

facility decontamination and decommissioning, remedial actions, and other activities of title II of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, and title X, subtitle A, of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, \$625,000,000, to be derived from the Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund, to remain available until expended, of which \$32,959,000 shall be available in accordance with title X, subtitle A, of the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

SCIENCE

For Department of Energy expenses including the purchase, construction, and acquisition of plant and capital equipment, and other expenses necessary for science activities in carrying out the purposes of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), including the acquisition or condemnation of any real property or facility or for plant or facility acquisition, construction, or expansion, and purchase of not more than 17 passenger motor vehicles for replacement only, including one ambulance and one bus, \$5,100,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That of such amount, \$181,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2017, for program direction.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FLORES

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 25, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,500,000)”.

Page 51, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$25,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 223, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chair, I rise to offer an important amendment that ensures that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is appropriately funded to meet its core mission. The NRC's work is vital to the energy picture of our Nation, and safety remains and always will be the number one priority.

The NRC is funded in two ways: 10 percent of its budget comes from appropriated funds from the taxpayers; and, secondly, 90 percent of the fees are collected from the nuclear industry.

While I am a strong supporter of nuclear power and safety, the NRC budget has grown dramatically in the last decade from \$669 million per year in 2005 to the current level of over \$1 billion this year. Herein lies the problem.

This chart lays out the picture that we face today with the NRC. Under the NRC's 2005 budget, there were 3,108 employees responsible for oversight on 104 reactors and the review of 1,500 licensing actions. In their fiscal year 2016 budget request of \$1.032 billion, the NRC called for 3,754 employees to oversee 100 reactors and review 900 licensing actions.

In summary, the number of reactors has gone down by 4 percent; the number of licensing actions has gone down by 40 percent; the number of employees has gone up by 21 percent, and the budget has grown by 54 percent.

Madam Chair, only in Washington does the staff and the cost grow while

the workload goes down. The historical increases in both funding and staff resources occurred in anticipation of new reactors being built under a nuclear renaissance for our country.

Unfortunately, due to increasing bureaucratic red tape and other market conditions, the work never materialized; thus, a shrinking nuclear industry has faced an ever-growing regulator over the past 10 years. Only in Washington, as I said before, does the bureaucracy grow while the workload shrinks.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission even admits that it needs to downsize. In its February 2015 report entitled, “Project Aim 2020,” they said the same thing. Additionally, the NRC has 60 rulemakings underway, and they are collecting additional fees from existing reactors to make up for lost licensing revenue. These fees are ultimately paid by hard-working American families in their electricity bills.

My amendment is simple. It reduces funding by \$25 million, or about 2.5 percent, and would right-size the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to meet its core mission and safely regulate our existing nuclear fleet.

The industry share of support, or 90 percent of that, would be reduced by \$22.5 million, and the Federal share of \$2.5 would be redirected to basic research in DOE's Office of Science in order to develop future American energy solutions.

Madam Chair, in the last few minutes, I have had the opportunity to have great discussions with Chairman SIMPSON, and I am confident that he is aware of this issue and has taken steps to do this. He said he would work with me in the future to continue addressing this issue. I am raising this today, but I will be withdrawing my amendment.

I would like to thank Chairman SIMPSON for his efforts to address this issue and for agreeing to work with me on the issue.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, I claim time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SIMPSON. I want to thank the gentleman for being dogged on this issue. We share his concern. We had a great hearing with all the commissioners of the NRC. They also understand this concern. It was the Aim Project 2020 that they put together that realized that they have too many staff and they need to reduce it. They want to do it in a responsible way.

In the full committee, we adopted an amendment to reduce their budget by \$25 million. That is in addition to the fact that they had carryover fund that they could have spent last year that they won't have available this year.

Their budget is going down; whether it is the right amount or not, we don't know yet, but we are going to keep on

this because we want them to reestablish their credibility in the world. They need to do that because they are a regulatory agency that is very important, and they do incredibly important work.

We are going to be holding hearings again on this next year when we do their budget to make sure they are following through on their commitment to reduce their size and scope, particularly the rulemaking authority that they have got out there. Many people believe they are writing far too many rules, and some believe it is because they have too many employees.

I appreciate the gentleman offering this amendment and the discussion and offering to withdraw the amendment.

Ms. KAPTUR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SIMPSON. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. I would just say to the offeror of the amendment from Texas that I come from a part of the country where the Nuclear Regulatory Commission did not do its job for a long time.

I appreciate what you are attempting to do, and all I would say is, coming from a region where we have serious infractions that put human life at risk more than once, as you look at that budget and try to improve it, do not assume whatever levels of regulation existed in fact were appropriate because, in many cases, they were shortchanged and inadequate.

As you move forward in this important arena, I would urge you to look at the places in the country where mistakes happened and figure out why and then direct resources to where they are most important in this very important technology.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROKITA) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FOSTER

Mr. FOSTER. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.