

Ocean Carrier Advisory Committee which will provide critical informed insight to ensure a more fair and efficient international ocean freight system.

I support this legislation, and I thank my colleague from South Dakota, Congressman JOHNSON, as well as the Democratic cosponsors of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation that will strengthen our Federal Maritime Commission and ensure that we have a competitive, effective, and efficient maritime transportation system.

I support H.R. 4183, as introduced by my colleague from South Dakota, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, whether they realize it or not, every single American benefits from having a competitive maritime marketplace. For that to be the case, you have to have a cop on the beat that understands the job, is focused on anti-competitive behavior, and is driven to make sure that the free market works in the maritime space.

Mr. Speaker, this bill pushes forward all of those goals. I urge support of 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 South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4183, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to authorize appropriations for the Federal Maritime Commission for fiscal years 2026 through 2027, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENHANCING SCIENCE, TREATMENT, AND UPKEEP OF AMERICA'S RESILIENT AND IMPORTANT ESTUARINE SYSTEMS ACT

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3962) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3962

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 "Enhancing Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems Act" or the "ESTUARIES Act".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM.

Section 320 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(B), by striking "and Pensacola and Perdido Bays, Florida" and inserting "Pensacola and Perdido Bays, Florida; and Mississippi Sound, Mississippi"; and

(2) in subsection (i)(1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "2026" and inserting "2031".

SEC. 3. INELIGIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO FISCAL YEARS 2025 AND 2026.

With respect to the amendment made by section 2(1), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency may not use for the implementation of that amendment, including, with respect to Mississippi Sound, Mississippi, convening a management conference, developing or carrying out a comprehensive conservation and management plan, or providing grants under section 320 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330)—

(1) any amounts appropriated to carry out the national estuary program under that section for fiscal year 2025; or

(2) unless the total amount appropriated to carry out that program for fiscal year 2026 is at least \$850,000 more than the total amount appropriated to carry out that program for fiscal year 2024, any amounts appropriated to carry out that program for fiscal year 2026.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Dakota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert other extraneous material in the RECORD on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3962, as amended, reauthorizes EPA's National Estuary Program until 2031. The NEP was created by Congress in 1987 as a non-regulatory program to deliver cost-shared grant money to local communities to improve water quality in coastal areas.

The NEP is a clear success story demonstrating that when Washington empowers local experts to lead in the areas they know best, the outcomes are stronger.

For every Federal dollar invested, the NEP's estuaries leverage an additional \$17 from other sources. This approach has improved water quality in estuaries nationwide without imposing new regulations.

This program was last reauthorized by President Trump. I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, particularly the diligent and hard-working Mr. FIGURES, as lead sponsor, for their work on this bill, and I urge support.

H.R. 3962, as amended, also adds the Mississippi Sound to the list for priority consideration of selection by the EPA for inclusion in the NEP.

This bill, as amended, was reported favorably out of the Transportation

and Infrastructure Committee by a vote of 57 yeas to 2 nays on September 17, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the 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 in support of H.R. 3962, as amended, the Enhancing Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems Act, more simply known as the ESTUARIES Act.

I am proud to be the lead on this bipartisan bill. I thank the co-chairs of the Estuary Caucus, Ranking Member RICK LARSEN, as well as Representatives BONAMICI, HARIDOPOLOS, and MAST, all of whom are original cosponsors of this bill.

The National Estuary Program, or NEP, is an important resource for supporting locally led efforts to restore and protect the health of our coastal estuaries nationwide. This bill reauthorizes the NEP for 5 years and adds the Mississippi Sound to the list of estuaries for priority consideration.

Reauthorization ensures continued Federal support for this critical program, which has protected vital habitats, improved water quality, and fostered regional resilience since its creation in 1987.

Protecting and restoring Mobile Bay, which is in the heart of my district, is essential to Alabama's environment, flood protection, and seafaring economy as well. Mobile Bay is now home to the deepest port in the Gulf, so protecting its surrounding estuaries is critical not just to our local economy but to our regional and national economy as well.

I will take a moment to recognize Roberta Swann, who has led the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program since 2009 and is calling it a career at the end of this year. Ranking Member LARSEN and I had the privilege of meeting with her in Mobile this past August, and her dedication to building partnerships and advancing science-based solutions is a big reason the program has been so successful in Mobile.

It could not be more fitting that, in the same year in which she celebrates 16 years of leadership and her retirement, that her Congressman has the honor of leading this reauthorization and advancing it through the House of Representatives here today.

This year, the Association of National Estuary Programs' fall meeting was held in Mobile, which is my hometown, a powerful reminder of Mobile Bay's national significance and how this program brings people together to share solutions across the country.

This program funds partnerships between the EPA, States, local governments, and community stakeholders. It is very successful in leveraging not just Federal dollars, but on average the local NEPs raise an additional \$17 for every \$1 in Federal funding, as my colleague Representative JOHNSON also noted.

These non-Federal dollars come through in kind, local, State, and private sources, which are utilized by the local program leaders in accordance with their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans. The NEP allows the locals to lead and address the water quality issues because they know best.

Projects carried out using NEP funds cover a wide range of possibilities but always keep the locals in the driver's seat. They may include protecting shoreline habitats, increasing the ecological integrity of estuaries, or building coastal resilience. Projects may also aim to improve water quality or encourage community access to coastal ecosystems.

In other instances, funds may support estuaries in a broader scope, such as supporting adjacent land acquisitions or upgrading nearby wastewater or stormwater infrastructure.

Regardless, these decisions are made locally and based on the specific NEP program and its unique location and specific needs.

Currently, there are 28 active NEP initiatives nationwide. This includes all corners of the country, from the Puget Sound in Washington to Santa Monica Bay in California, my home in Mobile, Alabama, all the way up to Casco Bay in Maine.

I will always champion efforts like the National Estuary Program, which protect and restore our critical natural resources while utilizing local knowledge and ensuring the efficient use of Federal funds.

This is a program that is working. It is popular, and it deserves our support. I urge passage of the ESTUARIES Act, as amended, and ask all my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative FIGURES for yielding.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3962, the Enhancing, Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems Act, or ESTUARIES Act.

Estuaries rank among the most productive ecosystems in the country, where freshwater meets saltwater, and entire communities benefit from that key meeting point.

Families depend on estuaries for clean water. Fishers depend on them for healthy stocks. Small businesses depend on them for tourism, recreation, and the natural beauty that draws people to our coasts. When estuaries thrive, local communities thrive. The National Estuary Program makes that possible.

For more than three decades, NEP partnerships have restored wetlands, improved water quality, reduced toxic

pollutants, strengthened fish habitat, and built natural buffers that protect homes and businesses from flooding and storm surge.

These partnerships unite scientists, local governments, Tribal nations, fishers and anglers, farmers, and community leaders around a shared plan, and those plans deliver results.

In Tillamook Bay in Oregon, in the district I am honored to represent, the NEP helped restore hundreds of acres of tidal wetland which improved salmon runs, protected dairy farms from flooding, and created new recreational corridors.

□ 1550

On the Gulf Coast, NEP projects rebuilt marshes that shield front-line communities from hurricanes. In New England, estuary programs helped revive the shellfish beds that sustain entire working waterfronts.

This bill continues the NEP's successful legacy. The ESTUARIES Act reauthorizes competitive grants from 2031 so every estuary of national significance can implement science-driven conservation, respond to emerging threats, and support long-term economic resilience.

This bill upholds a simple principle: When we give local experts the tools they need, they protect the ecosystems that protect us.

This legislation reflects a strong bipartisan, bicameral commitment to support these critical ecosystems and recognize their significance.

I thank Representative FIGURES for leading this effort. I thank, as well, Representative JOHNSON for his support. Also, I thank my fellow co-chairs of the Bipartisan Estuary Caucus for their partnership: Representatives HARIDOPOLOS, MAST, and Ranking Member LARSEN. Together we can continue decades of success in estuary restoration and resilience.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the ESTUARIES Act.

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

Mr. Speaker, to date, the National Estuary Program has restored more than 2½ million acres of coastal habitat nationwide. The 28 programs, soon to be 29 with the addition of the Mississippi Sound, and partnerships will work hard to address challenges we are all familiar with, like harmful algal blooms, coastal erosion, and runoff pollution.

Keeping our estuaries healthy means keeping our coastal communities strong. Estuaries protect these communities from flooding, store clean water, support commercial fish habitats, and provide recreational opportunities. Let's keep working together to restore and protect these essential ecosystems. Reauthorizing the national estuary program will allow us to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3962, as amended, the ESTUARIES Act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the American people can be forgiven if they are watching cable news and assume the only thing we do around here is fight, but I think the last three bills on the floor are a good example that, indeed, is not the case.

Now, let's be honest. None of these bills have been silver bullets slaying the biggest policy challenges facing our Nation, but they are real attempts at governing. The Save Our Seas Act, FMC reauthorization, and this, the ESTUARIES Act, are attempts by serious legislators, people like Mr. MAST, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. LARSEN, and Mr. FIGURES, to address real problems facing our country.

Indeed, this bill is a bipartisan attempt to reauthorize the longstanding, nonregulatory EPA grant program that does empower locals to solve these problems far more powerfully than if we just had the experts in D.C. do it.

This is a good bill. It is a continuation of a theme on the floor today of serious legislators doing serious work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of 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 South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3962, 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.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH RESEARCH PARK ACT

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2876) to confirm the use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for public purposes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2876

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 "University of Utah Research Park Act".

SEC. 2. CONFIRMATION OF USE OF CERTAIN NON-FEDERAL LAND IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, FOR VALID PUBLIC PURPOSES.

(a) CONFIRMATION OF USES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The use by the University of Utah of the land described in subsection (b) as a University research park, as approved by the letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the University of Utah dated December 10, 1970, and any modifications of the approved plan of development and management approved by the Department of the Interior prior to the date of enactment of this Act, is confirmed as a valid public purpose consistent with the requirements of the