope that we in Congress fund the IT infrastructure so that we can get this done and get this done quickly.

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

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I hope we can continue to show support for this commonsense accountability measure. It is going to help improve transparency for Federal disaster spending.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 153.

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. GRAVES. 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.

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES TO WIDEN ELECTRICAL RESILIENCE ACT OF 2025

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 164) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize Federal agencies to provide certain essential assistance for hazard mitigation for electric utilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 164

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 Opportunities to Widen Electrical Resilience Act of 2025" or the "POWER Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. ESSENTIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 403 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(e) ELECTRIC UTILITIES.—

"(1) HAZARD MITIGATION ACTIVITIES.—An electric utility may carry out cost-effective hazard mitigation activities jointly or otherwise in combination with activities for the restoration of power carried out with assistance provided under this section.

"(2) ELIGIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—In any case in which an electric utility facility receives assistance under this section for the emergency restoration of power, the receipt of such assistance shall not render such facility ineligible for any

hazard mitigation assistance under section 406 for which such facility is otherwise eligible."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall only apply to amounts appropriated on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 164.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, following a natural disaster, electric utilities work tirelessly to restore power to their customers. However, because of FEMA's problematic interpretation of section 403 of the Stafford Act, once power is restored, even with temporary measures, electric utilities are deemed ineligible for reimbursement for permanent work and mitigation efforts.

As a result, electric utilities are treated differently from all other critical infrastructure, even though building mitigation into our power systems reduces the costs of future disasters.

H.R. 164 is going to address this by clarifying that electric utilities may build in mitigation measures that provide essential assistance and that it does not disqualify electric utilities from permanent work eligibility later in the disaster recovery process.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 164, my legislation with Representative EZELL. This bill empowers publicly owned electric utilities to implement hazard mitigation improvements during disaster recovery.

When disasters strike, they leave a trail of destruction, including damaged energy infrastructure that needs to be immediately repaired to restore power. At the same time, this can present an opportunity to improve the resilience of power infrastructure to reduce the risk of outages or fires in the future.

I have spoken with many FEMA employees, and they feel like they have their hands tied because of rules that are in place that prevent them from being able to fund investments in resilience and infrastructure.

As we are seeing more extreme weather because of climate change, we need to step up and spend taxpayer dollars more efficiently and better. That

means that we have to change this law because the current law prevents FEMA from reimbursing utilities for hazard mitigation as they make temporary disaster repairs. This leads to wasted opportunities, more frequent power outages, and higher costs passed on to ratepayers.

Commonsense solutions, like H.R. 164, are more critical than ever to keep energy costs low for American families. This bill maximizes FEMA's resources and helps communities protect critical infrastructure, leading to lower costs for utilities and families in the wake of future disasters. More importantly, it allows us to use taxpayer dollars to invest in resiliency as we are seeing more extreme weather coming at us every single day.

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

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I want to publicly thank Representative HOYLE for her work on the bill. It is a great bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. EZELL).

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of H.R. 164, the POWER Act, which would allow public electric utilities to implement cost-effective hazard mitigation activities as part of power restoration.

Public power utilities are essential in ensuring our communities have access to reliable and resilient electricity, especially in the aftermath of major disasters. Current law says that if States and localities get cost reimbursements from FEMA for certain disaster recovery activities, like restoring power, then that could make them ineligible for future hazard mitigation funds. Our communities should not have to make either-or decisions when it comes to restoring critical infrastructure in the wake of natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to co-lead this bill alongside Representative HOYLE, and I encourage my colleagues to support its passage.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the costs of recovering from increasingly frequent severe weather events often raise the price of Americans' electric bills. This bill would help public power make their systems more resilient at the time of repair, increasing efficiency and cutting overall costs.

I can't think of a more important set of bills to be passing at this time as the first bills coming up on suspension. These bills invest in our infrastructure and help FEMA be more transparent and utilize taxpayer dollars more efficiently.

Again, I thank my colleague, Representative EZELL, for prioritizing and moving this bill forward.

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

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this legislation is going to provide a whole lot of needed clarity to ensure that electric utilities are not penalized

for acting quickly to restore power to those impacted by natural disasters.

This legislation passed the Chamber under suspension of the rules by voice vote last December, and I look forward to the House approving it again.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 164.

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. GRAVES. 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.

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION REAL ESTATE LEASING AUTHORITY REVOCATION ACT

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 189) to amend title 40, United States Code, to eliminate the leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 189

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 “Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act”.

SEC. 2. LEASING OF SPACE FOR SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3304 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) LEASING OF SPACE FOR SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on and after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Securities and Exchange Commission may not lease general purpose office space. The Administrator may lease such space for the Securities and Exchange Commission under section 585 and this chapter.”.

(b) LIMITATION ON STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) may not be construed to invalidate or otherwise affect a lease entered into by the Securities and Exchange Commission before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. INDEPENDENT LEASING AUTHORITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review described in subsection (b).

(b) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General shall complete a review under which the Comptroller General shall update the 2016 report of the Comptroller General (GAO-16-648) with a specific focus on the following:

(1) Updating the information included in Appendix II: Federal Entities That Reported Having Independent Leasing Authority for Domestic Offices and Warehouses of such report.

(2) Determining to what extent Federal entities with independent leasing authorities have had such authorities rescinded or amended and the number and amount of office and warehouse space such entities lease.

(3) Determining to what extent have agencies with independent leasing authority utilized the General Services Administration for leasing, including utilization of delegation of authority.

(4) Identifying progress made on implementing the recommendations in such report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 189.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2012, the Securities and Exchange Commission violated Federal law by signing a lease for 1.4 million square feet that cost taxpayers over \$566 million.

Investigations conducted by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, as well as SEC’s inspector general, found that the SEC had exceeded its authority with this lease. Investigations also found that the SEC had a history of mismanaging its leasing authority.

Recent actions taken by the SEC seem to indicate that the agency has not learned from the past. This is why I urge support of H.R. 189, which would revoke the SEC’s leasing authority for general office space and bring them in line with current leasing practices through the General Services Administration.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 189, the Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act.

This bill revokes the independent real estate leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC. Congress granted the SEC independent leasing authority in 1990, which means the SEC does not use the GSA, the General Services Administration, for its real estate needs, as many government agencies do.

While some Federal agencies have used their independent real estate leasing authority successfully, since securing their own authority, the SEC has wasted time and taxpayer dollars with failed procurements.

For example, in 2010, after the SEC leased 900,000 square feet of space in the Constitution Center building in Washington, D.C., the SEC’s own inspector general found that the SEC had overestimated the amount of space needed, attempted to eliminate competition among building owners, and violated the Antideficiency Act.

After this incident, the SEC pledged to Congress that the agency would use the GSA to handle its real estate procurements, but the SEC has yet to follow through on that pledge and has since canceled procurements, had lawsuits, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

Congresswoman NORTON introduced an identical bill during the 118th Congress. That bill, H.R. 388, passed both the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the House of Representatives on voice votes. Unfortunately, H.R. 388 was not even considered by the Senate.

It is time for Congress to return the SEC’s leasing authority to the GSA, the Federal Government’s civilian real estate arm.

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

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, which the House passed in the 117th and 118th Congresses. I thank Chairman GRAVES and Ranking Member LARSEN for bringing this bill to the floor again.

This bill would revoke the independent real estate leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission and direct the Government Accountability Office to update its 2016 report on independent real estate leasing authority in the Federal Government.

While a number of Federal agencies have independent real estate leasing authority, the SEC has a history of egregious real estate leasing practices. In 2005, the SEC disclosed that it had underbudgeted costs of approximately \$48 million for the construction of its headquarters near Union Station.

In 2007, after moving into its headquarters, the SEC shuffled its employees to different office space at a cost of over \$3 million without any cost-benefit analysis or justifiable explanation.

In 2010, the SEC conducted a deeply flawed analysis to justify the need to lease 900,000 square feet and to commit over \$500 million over 10 years, overestimating its space needs by over 300 percent.

In addition, the SEC failed to provide complete and accurate information and