

rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 452.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WATER RESOURCES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW ACT

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3427) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to review all clean water-related technical assistance authorities of the Environmental Protection 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. 3427

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 "Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act".

SEC. 2. GAO REPORT ON CLEAN WATER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall initiate a comprehensive review of all covered technical assistance.

(b) *REQUIREMENTS.*—The Comptroller General shall include in the review required under subsection (a) the following:

(1) A description of all covered technical assistance available to States, Tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations, including—

(A) the regions and populations that are served through the provision of technical assistance; and

(B) a summary of the activities and actions carried out through covered technical assistance during the 5-year period preceding this Act.

(2) A comprehensive review of how the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, through the Water Technical Assistance initiative (known as "WaterTA initiative"), identifies, selects, and partners with technical assistance providers to support communities, including—

(A) a description of the criteria, evaluation process, and contracting mechanisms used for selecting such providers;

(B) a description of the extent of coordination with State, Tribal, and regional partners in the selection and deployment of such providers;

(C) a description of how such providers are matched to meet the needs of local communities, including any pre-engagement scoping activities or community consultations;

(D) a description of how such providers identify communities in need of technical assistance, including economically distressed communities, and conduct outreach to such communities;

(E) a description of the scope and types of assistance delivered through such initiative; and

(F) a list of communities that received technical assistance support through such initiative, including the type and cost of assistance received by each such community and a summary of the outcomes associated with the provision of such assistance.

(3) An analysis of any duplication of covered technical assistance available through multiple programs of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(4) An evaluation of how the provision of covered technical assistance builds capacity in com-

munities to access other water infrastructure programs carried out by the Administrator.

(5) An assessment of the needs of economically distressed communities eligible to receive assistance under a clean water infrastructure program carried out by the Administrator that are not addressed through covered technical assistance.

(6) An evaluation of how the Administrator carries out covered technical assistance in coordination with other Federal agencies providing technical assistance related to water infrastructure.

(7) An evaluation of how covered technical assistance supports communities in understanding, identifying, and implementing alternative and cost-effective technologies and features of treatment works that achieve long-term savings and improved outcomes in addressing water quality challenges.

(c) *REPORT.*—Upon the completion of the review conducted under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report containing—

(1) the findings of such review; and

(2) any recommendations to improve covered technical assistance.

(d) *PLAN FOR COMPLIANCE.*—Not later than 90 days after the Comptroller General submits the report required under subsection (c), and annually thereafter for a period of 5 years, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a plan detailing any actions the Administrator has taken to comply with the recommendations contained in such a report.

(e) *COVERED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DEFINED.*—In this section, the term "covered technical assistance" means a technical assistance authority, initiative, or program of the Environmental Protection Agency that is related to clean water infrastructure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. FIGURES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

□ 1530

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 3427.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, my bill, H.R. 3427, the Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act, would instruct the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, to conduct a study reviewing the EPA's technical assistance programs.

Access to clean and safe water should not be determined by where you live, Mr. Speaker. During my time in Congress, I have heard from elected officials across southern Ohio about the difficulties they face navigating the Federal grant process due to budgetary constraints, insufficient time, and lack

of technical expertise. This bill would change that by helping Appalachian regions get connected to resources they need to join the modern economy.

The EPA established technical assistance programs to connect rural communities like those in my district and across the United States with experts to help them navigate the Federal funding process to obtain water infrastructure.

Unfortunately, some of these technical assistance programs have failed to provide adequate assistance, hindering communities from obtaining critical water infrastructure funding.

My bill would direct the GAO to conduct a comprehensive study reviewing how the EPA identifies, selects, and partners with technical assistance providers, and provide recommendations on how the EPA can improve these technical assistance programs.

Once concluded, the EPA must submit a plan to Congress on how it intends to reform its technical assistance programs, helping connect communities with necessary resources to build and repair critical water infrastructure.

I am proud to lead legislation that helps alleviate the struggles that rural communities face in obtaining the infrastructure needed to survive. When water infrastructure ages well past its intended lifespan, Congress should support and advocate for programs that help rural communities, not leave them behind.

I thank my friend and colleague, Representative FIGURES, for joining me in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation to help communities across the United States receive the assistance they need to obtain water infrastructure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3427, as amended, a bill which I am co-leading with my colleague from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR). I thank Congressman TAYLOR for his leadership on this issue and for recognizing the importance of this issue.

This bill directs the Government Accountability Office to review the technical assistance programs created to help underserved, rural, and Tribal communities obtain critical investment for their water infrastructure needs.

In March, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment heard testimony from witnesses across the country on how these programs are critical to economically disadvantaged communities and rural communities.

Without the seed money and discretion provided by EPA, many underserved, rural, and Tribal communities simply do not have the staff, the resources, or the capacity to even apply for Federal assistance when it is available.

Unfortunately, in its fiscal year '26 budget request, the administration proposed to virtually eliminate funding for clean water-related infrastructure projects, but it also proposes to cut the Technical Assistance for Treatment Works Grant Program by over 60 percent.

These cuts ignore the water infrastructure needs of our most vulnerable communities, which includes a large part of the communities that I have the privilege of serving in Alabama. Rural communities, Tribal, and economically distressed communities in every State need this sort of assistance.

The message from the administration to these communities is: We will no longer help you meet your critical infrastructure needs. You are on your own.

I don't think that should be the case. Mr. Speaker, many of the communities that I have the privilege to represent historically have been passed over for critical infrastructure investments, and they need these investments, communities like Prichard, Alabama, and Greenville, Alabama, who are struggling with clean water issues and infrastructure issues as we sit here today.

The technical assistance provided by the EPA to be able to affordably meet their basic clean water and drinking water needs is something that they must have.

This GAO study will help identify how EPA implements the technical assistance programs established in the Clean Water Act, as well as any essential services for economically distressed, rural, and Tribal communities that continue to go unmet through these programs.

My hope is that these findings will, again, demonstrate how critical clean water infrastructure and technical assistance investments are to struggling American communities, especially to our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3427, as amended. I urge my colleagues to do the same, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3427, the Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act, is a good government bill that would help ensure that the EPA technical assistance programs effectively connect rural communities with experts to help them access water infrastructure funding. It is a step toward equal opportunity for areas that have long been denied it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support from all of my colleagues on this 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 Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3427, 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.

COURTHOUSE AFFORDABILITY AND SPACE EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2025

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3426) to amend title 40, United States Code, to limit the construction of new courthouses under certain circumstances, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3426

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 "Courthouse Affordability and Space Efficiency Act of 2025" or the "CASE Act".

SEC. 2. REDUCING COSTS RELATED TO COURTHOUSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 33 of title 40, United States Code, as amended by this act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 3320. Reducing costs related to courthouses

"(a) LIMITATION ON NEW COURTHOUSES.—The Administrator of General Services may not commence construction of any new courthouse if—

"(1) construction has not begun on or before the date of enactment of this section; or

"(2) the design and construction of the new courthouse fails to comply, at a minimum, with the courtroom sharing requirements described in subsection (b).

"(b) COURTROOM SHARING REQUIREMENTS DEFINED.—The term 'courtroom sharing requirements' means—

"(1) in courthouses with 10 or more active district judges, 2 courtrooms per 3 active district judges, except such courthouses may contain not less than 9 courtrooms for active district judges;

"(2) in courthouses with 3 or more bankruptcy judges—

"(A) 1 courtroom per 2 bankruptcy judges;

"(B) 1 courtroom for emergency matters; and

"(C) if there is an odd number of bankruptcy judges, the number of courtrooms required pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be rounded down;

"(3) in courthouses with 3 or more senior district judges, 1 courtroom per 2 senior district judges; and

"(4) in courthouses with 3 or more magistrate judges—

"(A) 1 courtroom per 2 magistrate judges;

"(B) 1 criminal duty courtroom; and

"(C) if there is an odd number of magistrate judges, the number of courtrooms required pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be rounded down.

"(c) UNITED STATES COURTS DESIGN GUIDE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Design Guide for courthouses shall be updated to incorporate courtroom sharing requirements to the maximum extent practicable.

"(d) UTILIZATION.—If a new courthouse will add capacity in the inventory of the General Services Administration, existing space in the same courthouse complex must be fully utilized or relinquished from the inventory of the General Services Administration."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 33 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"3320. Reducing costs related to courthouses."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TAYLOR) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. FIGURES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 3426, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3426, the CASE Act, limits the size of courthouses, by directing the General Services Administration, or GSA, to only build new courthouses that accommodate courtroom sharing.

Specifically, the CASE Act codifies the judiciary's current courtroom sharing policies for magistrate, senior, and bankruptcy judges.

For large courthouses, the legislation also directs there can only be two courtrooms for every three district court judges.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, on a bipartisan basis, has conducted oversight of the Federal courthouse construction program across multiple administrations.

Historically, courthouses have been significantly overbuilt, costing the American taxpayers billions of dollars to build, operate, and maintain. In 2010, the GAO, Government Accountability Office, found that courthouses built from 2000 to 2010 were overbuilt by 3.56 million square feet, costing an additional \$800 million in addition to \$51 million annually to operate and maintain.

Despite oversight, and even at one point a moratorium on authorizing new courthouses, the courts issued an updated courthouse design guide in 2021 that did just the opposite of consolidating the judiciary's space.

A GAO review of the updated design guide revealed the changes in the design guide actually increase space in courthouses by 6 percent and will cost the taxpayer 12 percent more. The Government Accountability Office found one of the key driving forces in the overbuilding of courthouses to be the overprojection of future judges.

Proposals for new courthouses are driven not by building condition, security, or even the need for more space for current judges, but by the court's projection of future judges. The court's own methodology for prioritizing the need for a new courthouse, for example,