

your caring response to one of our sea servicemembers in distress is deeply appreciated and will be long remembered.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ONDER). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WITTMAN) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

ADVANCED CAPABILITIES FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE OPERATIONS ACT

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 390) to utilize the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response to Operations project of NASA to improve aerial responses to wildfires, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 390

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 "Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations Act" or the "ACERO Act".

SEC. 2. ADVANCED CAPABILITIES FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE OPERATIONS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Administrator shall leverage NASA-developed tools and technologies to conduct research and development activities under the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations (ACERO) project, or appropriate successor project or projects, to improve aerial responses to wildfires.

(b) *GOALS.*—The research and development activities conducted under subsection (a) may include the following:

(1) *Advanced aircraft technologies and airspace management efforts to assist in the management, deconfliction, and coordination of aerial assets during wildfire response efforts.*

(2) *Information sharing and real-time data exchange for wildfire response teams.*

(3) *Development of an interoperable platform to provide situational awareness of aerial assets during wildfire response.*

(4) *Establishment of a multi-agency concept of operations, which may involve Federal, State, and local government agencies, to enable coordination of aerial activities for wildfire response.*

(c) *COLLABORATION.*—In carrying out this section, the Administrator—

(1) *may coordinate and collaborate with other Federal, State, and local government agencies, regional organizations, and commercial partners and academic institutions involved in wildfire management; and*

(2) *shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consult with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies to avoid duplication of activities.*

(d) *PROHIBITION.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Except as provided in this subsection, the Administrator may not procure an unmanned aircraft system to conduct activities described in this section if such unmanned aircraft system is manufactured or assembled by a covered foreign entity.

(2) *EXEMPTION.*—The Administrator may waive the prohibition under paragraph (1) on a case-by-case basis if the Administrator—

(A) *determines that the procurement of an unmanned aircraft system is—*

(i) *in the national interest of the United States; and*

(ii) *necessary for the sole purpose of improving aerial responses to wildfires; and*

(B) *notifies the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 30 days after a determination in the affirmative under subparagraph (A).*

(e) *ANNUAL REPORTS.*—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter until December 31, 2030, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing the activities, including results, carried out pursuant to this section. Each such report, at minimum, shall contain the following:

(1) *A description of any research and development activities.*

(2) *A description of the Administrator's activities pursuant to subsection (c).*

(3) *An identification of any topics related to improvement of aerial responses to wildfires that could benefit from further research.*

(4) *A description of any continuing efforts under this section.*

(5) *Any other information determined appropriate by the Administrator.*

(f) *DEFINITIONS.*—In this section:

(1) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(2) *COVERED FOREIGN ENTITY.*—The term "covered foreign entity" has the meaning given such term in section 1822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (Public Law 118-31).

(3) *NASA.*—The term "NASA" means the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(4) *UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.*—The term "unmanned aircraft system" has the meaning given such term in section 44801 of title 49, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 390, the bill that is now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 390, the ACERO Act, sponsored by Representatives FONG and MCCLELLAN. This important, bipartisan legislation will enhance our ability to respond to wildfires and mitigate the destruction that they cause.

Each year, wildfires burn millions of acres, threatening lives, destroying homes, and causing billions of dollars in damage. Federal agencies are increasingly turning to advanced technologies to improve wildfire detection, response, and suppression efforts.

Aerial capabilities are critical tools in combating wildfires, enabling crews to monitor fire behavior and spread, conduct suppression activities, and support ground operations. As unmanned aircraft systems continue to mature, they present new opportunities to strengthen aerial operations. Drones can map fire perimeters, assist with suppression efforts, enhance communications across large or remote areas, and even deliver equipment. In the future, some missions currently carried out by piloted helicopters may be performed by unmanned aircraft, which reduces risk to human life.

At the same time, aerial wildfire operations face significant challenges. Heavy smoke can severely limit visibility, grounding aircraft and disrupting response efforts. Rapidly changing fire behavior can complicate navigation and real-time coordination among multiple aircraft operating simultaneously. These airspace management challenges can hinder operations at the very moment decisive action is required.

NASA's Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations, or ACERO, project seeks to improve airspace management and coordination during emergency response activities. Building on prior NASA research, ACERO aims to enhance information sharing, communications, and airspace coordination while developing interoperable tools to improve situational awareness. More timely and accurate information can support safer, more effective decisionmaking and better coordination among Federal, State, and local agencies during wildfire events.

This legislation directs NASA to leverage its unique research and development expertise in aeronautics, airspace systems, and advanced technologies to further the objectives of the ACERO project in support of wildfire response.

This is a practical, forward-looking application of American innovation to protect lives, including those of our first responders. These brave men and women who risk their safety to combat wildfires deserve every available tool to bolster response capabilities and enhance operational safety.

I thank Representatives FONG and MCCLELLAN for their work to address this pressing need.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 390, the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations Act, or ACERO Act.

Destructive wildfires threaten human lives and communities around the country. Just over 1 year ago, the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires in southern California killed 31 people and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage.

In 2025, the U.S. experienced nearly 78,000 wildfires that burned more than 5 million acres. One tool we can use to prevent, mitigate, and respond to wildfires is aviation. Crewed aircraft have long been used to monitor and fight fires. Now, advanced aviation technologies and uncrewed aerial systems can advance our response to wildfires.

It is important now more than ever that crewed and uncrewed aircraft work together safely alongside ground operations. That means sharing and coordinating real-time operations information between aircraft, drone operators, and ground crews across multiple government agencies.

Here is where NASA and ACERO come in. NASA has done further research, development, and demonstration work, to use its tools and technologies for specific public safety applications, including wildfire response. The success of an initial pilot program led NASA to launch the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations project, or ACERO.

This legislation would formally codify the research and development efforts under ACERO in law. This bill directs NASA to conduct research and development activities to improve aerial responses to wildfires.

Additionally, NASA would be authorized under this bill to conduct research in areas including advanced aircraft technologies and airspace management, information sharing and real-time data exchange, and the development of an interagency coordination platform.

We need to ensure our first responders have access to the most advanced tools to respond to wildfires. This bill supports using NASA's brightest minds and cutting-edge technologies to support the safety of our communities. The ACERO Act will enable safer, more effective aerial operations for Federal, State, and local efforts on the front lines of wildfire management and response.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Mr. FONG and Ms. MCCLELLAN, for their work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 390, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, the ACERO Act promotes the development of advanced

technologies to strengthen our wildfire response efforts. NASA should leverage its unique aeronautics expertise to improve the emergency operations involving aerial assets. ACERO seeks to enhance situational awareness, coordination, and information sharing among aerial platforms, both piloted and unmanned. This bill recognizes the important work already underway and encourages NASA to continue advancing these efforts.

Again, I thank Representatives FONG and MCCLELLAN for their bipartisan leadership.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 390, 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 utilize the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response to Operations project of NASA to improve aerial responses to wildfires, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACCESSING SATELLITE CAPABILITIES TO ENABLE NEW DISCOVERIES ACT

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2600) to require the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a program to identify, evaluate, acquire, and disseminate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2600

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 "Accessing Satellite Capabilities to Enable New Discoveries Act" or the "ASCEND Act".

SEC. 2. COMMERCIAL SATELLITE DATA.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Section 60501 of title 51, United States Code, states that the goal for the Earth Science program of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to in this section as "NASA") shall be to pursue a program of Earth observations, research, and applications activities to better understand the Earth, how it supports life, and how human activities affect its ability to do so in the future.

(2) Section 50115 of title 51, United States Code, states that the Administrator of NASA shall, to the extent possible and while satisfying the scientific or educational requirements of NASA, and where appropriate, of other Federal agencies and scientific re-

searchers, acquire, where cost effective, space-based and airborne commercial Earth remote sensing data, services, distribution, and applications from a commercial provider.

(3) The Administrator of NASA established the Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition Pilot Program in 2019 to identify, validate, and acquire from commercial sources data that support the Earth science research and application goals.

(4) The Administrator of NASA has—

(A) determined that the pilot program described in paragraph (3) has been a success, as described in the final evaluation entitled "Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition Program Pilot Evaluation Report" issued in 2020;

(B) established a formal process for evaluating and onboarding new commercial vendors in such pilot program;

(C) increased the number of commercial vendors and commercial data products available through such pilot program; and

(D) expanded procurement arrangements with commercial vendors to broaden user access to provide commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery to federally funded researchers.

(b) COMMERCIAL SATELLITE DATA ACQUISITION PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 603 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 60307. Commercial satellite data acquisition program

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish within the Earth Science Division of the Science Mission Directorate a program to acquire and disseminate cost-effective and appropriate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and where appropriate, of other Federal agencies and scientific researchers to augment or complement the suite of Earth observations acquired by the Administration, other United States Government agencies, and international partners.

"(b) DATA PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY.—The terms and conditions of commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery acquisitions under the program described in subsection (a) shall not prevent—

"(1) the publication of commercial data or imagery for scientific purposes; or

"(2) the publication of information that is derived from, incorporates, or enhances the original commercial data or imagery of a vendor.

"(c) AUTHORIZATION.—In carrying out the program under this section, the Administrator may—

"(1) procure commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery from commercial vendors to advance scientific research and applications in accordance with subsection (a); and

"(2) establish or modify end-use license terms and conditions to allow for the widest possible use of procured commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery by individuals other than NASA-funded users, consistent with the goals of the program.

"(d) UNITED STATES VENDORS.—Commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery referred to in subsections (a) and (c) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be procured from United States vendors.

"(e) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives