

□ 1700

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my support for this particular resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I was very jovial early on, but I want to get serious for just a moment. On this floor, you will see passionate debate, oftentimes, that is divided by this center aisle. Yet, on this particular issue and others like them, the Boys and Girls Club and other things that actually minister to the needs of children in our Nation, the gentleman from Maryland is not only an advocate, he is a champion.

I want to recognize that this day and thank the gentleman from Maryland for his leadership, not only on this but on a number of things that affect our youth in this great country.

Today, we are unanimous in support of promoting that future generation, and I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

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

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 19.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mrs. CRAIG. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

LOCAL WATER PROTECTION ACT

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1331) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize certain programs relating to nonpoint source management, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1331

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 "Local Water Protection Act".

SEC. 2. NONPOINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.

Section 319(j) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1329(j)) is amended by striking "subsections (h) and (i) not to exceed" and all that follows through "fiscal year 1991" and inserting "subsections (h) and (i) \$200,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) and the gen-

tleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1331.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1331.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1331 is a bipartisan bill to reauthorize appropriations for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's nonpoint source management grants program.

I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), for introducing this bill with me. I also thank the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) for her support in moving this legislation through committee.

The Clean Water Act was enacted in 1972 to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. In 1987, the Clean Water Act was amended to add section 319 to create a nonregulatory program through which EPA administers annual grants to help States develop and implement their own programs for managing nonpoint sources of water pollution.

Under EPA's 319 program, States retain the primary role for addressing nonpoint source water pollution caused by snowmelt and rainfall runoff, which they do largely through monetary means and financial incentives. However, according to the Government Accountability Office, the extent of available incentives has declined in recent years, as grants to States under the section 319 program have declined by more than 30 percent from a high of about \$240 million annually in fiscal year 2004.

The section 319 program was initially authorized at \$70 million annually in fiscal year 1988, and its authorization level steadily increased to \$130 million in fiscal year 1991, the last year of authorization for this program.

This bill, H.R. 1331, would reauthorize \$200 million annually for the 319 program's grant fund, which gives local and State governments the flexibility to make conservation practices improvements aimed at decreasing water pollutants through partnerships within their local communities.

In Minnesota, we take the quality of our 10,000 lakes very seriously, and we all want to preserve the quality of these important waterways for generations to come. We also know that local communities are the experts on the most effective and innovative ways to keep these waterways clean.

That is why this bill is so important. It gives local and State governments

authority to create best voluntary conservation programs that work for their communities.

Here are just a few of the examples of section 319 grants in action from Minnesota's Second Congressional District.

The Scott County Soil and Water Conservation District saved native plants and the shoreline protecting McMahan Lake. The grant also significantly helped reduce pollution throughout the county by planting filter strips, building control grade structures, lining waterways with grass, and planting native grass.

Dakota County created and implemented projects to validate, demonstrate, and refine best management practices for nitrogen fertilizer for corn production that will lower nitrate levels in Dakota County's groundwater and surface water.

The Goodhue County Soil and Water Conservation District is currently working to reduce pollutants in the Mississippi River-Lake Pepin watershed by 20 percent.

In Wabasha County, the Whitewater Watershed Project worked with communities to increase awareness of water contamination and provided low-interest loans to improve residential infrastructure and help farmers come into compliance with pollution standards.

The South Washington Watershed District integrated a storm water reuse plan that captures roadway storm water in two existing ponds. This integrates into two golf course irrigation systems and provides new water amenities with the public golf courses. This is estimated to reduce potable water usage by more than 40 million gallons annually.

Finally, in Rice County, the Cannon River Watershed Partnership is working to engage local, regional, and State programs and organizations to develop a way for their local community to engage in pollution reduction in a meaningful and long-term way.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Florida for introducing this bipartisan bill with me. This legislation passed out of committee with bipartisan support. It is a good bill, and I am pleased to support it. I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1331, the Local Water Protection Act. I thank my colleague from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) for her leadership and my good friend from Florida (Mr. MAST) for introducing this important bill.

H.R. 1331 reauthorizes the Environmental Protection Agency's section 319, which is a nonpoint source pollution control program under the Clean Water Act. Indeed, the section 319 program takes a cooperative, nonregulatory approach toward addressing nonpoint sources.

Reauthorizing this program reinforces the Federal leadership being provided to help our State and local partners in their nonpoint source control efforts. This program has benefited water bodies all across the country, including in my district.

For example, when agricultural runoff impaired the Mills River, a source of drinking water for more than 50,000 people in western North Carolina, the North Carolina Division of Water Quality used \$450,000 of the section 319 grant to restore the Mills River and remove it from the State's impaired list in 2006.

There are hundreds more success stories from States across the Nation where the section 319 program has addressed nonpoint sources and restored water bodies.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support this program. I urge all Members to support the passage of H.R. 1331, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter of support for H.R. 1331 from Trout Unlimited.

TROUT UNLIMITED,
Arlington, VA, April 8, 2019.
Re Trout Unlimited supports HR 1331, The
Local Water Protection Act.

Hon. ANGIE CRAIG,
House of Representatives.

Hon. BRIAN MAST,
House of Representatives.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES CRAIG AND MAST: On behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU), I am writing to strongly support the above referenced bill, to urge its swift passage through the House, and to thank you for introducing it. Section 319 of the Clean Water Act has provided our field staff with valuable funds which they have leveraged many times over to accomplish a number of valuable nonpoint source pollution projects across the nation. But as you know there is much more work to be done, and passage of this bill will be a big step in a positive direction for the health of the Nation's watersheds.

Trout Unlimited has over 300,000 conservation-minded members and supporters, organized into 380 chapters in 35 state councils. Our mission is to conserve, protect and restore the Nation's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. We have 250 staff spread across America who work with our members and a wide variety of partners—including farmers, ranchers, miners and state and local agencies—to accomplish our mission. Section 319 has become an increasingly important tool for our work.

Working with our partners, we have used Section 319 funds in a variety of ways to control nonpoint pollution. Of special note is our recent use of funds to control abandoned mine pollution in Pennsylvania and Colorado. Abandoned mine pollution is especially insidious problems in coal country and in the mining regions of the Rocky Mountain West, but we have developed a number of techniques which are restoring formerly dead streams to healthy streams.

TU and other conservation groups are pressing Congress to provide more funding for natural infrastructure funding and projects. Section 319, and your bill, are delivering on that request.

Abandoned mine cleanup, sediment control, and nutrient runoff control, are model examples of natural infrastructure projects.

Thank you again for introducing this bill. We urge its speedy passage.

Sincerely,

STEVE MOYER,
Vice President,
Government Affairs.

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

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), the sponsor of this particular legislation.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today also in support of H.R. 1331, the Local Water Protection Act. I thank both my colleagues for their support and their comments on this legislation.

Let's talk about what this really does, how this bill is so important, and how it makes a difference with nonpoint source pollution.

Point source pollution is easy to identify, for most people. They have an image of it in their head. It is that pipe coming out of some sort of seawall, coming out of the ground somewhere, dripping something that doesn't look so fresh into their waterways that they want to look pristine and beautiful.

That is easy to identify. The nonpoint stuff is not quite as easy for everybody to go out there and see.

What this does is it helps us prevent toxic agricultural runoff that can have an impact from things like fertilizer spraying, those things that go out there and are put onto our crops at different times.

It can help implement best management practices. It can install pump stations where they might be needed. It can assist with septic to sewer conversions for those issues that arise in our more suburban and residential areas where we have runoff coming off yards, leaky septic tanks, things that we also don't want in our waterways coming from those areas.

It can help address legacy pollutants already in our waterways. It can help prevent other forms of pollutants from coming in. This is why it is so important.

For us, Mr. Speaker, in Florida, this is a huge issue because our Florida waterways, we know how irreplaceable a treasure they are. They are ecologically unique. They are central to our economy. They are central to our health because our family members are in and out of the water so often, whether they are fishing, whether they are swimming, whether they are boating, whether they are recreating, whatever it is, whether it is a part of their livelihood, it is what they are in, so it is a big deal for our health.

The community that I represent, like many others, is plagued with toxic algal blooms that result from algae-laden discharges, an unnatural infusion of freshwater into our salt water that causes this. It creates a real mess for us.

When this nutrient-loaded freshwater hits our saltwater estuaries, it wreaks havoc on our coasts. It kills everything in the sea life in its path.

This past summer, we had freshwater that was released into our coastal estuaries that was labeled nearly 50 times too toxic for human contact. Now that water has tested positive for a number of toxins in areas that are very heavily populated. It is a very bad situation for what we experience each and every year.

This bill helps to stop this pollution by increasing the EPA's successful section 319 grant program. It addresses nonpoint source pollution through State-run nonpoint source pollution management, not Washington, D.C., one-size-fits-all approaches, but State-run. The bill reauthorizes this program and increases funding levels up to \$200 million annually through 2024. This is an amazing bill. I am very proud to work with everybody else on it.

In short, Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that can make a real difference for communities across our country, but specifically for communities in and around Florida and our beautiful peninsula, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support its passage. I thank Congresswoman CRAIG for leading this effort with me.

By the way, congratulations to Congresswoman CRAIG on passing her first piece of legislation, as well. Let's get this bill passed.

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO).

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Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) for yielding.

I rise in very strong support of H.R. 1331, the bipartisan Local Water Protection Act, and I wish to thank Representatives CRAIG and MAST for their leadership in introducing this bill that will help many communities in Minnesota, Florida, California, and around the country manage and treat pollution in our rivers, lakes, and seas.

The bill authorizes \$200 million annually for EPA to provide grants to States to address nonpoint source water pollution. This is pollution that comes when rain runoff carries toxins, fertilizers, metals, and other contaminants from farms, roads, and forests into the water bodies.

Today, according to the data provided by the State of California, my home State, approximately 89 percent of my State's assessed rivers and streams currently do not meet the State water quality standards. That is pretty high. And of that number, somewhere between 30 to 60 percent are impaired because of nonpoint sources of pollution in the State, both urban and rural sources. The number is staggering and has remained relatively constant over the past decade.

As Mrs. CRAIG mentioned, States around the country are experiencing the same level of unacceptable pollution entering their waterways, and this bill will address it.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG)

and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) for introducing this bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, which will help all of our congressional districts.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support.

I thank the leadership of the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), and I urge all of my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time and urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1331, "The Local Water Protection Act", which provides 200 million annually to support the nonpoint source management grants program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

I support this legislation because it is necessary to counteract the current crisis of water pollution in our country.

As an Energy and Environment Task Force Co-Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I understand the necessity of this bill and its funding to managing sources of water pollution.

It is unsustainable to think we can continue to allow runoff that carries pollutants, fertilizers, and sediment from fields; toxins from abandoned mines, and oils and heavy metals from roads, into lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water.

As pollutants in our waters increase, human exposure to toxins will follow in step, toxin exposure is directly linked to cancers and heart disease.

Before the pollutants reach people they reach our waterways, adversely affecting a whole ecosystem, putting 1 to 11 percent of marine species in to extinction every decade.

The strain on the marine life is not the only adverse effect to nature, global warming is also worsened when we turn a cheek to decreasing the pollution of our waterways.

Water pollution is not a topic to be taken lightly and we are reminded of our current privileges of clean water when we look at cities that have experienced the unimaginable, such as Flint, Michigan.

Flint, Michigan has lived in a state of fear, having to drink from bottles of filtered water in order to completely avoid lead poisoning and contamination.

Citizens of Flint, Michigan had to abandon their homes and the residents had to be compensated for their property and their current and future health conditions that arise from the contamination by polluted water.

Water pollution poses a threat in every state, including my home state of Texas.

It was found just recently that in 938 instances, Texas companies released pollution that exceeded the levels permitted by federal clean water laws according to researchers who examined Texas Commission for Environmental Quality data.

Texas was found in 2018 to have the most widespread radiated drinking water contamination affecting more than 3,500 utilities serving 22 million people.

The contamination in Texas included detectable levels of radium-226 and radium-228 in a study conducted by the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

Currently, it is required by law for states to submit reports to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the current sources of water pollution within their state, as well as plans to manage those sources of pollution.

EPA provides grants for states to carry out their plans to manage water pollution.

Mr. Speaker, we must not wait to take action when the health of our marine life, the state of Global Warming, and the health of our people are being affected.

H.R. 1331 would allow instrumental programs to continue serving as a step in the right direction in protecting and healing our home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1331.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. CRAIG. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AND NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM TASK FORCES

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 639) to amend section 327 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to clarify that National Urban Search and Rescue Response System task forces may include Federal employees.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 639

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AND NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM TASK FORCES.

Section 327 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(p) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that a task force may not include Federal employees. In the case of a Federal employee detailed to a task force, the sponsoring agency shall enter into an agreement with the relevant employing Federal agency.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. CRAIG) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CRAIG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 639.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 639 introduced by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

H.R. 639 is a technical correction bill which will amend section 327 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to explicitly clarify that Federal employees are able to participate in the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System task forces coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA has developed the National USAR Response System over the last several decades to act as a force multiplier for disaster rescue missions. The system is comprised of 28 task force teams from across the country and includes highly skilled volunteers who are constantly training for a variety of hazard scenarios, both man-made and natural.

Task force teams have proven their effectiveness time and again across this Nation.

Following enactment of the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act at the end of the 114th Congress, certain Federal agencies that employ members of some of these task forces have, unfortunately, been misinterpreting language that granted liability protections for non-Federal task force members equal to Federal first responders only when their task force was called into Federal service, resulting in an impediment to those Federal employees serving on a task force.

This bill will simply clarify that nothing in section 327 of the Stafford Act shall be interpreted to mean that a task force cannot include Federal employees and that, in instances where a Federal employee is detailed to a National USAR Response System task force, the sponsoring agency shall enter into an agreement with the relevant employing Federal agency.

The critical emergency services provided by the National USAR Response System and these highly skilled operators are too important for us to delay this fix any longer. I strongly support this bill and urge my colleagues to join me.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for her leadership on this legislation. Nothing is so valuable as someone who looks at a problem, sees the problem, and then endeavors to fix it, and that is exactly what the gentlewoman has done.