pear industry needs greater flexibility than the act currently allows in order to respond to international markets. This bill will help the pear industry achieve increased exports and essential goals for all farmers in the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, this 65 year old law was originally intended to protect the reputation of U.S. apples and pears in foreign markets by requiring inspection and certification prior to export. Now, however, pear exporters find that the act is more of a hinderance than an asset for their exports. They wish to be able to export to all the markets willing to purchase U.S. pears. H.R. 4148 will allow U.S. farmers to increase pear exports.

Mr. Speaker, USDA supports enactment of H.R. 4148 and advises the committee that enactment of H.R. 4148 would not result in increased outlays. CBO estimates that there are no costs to H.R. 4148.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4148.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4148 which updates the Apple and Pear Export Act. For many years, as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) has explained, the act has served the very beneficial use for the two industries, but tonight the pear industry asked to be relieved from coming under that bill. The effect is to eliminate an outdated requirement for a law that worked well for many years but is now hindering further development for markets for U.S. pears.

The pear industry now believes that market opportunities will be enhanced by greater flexibility. For example, last year the sale of 200,000 cartons of pears to Russia was made possible by a January 1997 amendment to the act that allowed for the shipment of a more competitive grade of pears to that country. This bill gives greater control to the pear industry just as the Russian government has begun to privatize its economy.

Our farmers are increasingly dependent on foreign markets. It is, therefore, essential that the regulations they operate under are designed to help them compete in these markets.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this regulatory improvement which will provide our pear producers with much greater flexibility.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4148, a bill to amend the Export Apple and Pear Act. The Export Apple and Pear Act, enacted on June 10, 1933, requires that apples and pears meet certain standards prior to export in order to ensure only high quality U.S. fruit moves in foreign commerce.

Pears exported from the United States are grown almost exclusively in Oregon, California and Washington and the pear organizations in these states support this bill. U.S. pear producers and shippers recommended that pears should be dropped from the Act so that they can increase the volume of pear exports.

H.R. 4148 eliminates pears from the Act, thereby allowing U.S. exporters greater flexibility in the changing international marketplace and the opportunity to increase exports. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) believes that mandatory federal quality standards for pears are no longer needed to assure the high quality of exported pears.

USDA supports enactment of H.R. 4148 and advises the Committee that enactment of H.R. 4148 would not result in increased outlays.

CBO estimates there is no cost to H.R. 4148.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4148.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4148.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4148, the bill just adopted.

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

There was no objection.

SELECTIVE AGRICULTURAL EMBARGOES ACT OF 1998

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4647) to amend the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to require the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agricultural commodities, to provide a termination date for the embargo, to provide greater assurances for contract sanctity and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4647

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 ''Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1998''.

SEC. 2. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

The Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of title VI:

''SEC. 604. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

''(a) REPORT.—If the President takes any action, pursuant to statutory authority, to embargo the export under an export sales contract (as defined in subsection (e)) of an agricultural commodity to a country that is not part of an embargo on all exports to the country, not later than 5 days after imposing the embargo, the President shall submit a report to Congress that sets forth in detail the reasons for the embargo and specifies the proposed period during which the embargo will be effective.

''(b) APPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution approving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period beginning on the date of receipt of the report provided for in subsection (a), the embargo shall terminate on the earlier of—

''(1) a date determined by the President; or

''(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of the joint resolution approving the embargo.

''(c) DISAPPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution disapproving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period referred to in subsection (b), the embargo shall terminate on the expiration of the 100-day period.

''(d) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an embargo may take effect and continue in effect during any period in which the United States is in a state of war declared by Congress or national emergency, requiring such action, declared by the President.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

''(1) the term 'agricultural commodity' includes plant nutrient materials;

''(2) the term 'under an export sales contract' means under an export sales contract entered into before the President has transmitted to Congress notice of the proposed embargo; and

''(3) the term 'embargo' includes any prohibition or curtailment.''.

SEC. 3. ADDITION OF PLANT NUTRIENT MATERIALS TO PROTECTION OF CONTRACT SANCTITY.

Section 602(c) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5712(c)) is amended by inserting ''(including plant nutrient materials)'' after ''agricultural commodity'' each place it appears.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING).

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

Mr. Speaker, American agriculture plays a key role in the U.S. trade economy. The contributions of agricultural exports to the U.S. economy are impressive such as near record farm exports of just over $57 billion in 1997 and a positive trade balance of $21 billion among the largest of any economic sector.

Additionally the U.S. agricultural economy is more than twice as reliant on exports as the overall economy. This reliance makes agricultural specific embargoes especially painful for American farmers and ranchers.

I believe H.R. 4647 provides a vital and necessary foreign policy check and balance system. My legislation would require congressional review and approval of both houses of Congress if the President imposed an agricultural specific embargo on a foreign country. H.R. 4647 would require the President to submit a report to Congress detailing reasons for the embargo and a proposed termination date. Congress then has 100 days to approve or disapprove the embargo. If Congress approves the resolution, the embargo will terminate on the date determined by the President or 1 year after enactment, whichever occurs earliest. If a disapproving