

any monitoring or auditing of the counseling process which breaches patient confidentiality or reveals patient identity.

Funding for research in adoption counseling practices has been sporadic at best. Despite the acknowledged need to ensure pregnancy counselors can present adoption in a positive, accurate manner, funding for such studies has not materialized in proportion to the need. The Adolescent Family Life Program in the Office of Population Affairs provided for limited studies in the 1980s and follow-up studies on the effectiveness of the AFL Demonstration Programs into the early 1990s. The Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs in the 1990s proposed an objective of increasing to 90 percent the number of pregnancy counselors who are able to counsel on adoption in a complete, accurate manner. With a change of Administration, this goal never materialized as one of the priorities of the Public Health Service. Furthermore, plans for follow-up study by the Department of Health and Human Services to determine if the orientations of pregnancy counselors toward adoption had changed were dropped in 1995. Thus, research in this area is of critical importance.

Additionally, there is an understanding that this Act would include "charitable choice" language allowing faith-based organizations to compete for grants on the same basis as any other non-governmental provider without impairing the religious character of such institution, upon agreement by the White House and House Leadership on "charitable choice" language for other legislation. Under charitable choice, the Federal Government cannot discriminate against an organization that applies to receive such a grant on the basis that the organization has a religious character and programs must be implemented consistent with the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the United States Constitution. While following the agreed upon charitable choice model, the language must be crafted to conform it to the purpose and structure of this Act.

While we have come a long way, much work remains to be done. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee on this adoption priority and with members of the other body to enact this important provision into law this year, on which better and more humane Federal policies can be built in the future.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am in support of H.R. 4365, the Children's Health Act of 2000. This bill is an important first step toward improving the health and well-being of our nation's next generation.

H.R. 4365 enhances the national research infrastructure and reinforces surveillance and prevention initiatives for such conditions as fragile X, autism, asthma, juvenile arthritis, childhood malignancies, traumatic brain injury, hepatitis C, and immediate adverse reactions to vaccines. I am particularly pleased to see two provisions that reflect the tireless efforts of my colleague DIANA DEGETTE: one to advance the quest for a treatment and cure for juvenile-onset diabetes, and the second to improve pediatric organ transplant services. H.R. 4365 also strengthens existing activities to promote the use of folic acid in the prevention of certain birth defects, a measure that will reduce human suffering and save healthcare dollars.

Other highlights of the bill include the expansion of oral health and epilepsy treatment services to undeserved children, and the reau-

thorization of the Healthy Start initiative, a demonstration program established to reduce infant mortality and improve pregnancy outcomes.

Investments in America's researchers are also evidenced in H.R. 4365 through the extension of authorized appropriations to children's hospitals for the cost of graduate medical education. The bill enhances biomedical pediatric research by establishing a Pediatric Research Initiative within NIH, and centralizes the coordination of NIH research activities in the area of pediatric autoimmune disorders. Finally, to attract the most promising young research minds in the country to work on often overlooked childhood disorders, the bill contains loan repayment programs for biomedical researchers and physician-scientists.

Regrettably, however, this children's health bill is not the best we could do for America's children. A number of my colleagues had amendments that would have strengthened H.R. 4365, but the irregular procedures used by the majority for the bill blocked their consideration. These include, but are not limited to: (1) supplementing S-CHIP and Medicaid to provide seamless access to state-of-the-art prenatal services to all pregnant women; (2) assuring equal access to pediatric specialists, medically necessary drugs and clinical trials for children with rare and/or serious health problems; (3) attending to state-by-state disparities in newborn screening for genetic diseases by authorizing HHS to carry out the recommendations of the Task Force on Newborn Screening, an issue of deep concern to my colleague Mr. PALLONE; and (4) an excellent proposal by my good friend Mr. TOWNS for establishing guidelines for the administration of psychotropic medications to children under five.

An even more glaring omission from this bill is the lack of a provision to restore FDA's jurisdiction over the regulation of youth tobacco use. This issue was thoughtfully raised in legislation introduced by my colleague, Dr. GREG GANSKE, which enjoys a broad base of bipartisan support. The process by which the legislation comes before us today is characterized by the majority's determination to block any discussion of this important issue.

I have additional concerns about the difficulties that will arise for this particular Children's Health bill, H.R. 4365, as companion legislation is crafted by the Senate. Title XII, the Infant Adoption Awareness Act of 2000, has drafting problems, and leaves the bill vulnerable to a host of family planning and adoption issues that are beyond the agreed upon scope of this Children's Health bill.

I will be one of the first to suggest that adoption is an important national issue. As of March 31, 1999, America had 117,000 children in the public foster care system who are awaiting adoptive parents and a permanent place to call "home." This represents an increase of over 7,000 children since 1998, perhaps in part because Public Law 105-89, the Adoption and Safe Families Act has made more foster children, who are unable to return home safely, available for adoption. Something is wrong, however, when adoptive parents tell us that it is easier to pursue an international adoption than to adopt a special needs child from America.

If we wanted to address adoption issues, we should have considered legislation sponsored by Senator LEVIN that the Senate has passed

three times. It would facilitate the creation of a national voluntary reunion registry. In the era of genetic medicine, with its emphasis on family medical history information, this not only makes sense as public policy, but addresses the life-long psychological issues that often shroud the adoption process. Again, irregular procedures blocked mere discussion of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I will support this bill. I do so, however, with the fervent belief that we can, and should, do more for America's children than is reflected in H.R. 4365. The children of every district in this nation have waited too long for the many laudable provisions in the bill; but they also deserve more, and they deserve it soon.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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 Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4365, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

LONG ISLAND SOUND RESTORATION ACT

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3313) to amend section 119 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the program for Long Island Sound, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3313

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 "Long Island Sound Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. NITROGEN CREDIT TRADING SYSTEM AND OTHER MEASURES.

Section 119(c)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1269(c)(1)) is amended by inserting " , including efforts to establish, within the process for granting watershed general permits, a system for trading nitrogen credits and any other measures that are cost-effective and consistent with the goals of the Plan" before the semicolon at the end.

SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES.

Section 119 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1269) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

"(e) ASSISTANCE TO DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES.—

"(1) ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES.—

"(A) STATES TO DETERMINE CRITERIA.—For the purposes of this subsection, a distressed community is any community that meets affordability criteria established by the State in which the community is located, if such criteria are developed after public review and comment.

"(B) CONSIDERATION OF IMPACT ON WATER AND SEWER RATES.—In determining if a community is a distressed community for the purposes

of this subsection, the State shall consider the extent to which the rate of growth of a community's tax base has been historically slow such that implementing the plan described in subsection (c)(1) would result in a significant increase in any water or sewer rate charged by the community's publicly-owned wastewater treatment facility.

“(C) INFORMATION TO ASSIST STATES.—The Administrator may publish information to assist States in establishing affordability criteria under subparagraph (A).

“(2) REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS.—

“(A) LOAN SUBSIDIES.—Subject to subparagraph (B), any State making a loan to a distressed community from a revolving fund under title VI for the purpose of assisting the implementation of the plan described in subsection (c)(1) may provide additional subsidization (including forgiveness of principal).

“(B) TOTAL AMOUNT OF SUBSIDIES.—For each fiscal year, the total amount of loan subsidies made by a State under subparagraph (A) may not exceed 30 percent of the amount of the capitalization grant received by the State for the year.

“(3) PRIORITY.—In making assistance available under this section for the upgrading of wastewater treatment facilities, a State may give priority to a distressed community.”.

SEC. 4. REAUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 119(f) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (as redesignated by section 3 of this Act) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “1991 through 2001” and inserting “2000 through 2003”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “not to exceed \$3,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1991 through 2001” and inserting “not to exceed \$80,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2000 through 2003”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BORSKI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3313.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to commend the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) and her colleagues from the Long Island Sound area who provided the leadership on this very important environmental piece of legislation.

This is the Long Island Sound Restoration Act, which is updated and improves the Long Island Sound program established under the Clean Water Act.

This is legislation which provides funding for clean water facilities and as well to control runoff. The Long Island Sound is one of the estuaries in the National Estuary Program. The Long Island Sound program was created in part to help carry out the goals of the Sound's long-term estuary management program. This legislation authorizes funding for that.

It provides financial relief for distressed communities and encourages the EPA to support ongoing State efforts in the watershed to establish a nitrogen trading credit program. It is a market-oriented program. Low-level dissolved oxygen, caused largely from the high levels of nitrogen from wastewater treatment plants, is one of the most significant problems in the Long Island Sound area. This legislation will help achieve the goals of reducing the nitrogen in the Sound.

H.R. 3313 will also help restore the Long Island Sound's habitat and improve the water-quality dependent uses so important to the regional economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is very, very important environmental legislation. I urge its support.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act. This legislation would extend the authorization of the Long Island Sound office under the Clean Water Act through fiscal year 2003 and would increase the authorization for grants to implement the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Long Island watershed to \$80 million per year for 4 years.

As stated in the committee report, the construction of projects that are treatment works as defined in the Clean Water Act will be subject to section 513 of the act. I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman SHUSTER) and the gentleman from New York (Chairman BOEHLERT), our colleagues, for their willingness to address this critical issue in a positive way.

H.R. 3313 would encourage the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to use her existing authorities in implementing the Long Island CCMP to establish a nitrogen credit trading program or any other measure that is cost-effective and consistent with the goals of the CCMP.

H.R. 3313 does not alter any existing regulatory authorities under the Clean Water Act, nor does it provide the Administrator with any new authorities.

The bill, as amended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, would authorize New York and Connecticut to subsidize loans to distressed communities in the Long Island Sound watershed for wastewater treatment facilities under the revolving fund program of the Clean Water Act.

Population growth and economic development have impaired the water quality of the Sound, contributing to public health and environmental public problems in the watershed. Investment in wastewater treatment facilities as called for in the CCMP would lead to significant water quality improvement.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that all the wastewater treatment works in the Long Island Sound watershed are in

need of improvement soon. This bill would enhance that effort by providing additional resources and flexibility.

I support providing additional assistance to address distressed communities in the region to help finance wastewater infrastructure improvements and investment to improve water quality. Many of us in the eastern United States know all too well about declining urban populations and diminished tax base even as infrastructure needs rise.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the amended bill represents a reasonable approach to providing additional financial assistance to distressed communities in the Long Island Sound watershed so that they can better afford necessary investments in wastewater treatment facilities.

It is modeled after the Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1996, and may serve as a national model for the Clean Water Act. At the same time, the financial integrity and viability of the SFR programs of the States are not unduly compromised.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill and urge approval.

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), chairman of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

(Mr. BOEHLERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1500

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act.

First let me thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman SHUSTER), and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BORSKI) of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for their leadership and cooperation in moving this important legislation forward.

I made clear right from the outset that this was a legislative priority of mine, not only in my capacity as chairman of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, but as a New Yorker and one who knows firsthand the value and beauty of the Long Island Sound. So for me, today's action is particularly gratifying.

I am sure no one is more gratified than the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO), the bill's primary sponsors. On a bipartisan basis, with 30 of our colleagues, they have worked tirelessly to advance this legislation and the cause of restoring and protecting Long Island Sound.

I would also like to recognize the invaluable efforts of Governor George Pataki of New York and Governor John Rowland of Connecticut and the many governmental and nongovernmental organizations that have championed this critically-needed legislation.

Let me say, Governor Pataki and Governor Rowland came to Washington to testify before our very committee. I know from firsthand experiences, my fellow New Yorkers on both sides of the aisle will tell us Governor Pataki has given this a very high priority. He is proving by performance that he is a leader on environmental issues, not only for the State of New York, but nationally. As a matter of fact, in New York State, through his leadership, we passed a \$1.7 billion environmental bond act. We did it on a bipartisan basis.

Now we are demonstrating that we are willing to put our money where our mouths are. We are willing to back up our words with deeds under the leadership of Governor Pataki, and he deserves special commendation today.

Long Island Sound is approximately 110 miles long and 21 miles across at its widest point. More than 8 million people live within Long Island Sound Watershed, which borders both States, New York and Connecticut.

The Long Island Sound, like many estuaries across the U.S., supports multiple uses and demands. It generates more than \$5 billion a year for the regional economy from boating, swimming, and commercial and sport fishing, among other activities. It also is home to a multitude of fish and wildlife species.

However, the Sound can no longer support these multiple economic and environmental uses and demands. Increasing population growth and development have led to water quality problems arising from increased nonpoint source pollution from storm water and agricultural runoff, wastewater discharges with high nitrogen levels, industrial pollution, and commercial and recreational waste.

In fact, an estimated \$1 billion would be needed over the next 20 years to address the environmental and public health problems in the Sound. This is an important start. This is a demonstration of the Green Team in action again, and we see it on the floor here. Very dedicated Members of Congress support it by very able and very professional staff people who all have the privilege of working for the most productive committee in the House of Representatives in the people's House.

This is legislation I proudly identify with. Once again, I say to all of my colleagues, this is something that has earned our support for all the right reasons.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FORBES), and I note the gentleman's hard work to improve the water quality of the Long Island Sound.

(Mr. FORBES asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Chairman SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBER-

STAR), the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and of course the gentleman from New York (Chairman BOEHLERT) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BORSKI), ranking member, for their leadership.

This bill on the floor today is a bill that enjoys strong bipartisan support, as it should. The Long Island Sound Restoration Act is critically needed. As one of the sponsors of this important legislation, I can tell my colleagues that we have long overdue the need for the Long Island Sound study and the proper implementation of the comprehensive conservation and management plan for Long Island Sound.

As we heard from the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), over the next decade, we are going to need upwards of \$1 billion to restore the ecological health of Long Island Sound. As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, I can assure my colleagues that I will be working with my colleagues from Connecticut and New York to ensure that we have the kind of funding that will make this critical estuary healthy once again.

Last fall, the Long Island Sound fell victim to some kind of a disease that really struck our lobster industry, and we saw a tremendous die-off of the lobster crop in Long Island Sound to the detriment of so many families on Long Island. Thanks to the efforts of the New York and Connecticut delegation, the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Daley, declared a commercial fishery failure in January of this year.

Restoring the Sound to its critical health, the marine life so important to this estuary is critically important to all of us and certainly, important to our fishing families.

Underscoring the need to restore Long Island Sound is important, but equally important is the need to stop the Nation's largest polluter; and that is the Federal Government. The Federal Government continues to poison Long Island Sound with its dredge spoils.

What was reported out of the committee also unanimously was the Long Island Sound Protection Act, a measure that I authored, which I believe should go hand in hand with the measure on the floor. It would amend the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 to make sure that the Federal Government is held to the same standards that we require of the private sector when dumping dredge spoils into Long Island Sound. Frankly, it reiterates something that was put into law back in 1980 by the late Jerome Anbrow, Democrat from Huntington.

This important legislation would end what we have seen for the last several decades, the Federal Government dumping poison sludge back into Long Island Sound. We are too sophisticated as a Nation today to allow this kind of egregious behavior to continue. So I lament the fact that we are not adding

this amendment, this important protection for Long Island Sound, to this critically important legislation. I do applaud the committee for its bipartisan support of this legislation. It is long overdue.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON).

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) very much for yielding me his time. I appreciate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BORSKI) for their help in getting committee approval of H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act, legislation both the Connecticut and New York delegations have worked hard together to bring to the floor.

I also want to thank Governor Rowland of Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for working closely with me, not only to achieve the worthy goals of this bill, but to do so in a way that small communities, distressed small towns can handle without unfair economic hardship.

Long Island Sound was one of the original 11 estuaries designated a national estuary under our Federal estuary program. Consistent with the requirements, New York and Connecticut, with the guidance from the EPA, developed a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan which dictates the steps each State must take to end pollution of the Sound. The plan addresses six core areas: hypoxia, or lack of oxygen in the water caused by high levels of nitrogen; nonpoint source pollutants; toxics in the water; floating debris; pathogens and land use or habitat protection.

Just Connecticut will spend between \$600 million and \$900 million over the next 20 years to clean up the 85 water treatment plants, the primary solution to hypoxia. These multimillion dollar costs will be paid by our towns and cities through a combination of grants from the State and local tax dollars that will repay loans from the revolving loan funds. While the grants are generous, totalling 30 percent of each town's expenses, the 70 percent of loans can impose an overwhelming burden on small communities and tax-strapped cities.

For instance, the town of Winsted, Connecticut has a cumulative debt of \$15 million as a result of upgrades to both their water treatment, their drinking water, and wastewater treatment plants. Winsted's 2,500 customers face a daunting task in repaying the \$15 million. They simply cannot afford any additional debt to fund the cost of nitrogen control equipment.

The Mattabassett District is the regional sewer authority for New Britain, Cromwell and Berlin, Connecticut and

serves 102,000 residents. This district estimates that it will have to raise rates by well over 100 percent in order to install the required nitrogen removal equipment. This area of the State, once a manufacturing hub of the Northeast, has seen its tax base collapse in the last two decades and has been slow to share in the current economic boom. A doubling of water rates would be devastating to economic development efforts just taking hold in these towns and to their tax-paying residents.

Some may argue that Long Island Sound is not a national problem and should be handled by those States most affected. But 10 percent of America's population lives within the Long Island Sound Watershed. It is one of the most populated, visited and traveled areas of the country.

The Sound contributes \$5 billion annually to the regional economy. And the ports of Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London—each in Connecticut—handle incoming freight from national and international sources. Much of the northeast's heating oil comes in through these ports; over 12 million tons of petroleum products passed through in 1997.

I will not go through the details of what it contributes to our economy. But more than 12 million tons of petroleum come through its ports. The Port of New Haven alone handles 622,000 tons of steel in 1997, making it the fourth largest port of entry for steel products into the United States after New Orleans, Houston, and Philadelphia. The New London port is one of the chief ports for lumber exports and home to Groton Naval Shipyard.

Further, in 1998, New York and Connecticut caught \$23.8 million worth of clams and oysters. In other words, if people aren't enjoying the Sound for its recreational opportunities, they are using the products that come in through its ports or consuming the seafood from its waters.

In other words, if people are enjoying the Sound for its recreational opportunities, they are using it, the products that come in through its ports or consuming the seafood from its waters.

In sum, the Sound is clearly a body of national, economic, and environmental significance and calls for a nationwide commitment to its restoration.

As the Federal Government has provided help to implement other States' plans to save their estuaries, harbors, and lakes, so New York and Connecticut need help. Boston Harbor received \$840 million to construct Deer Island Water Treatment Facility and clean their harbor. The Great Lakes has received \$13 million a year since 1991. The Chesapeake Bay has received nearly \$20 million a year since 1991. Long Island Sound is important to our Nation. It is as important to these other bodies of water and deserves our national efforts.

But New York and Connecticut are not just looking for Federal help, they are looking for a Federal partnership. Consistent with its responsibility to

that partnership, Connecticut has developed a plan for reducing the overall cost of the cleanup. Connecticut estimates that their water treatment upgrades could cost up to \$900 million over the next 20 years, but with this trading program will cost considerably less, probably \$200 million to \$300 million less.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of my colleagues of this very important legislation to preserve one of the Nation's real gems.

My legislation will allow Connecticut and New York to develop a nitrogen trading program to fulfill their obligations under the CCMP. The entire state must still meet the same nitrogen levels, but the trading program will help small communities who contribute very little pollution do their part to clean up the Sound.

In addition to authorizing a trading program and increasing the authorization level for the Long Island Sound office, my legislation will provide states with the option to give additional help to low income, distressed communities which have slow growth tax bases and would be unable to sustain significant increases in water rates. These communities would be eligible for grant money as well as negative interest loans.

Nothing is more important than bequeathing to our children a clean, healthy environment. With this bill we take a giant step toward the restoration of a real jewel, Long Island Sound.

Again, I thank the Chairman, Mr. BOEHLERT and Mr. SHUSTER for their support and assistance in developing this bill and urge its passage by the House.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO). I thank the gentlewoman for her work in several sessions of the Congress to try to improve the viability and well-being of Long Island Sound.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania very much for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Long Island Sound Restoration Act. I have labored long and hard to try to see that we do clean up the Long Island Sound. It is critical to our environment and to our economy. It is one of the most complex estuaries in the country. It is located in a densely populated area. More than 8 million people live in the 16,000 square miles of watershed. Millions more flock to it for recreation. In fact, 10 percent of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of the Long Island Sound.

It brings in more than \$5 billion annually to the regional economy from activities like fishing, recreational, boating, swimming, and beachgoing, all of which require clean water.

The bill we consider today is a sensible approach to a problem that has plagued our community and its efforts to clean up the Long Island Sound for over a decade; that is the fact there are no reliable steady funding sources for implementing the Sound's Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, which we developed in 1994 to protect the Sound.

This bill increases the authorized level we can spend on the Sound to \$80 million a year for 4 years. It is a good first step. It is timely, because we need a dedicated increased funding source in order to be able to finally roll up our sleeves and to get the job done. It allows for a much-needed investment in clean water treatment facilities, provides a flexible approach for communities all around the watershed to reduce the pollution that goes into the Sound.

If one wants to talk to people who know the importance of the Long Island Sound to the communities and to our economy, take a walk along the shore with a lobsterman. We are suffering a massive lobster die-off that has virtually wiped out the lobster population in the Sound. To date, we do not know what has caused the die-off, but we do know that a cleaner Long Island Sound would make incidents like this less likely in the future.

I am pleased we are considering a bill like this today. I urge my colleagues to support the bill and help us clean up this treasure, our treasured Long Island Sound.

□ 1515

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO).

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), for his accommodation, together with the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), in moving this consideration from yesterday, which was Cardinal O'Connor's funeral, to today to allow some of us to participate.

I also would like to thank the leader of the Green Team, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), who is a hero to Long Islanders, and this is a major initiative on which his help has been invaluable. I also want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON), the prime sponsor of this legislation and the leading force, as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) and the rest of the New York and Connecticut delegations who joined us in introducing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for my colleagues to visualize for a moment Yellowstone National Park. It is truly one of America's great jewels. Conservation managers at that park agonize over the impact of 3 million visitors that come annually to experience its beauty. They worry about the health of its sensitive ecosystems. They agonize about the stresses that this population influx puts on the system.

Now, I would like my colleagues to visualize that park with 8 million people living directly on its borders, with another 15 million living within 50 miles of it. I do not need to spell out the stresses that this situation would place on this natural system. I do not need to detail how the inability of that

park to meet the needs of our citizens would be degraded. And I do not need to detail how much this Nation would pay to maintain that jewel for the enjoyment of all.

Mr. Speaker, the picture I just described is one we are living with today on the Long Island Sound. This 150-mile-long estuary is one of America's natural jewels, providing recreational outlets, commercial fishing, shell fishing, and a vital transportation corridor for the most heavily populated portion of this Nation. Like Yellowstone, the Sound is a major asset to the regional economy, generating over \$5 billion annually.

A full 10 percent of this Nation's people live on or near this body of water. To many of these people the Sound is their opportunity to escape the multitudes, to get in touch with the great outdoors. To others, the Sound is a livelihood, a way of life. The lonely lobsterman, who sails out every morning to check his traps, or a fisherman trying to land that special of the day for a Manhattan restaurant. To all these Americans, the Sound is increasingly less able to meet their essential needs.

Pollution problems in the Sound have degraded the recreational experience. They have reduced the fish and shellfish populations. And pollution in the Sound has contributed to the 90 percent decline in the lobster population, which has been this Nation's third largest lobster fishery. That decline forced Commerce Secretary Daley to declare the Sound a fishery disaster area.

In a separate action, I and the other New York and Connecticut Members are now looking for funds to mitigate the economic impact of the lobster disaster. Like much of our region, nearly the entire Long Island Sound coastline is developed. We have lost up to 35 percent of our vegetated wetlands, endangering wildlife and increasing the potential of flooding. Over a billion gallons of sewage is discharged daily from our treatment plants, killing our fish and shellfish. As a result of this ecological stress, many of our bays and harbor bottoms are contaminated, and health advisories now warn against eating too much of some of the Sound's fish and waterfowl.

New York and Connecticut recognized this problem and have been working cooperatively to develop a plan for cleaning up the Sound. This plan was developed with the support of local environmental groups, recreational and commercial users of the Sound, and property owners. We are now ready to implement. We are ready to put up the upgrades we need to our sewer systems, to construct our runoff diversion ponds, and to restore our lost habitats.

New York's governor recently announced the funding of \$50 million worth of projects from that plan. Connecticut's governor has also pledged to put their share of funding forward. The only partner that is not at the table is

the Federal Government. In a role reversal, we now have States coming to the Congress asking us to cost share with them on a program of national significance.

The bill before us makes the Federal Government a full partner in this critical enterprise. It recognizes that cleaning up our pollution problems is not cheap but that it is a good investment. And this bill recognizes that we owe the future of the Sound to our children.

I grew up on Long Island and was fortunate to be able to take advantage of the benefits of its coastal waters. I want my children to be able to have that same advantage. This bill will give them that opportunity.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN), an original cosponsor of the bill.

(Mr. ACKERMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), as well as the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) for her leadership.

I also want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO), who has done a lot of work on this, and the rest of the Long Island delegation, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY), as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. FORBES), who has now managed to cosponsor this bill from both sides of the aisle.

I am proud to represent an area that borders the Long Island Sound. The Sound is one of our Nation's natural treasures with important environmental, recreational and commercial benefits. Its value as an essential habitat for one of the most diverse ecosystems in the Northeast cannot be understated. Residents and vacationers alike enjoy the Sound for swimming and boating, and the approximately \$5 billion in revenue generated by commerce relating to the Sound is vital to the region as well as to individuals who base their livelihood on the benefits of the Long Island Sound.

Unfortunately, the effects of millions of people on the shore and in the Sound are evidenced by the deteriorated water quality. Over the last several years, the Long Island Sound has suffered from numerous forms of pollution which has caused a dramatic drop in the Sound's fish population. As a result of the pollution, the Sound's multibillion dollar a year fishing industry is in jeopardy. The most recent devastating example that we have heard about is the unexplained and widespread lobster die-off. We must supply adequate resources to address this crisis and to examine possible problems in the water that could have caused the crisis.

Preservation of the Long Island Sound is not a parochial issue but a national one. Its inclusion as a charter member in the National Estuaries Program, the Sound has been designated as one of only 28 estuaries of national significance. The time to act is now. When I first introduced this legislation by this name in 1992, and again in every subsequent Congress, the price tag was \$50 million. Now it is \$80 million. It will not get cheaper if we wait any longer.

I am pleased to say and to note that both the States of New York and Connecticut are prepared to match the \$80 million authorization with State funds, and I am confident that these funds will have a significant impact on the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of the Sound. We must do everything possible to ensure the continued funding of these efforts, and this legislation is the appropriate means for achieving the desired end. I urge all of our colleagues to join with us in supporting this legislation.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Long Island Sound Restoration Act, and again thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) for their work in getting this bill out of committee. I also wish to thank Governors Rowland and Pataki and the respective Departments of Environmental Protection from both Connecticut and New York, and to thank as well my co-chair of the Long Island Sound Caucus, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), and the members of the caucus, as well as in particular the primary sponsors, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO).

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read what a number of very significant organizations have had to say about this bill. The first quote:

This is the most significant congressional action for Long Island Sound since it was designated a national estuary in 1985. It is critical this bill pass the House of Representatives to ensure the Federal Government is a true partner in the restoration of Long Island Sound.

—David Miller, Executive Director, National Audubon Society of New York.

Cleaning up the water quality of Long Island Sound is critical to a comprehensive approach to restoring this fabulous resource to its full potential as a natural resource.

—David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations, the Connecticut chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

This bill garnered widespread support across party lines. I think this sends a clear message to voters that the environment does matter and that both parties can work together to help preserve our environment.

—Deb Callahan, President, League of Conservation Voters.

Nitrogen pollution in the Long Island Sound is a relatively recent discovery and quite literally a deadly problem. For many years gross pollution masked the damage being done by excess nitrogen. Thanks to Congress' efforts and construction grants and State revolving funds of the 1970s and 1980s, we have been able to make great progress only to find an underlying problem of great environmental and financial magnitude.

—Terry Backer, Soundkeeper, supporting this bill.

It is critical to Long Island Sound, our region's greatest natural resource, that the Federal Government increase its recognition of the need to improve this water body by making an increased financial commitment. It is critical to future generations that this water body be returned to a flourishing ecosystem of flora and fauna.

—John Atkins, President of Save the Sound.

And, finally,

Local and State governments have made enormous investments in sewage treatment and pollution control facilities, but the problems are much more regional in scope and therefore beg Federal involvement. Any plan which places the entire fiscal burden of cleanup on the most vulnerable level of government, local authorities, is destined for environmental and economic failure. That is why we support H.R. 3313.

—Ross Pepe, President, Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley, a professional employers association representing more than 550 companies and some 50,000 workers.

We will not have a world to live in if we continue our neglectful ways, and passage of this bill makes clear we are no longer being neglectful.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON).

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman of the committee, who has always been so responsive to the needs of our States and other Members, and the ranking Democrats involved in this effort for Connecticut.

This is an important effort, but it is a national effort. Almost 30 million American citizens live within a short distance of Long Island Sound. It is an important economic asset. We have obviously had challenges in the last several years. The lobstermen, in particular, as has been noted by a number of my colleagues, have had a very significant impact and a decreased number of lobsters out there. We need to address these issues. It is an important economic asset and an environmental asset.

From kayaking to commercial fishing to sports fishermen, who really play, I think, the most significant role in many ways of helping the economy of the region and increasing the quality of life, it is an important national asset and it is appropriate that we are taking this action today.

One need only drive along the coast from New York and go through the fishing villages of Stonington and Mystic to see the kind of diversity of activity along the shore. We need to take

these actions for this generation but also for future generations to make sure that we leave this body of water in better shape than we found it when we took over the stewardship of Long Island Sound.

Again, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support and urge passage of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as an original co-sponsor of H.R. 3313, I rise in strong support of this measure. I would like to begin by thanking Chairmen SHUSTER and BOEHLERT and ranking Members OBERSTAR and BORSKI and their staffs for their support in moving this legislation through the Committee process. I truly appreciate their efforts.

The bill before us today reauthorizes activities of the Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound Program Office for four years. It also authorizes \$80 million annually to help implement the comprehensive conservation and management plan approved for the Long Island Sound under the National Estuary Program. It also allows New York and Connecticut to provide grants from their state clean water revolving funds for the upgrade of wastewater treatment facilities in small communities that can ill-afford the cost of the necessary procedure.

The Long Island Sound is one on the 28 designated estuaries in National Estuary Program. As one of the eleven original estuaries designated in 1987, it is recognized as a significant national resource making its health a top priority for not only Connecticut and New York, but the country as a whole. Ten percent of the American population lives within 50 miles of the Sound. It is a source of recreation for vacationers, fishermen, and boaters as well as a key commercial water way for trade and commerce, providing over \$5 billion to the regional economy.

I believe the increase in funding is reasonable. It would provide the necessary funds to allow Connecticut and New York to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Long Island Sound. By providing grants to distressed communities to assist them in upgrading wastewater treatment plants, the facilities would be better equipped to reduced the amount of nitrogen released into the Sound.

The high levels of nitrogen have depleted the supply of oxygen in the water—a phenomenon known as hypoxia or low dissolved oxygen. The nitrogen, which comes from a variety of sources including treatment facilities and run-off from lawns and fields, promotes the growth of algae by over-fertilization. Subsequently, the plants die, sinking to the bottom and decaying, using up the little oxygen there is. Too little oxygen can stunt the development or kill marine species like lobsters, slow moving species and finfish and flounder while also affecting their resistance to disease.

Recently, there has been a massive lobster die-off in the Sound. The lobster population has been in serious decline for the last year. Landings in Connecticut in December 1998 totaled 442,888 pounds while December 1999 landings were a mere 2,892 pounds. Initial findings indicate the presence of a parasite; however, there is still much research to be done. The need for research dollars is great making the funding provided within this legislation a significant step in the right direction.

The Long Island Sound is a nationally significant resource which deserves continued federal support. Passing this legislation today will allow the states of Connecticut and New York to continue their efforts to clean up the Sound and restore a healthy habitat for not only the wildlife that live in and around the Sound, but our constituents as well. The health of the Sound is crucial to our quality of life and economic well-being.

I urge my colleagues would join me in supporting H.R. 3313.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank our ranking member and the chairman for their support of this important bill, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act.

As the co-chair of the Long Island Sound Congressional Caucus, I am especially proud to stand here today in support of a bill that reaffirms our commitment to Long Island Sound. Protecting our fragile waterways and coastal environments is essential, and the bill we are considering today will strengthen our efforts to preserve Long Island Sound.

Long Island Sound is a national treasure, but this extraordinary environmental economic and recreational asset has been damaged by years of pollution and neglect. It is absolutely crucial to expand the Federal Government's role in controlling pollution and in stewarding our coastal resources throughout the Sound.

One of my proudest achievements since coming to Congress was working to establish the Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound office in 1991, which coordinates the implementation of the Sound's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The Plan is working to bring the Sound back to life again. But we need to do much more.

EPA estimates that simply meeting the appalling backlog of water quality infrastructure upgrades nationwide will cost \$140 billion over the next 20 years. And the amount needed to address the health and environmental concerns around Long Island Sound alone over the next two decades is \$1 billion. This critical legislation supports these efforts by significantly increasing authorization levels for the Long Island Sound office and targets these important resources towards implementation of the Sound's cleanup plan.

The Long Island Sound Restoration Act is another important tool in our arsenal to expand the Federal Government's role in restoring Long Island Sound, and I urge my colleagues to support this fragile resource by voting for H.R. 3313.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act.

The Long Island Sound is a unique, urban watershed nestled among one of the most densely populated regions of this country. Like

many of the salt-water estuaries along the coast of the United States, the Long Island Sound supports a variety of uses and demands, including providing vital habitat to numerous fish and wildlife species, as well as recreational and commercial activities.

However, increasing pressures from residential, industrial, and agricultural development have dramatically altered the natural conditions of this region, and have increased the discharge of pollutants into the Sound.

In 1987, upon the realization that additional efforts were needed to protect our Nation's salt-water estuaries, Congress authorized the establishment of the National Estuaries Program (NEP), within EPA, to restore and protect these resources. The Long Island Sound was one of the original waterbodies to be designated as an Estuary of National Significance under the NEP.

The Management Conference convened to develop a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the Long Island Sound identified several issues meriting special attention, including low oxygen conditions due to excessive nutrient loading, toxic and pathogen contamination, and the degradation and loss of marine habitat. Of these concerns, hypoxia, caused by excessive discharges of nitrogen from both point and non-point sources, was identified as the priority problem.

In 1990, Congress recognized that additional resources were needed to realize improvements in the Sound, and created a new office within the Environmental Protection Agency to assist in achieving these improvements. The Long Island Sound Program Office has been charged with assisting and supporting the implementation of the Long Island Sound CCMP.

The legislation we are considering today, H.R. 3313, extends the reauthorization of this office, as well as make additional changes aimed at achieving greater improvements to the Sound watershed.

The bill, as amended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, reauthorizes the Long Island Sound Program Office through 2003, and authorizes \$80 million per year through 2003 in grants for projects and studies which will help implement the CCMP.

In addition, this legislation encourages the Administrator of EPA, through the Long Island Sound Program Office, to use existing regulatory authorities to implement the CCMP, including efforts to establish, within the process for granting watershed general permits, a system for trading nitrogen credits and any other measures that are cost-effective and consistent with the goals of the CCMP.

It is important to note that this legislation does not expand the authorities of the EPA with respect to pollution credit trading; it merely encourages the Administrator to use existing authorities to achieve water quality goals within the Sound.

Finally, H.R. 3313 provides enhanced assistance to distressed communities within the Long Island Sound basin for repayment of construction loans under the Clean Water Act.

This legislation grants the Administrator authority to provide additional loan subsidization, including principal forgiveness, to distressed communities within the Sound. Principal forgiveness provides significant assistance to distressed communities in the repayment of construction loans without the unintended consequence of significantly diminishing the corpus of State Revolving Loan funds.

I support this bill and urge its approval.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3313, the Long Island Sound Restoration Act.

I congratulate Representative NANCY JOHNSON for crafting this bi-partisan legislation that represents an excellent step in the right direction towards cleaning up and maintaining the water quality of Long Island Sound.

A great many of my constituents benefit from this water body—whether it be vacationing on her beautiful beaches, working on her shores or eating the fish products caught in the Sound. Long Island Sound is a vital lifeline for the people of my district and of the whole tri-state area.

Unfortunately, with the population explosion along the shores of Long Island Sound, new threats are appearing.

This legislation will increase the funding for the Long Island Sound Office by \$77 million. Additionally, this legislation will address the efforts to reduce nitrogen discharges into the Sound and authorizes the surrounding states to provide additional subsidies to designated distressed communities from a state's clean water fund.

Finally, this legislation will not hinder the environmentally important dredging efforts occurring in communities surrounding Long Island Sound. In my district, dredging operations have vastly improved both the economic as well as the environmental climate in a number of communities.

As a deliberative body, we must ensure that important dredging projects, such as ones occurring in Flushing Bay and New York Harbor continue unencumbered.

I urge my colleagues to support this valuable, environmental legislation.

□ 1530

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3313, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. SHUSTER. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SENSE OF THE HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 492) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of America's teachers.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 492

Whereas the foundation of American freedom and democracy is a strong, effective system of education in which every child can learn in a safe and nurturing environment;

Whereas a first-rate education system depends on a partnership between parents, principals, teachers, and children;

Whereas much of the success of our Nation during the American Century is the result of the hard work and dedication of teachers across the land;

Whereas, in addition to their families, knowledgeable and skillful teachers can have a profound impact on a child's early development and future success;

Whereas, while many people spend their lives building careers, teachers spend their careers building lives;

Whereas our Nation's teachers serve our children beyond the call of duty as coaches, mentors, and advisors without regard to fame or fortune; and

Whereas across this land nearly 3 million men and women experience the joys of teaching young minds the virtues of reading, writing, and arithmetic: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors and recognizes the unique and important achievements of America's teachers; and

(2) urges all Americans to take a moment to thank and pay tribute to our Nation's teachers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MARTINEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON).

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2½ minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this important resolution in recognition of our Nation's teachers, and I would like to start off by simply saying thank you.

Thank you to all of the teachers who have shaped the lives of American school children. Thank you for your selfless and sometimes exhausting commitment to the children of this country, and thank you for protecting America's future.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in many cases that we take teachers for granted and simply expect them to single-handedly prepare our students to face the challenges of life and become productive members of society.

Here in Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure that Federal education programs allow local officials and schools the flexibility to make decisions based upon their specific needs. Again, I want to stress the flexibility is the key.

Last year, in bipartisan fashion, the House passed the Teacher Empowerment Act to help address the needs of local schools and teachers relating to their recruiting, hiring and training of teachers.

While this legislation requires school districts to both decrease class size and improve the quality of training for teachers, it leaves the exact balance between the two at the discretion of those at the local level who best know the needs of their schools and communities.

I know I am not alone when I say I was privileged to have teachers who had a profound impact on my development, not only as a student but as a person. One of the greatest rewards of my job now is the opportunity to visit