

Therefore, it is imperative that Congress act now to renew this expired authority.

H. Res. 632 also makes improvements to the Warehouse Act. This will provide the United States Department of Agriculture with the uniform regulatory system to govern the operation of federally licensed warehouses involved in storing agricultural products. Currently, warehouse licenses may be issued for the storage of major commodities and cottonseed. According to the USDA, 45.5 percent of the U.S. off-farm grain and rice storage capacity and 49.5 percent of the total cotton storage capacity is licensed under the Warehouse Act.

The revisions to the Warehouse Act will make this program more relevant to today's agricultural marketing system. The legislation would do such things as, number one, authorize and standardize electronic documents to allow their transfer from buyer to seller across State and international boundaries; number two, authorize warehouse operators to enter into contracts or agreements with depositors to allocate available storage space; and, finally, to protect the integrity of State warehouse laws and regulations from Federal preemption.

In 1992, Congress directed the Secretary of Agriculture to establish electronic warehouse receipts for the cotton industry; and since then, participation in the electronic-based program has grown to more than 90 percent of the U.S. cotton crop.

This legislation would extend the electronic warehouse receipts program to include all agricultural commodities covered by the U.S. Warehouse Act.

This legislation has been negotiated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and relevant industries.

Another important part of H. Res. 632, Mr. Speaker, addresses food aid to poverty-stricken countries. Many of the groups in the U.S. that assist in feeding the hungry around the world, are faith-based, nonprofit organizations that simply donate their services.

For years, these groups who want to contribute food aid to victims of international disasters have been prevented from fully participating in these efforts.

This legislation would authorize the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development to provide grants to private, non-profit and private, voluntary organizations for the stockpiling and rapid distribution, delivery of shelf-stable, prepackaged foods to needy individuals in foreign countries.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will bring grain inspection, and the use of warehouse facilities into the 21st century. At the same time, this bill will assist poverty-stricken countries, as they continue to accept the assistance of the United States nutrition programs. I certainly urge my colleagues to support this timely and very important piece of legislation.

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

1700

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4788, as amended, which contains the reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act and an update of the U.S. Warehouse Act that was passed in this House last week, as well as several other new provisions which I will go over.

Given today's world market, it is important that our farmers and commodity merchants have the best technical support possible to help them compete in that marketplace. This legislation helps continue the tradition by reauthorizing the inspection and weighing activities of the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration, GIPSA, as well as updating the U.S. Warehouse Act and providing for the use of electronic documentation under that act.

H.R. 4788 as amended by the Senate now also contains the following provisions:

An amendment to the Perishable Agriculture Commodities Act to extend the time period during which persons may file a complaint, which is, I think, identical to the bill we just passed previously, so we are going to do it twice to make sure that it does not slip by us;

A provision authorizing the Agriculture Marketing Service, AMS, to collect fees for contracted mediation and arbitration services provided by the tri-national Dispute Resolution Corporation, which has been formed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

AMS currently provides similar mediation and arbitration services to resolve contract disputes for fruit and vegetable businesses in the U.S. Since these services would be provided on a user-fee basis, the estimated net budgetary effect of this provision would be zero.

Several rural development provisions to further enhance the eligibility of rural areas suffering from severe unemployment and outmigration for a rural development program have been added.

A provision was added entitled "International Food Relief Partnership Act," which will provide incentives to further test the use of prepackaged, shelf-stable food. In addition, it will also provide limited authority to test the concept of pre-positioning commodities overseas for use in emergencies.

It would also extend and update the State mediation grant program, an important tool, given the difficult times facing farmers and ranchers today.

H.R. 4788, as amended by the Senate, has been further modified to include the following new provisions on our side: that is, Title I of the H.R. 728, the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments of 2000. This is a bill that passed the House by voice vote in July.

A provision for the exchange of private land involving the South Carolina Forestry Commission and the U.S. Forest Service. This exchange will be of equal value, and therefore of no cost to the government;

And a provision directing the Secretary to implement the recommendations of the September 21 General Accounting Office study of the enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act. It is hoped these changes will help make USDA more efficient and effective in protecting our Nation's livestock producers from any unfair market activities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the routine update of these two statutes and other provisions that were included in H.R. 4788.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this may be the last time that we see the gentleman from Nebraska (Chairman BARRETT) in this position on the floor. He has, unfortunately, chosen to leave the House.

I just want to say he has been an outstanding Member of the Committee on Agriculture, an outstanding chairman of the Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Resource Conservation and Credit. I have gotten to know the gentleman from Nebraska quite well. He is one of the nicest people, the most bipartisan chairman that we have. He is going to be very much missed.

All I can say is that I know that his family, his grandkids, are going to appreciate having him around a little more. He is maybe going to get a chance to fly his airplane like he used to do before he got so busy.

Most importantly, he and I are both musicians. He is going to go back and start playing the upright base again in his band. He is going to have a lot of fun, I know. We are going to miss the gentleman. He has done a great job. I know I speak for all of us in saying the best of luck to him, and have fun on the other side.

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

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota, for those kind words.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BARRETT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 632.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution just adopted.

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

There was no objection.

#### AMENDING INSPECTOR GENERAL ACT

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1707) to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) to provide that certain designated Federal entities shall be establishments under such Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1707

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

#### SECTION 1. THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY AS AN ESTABLISHMENT UNDER THE INSPECTOR GENERAL ACT OF 1978.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) Inspectors General serve an important function in preventing and eliminating fraud, waste, and abuse in the Federal Government; and

(2) independence is vital for an Inspector General to function effectively.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) in section 8G(a)(2) by striking “the Tennessee Valley Authority;” and

(2) in section 11—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking “or the Commissioner of Social Security, Social Security Administration;” and inserting “the Commissioner of Social Security, Social Security Administration; or the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority;” and

(B) in paragraph (2) by striking “or the Social Security Administration;” and inserting “the Social Security Administration, or the Tennessee Valley Authority;”.

(c) EXECUTIVE SCHEDULE POSITION.—Section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to the Inspector General of the Small Business Administration the following:

“Inspector General, Tennessee Valley Authority.”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The person serving as Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority on the effective date of this section—

(A) may continue such service until the President makes an appointment under section 3(a) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) consistent with the amendments made by this section; and

(B) shall be subject to section 8G (c) and (d) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) as applicable to the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, unless that person is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to be Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

#### SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF INSPECTORS GENERAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR ACADEMY AND INSPECTORS GENERAL FORENSIC LABORATORY.

(a) INSPECTORS GENERAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR ACADEMY.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Criminal Investigator Academy within the Department of the Treasury. The Criminal Investigator Academy is established for the purpose of performing investigator training services for offices of inspectors general created under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Criminal Investigator Academy shall be administered by an Executive Director who shall report to an inspector general for an establishment as defined in section 11 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.)—

(A) designated by the President’s Council on Integrity and Efficiency; or

(B) if that council is eliminated, by a majority vote of the inspector generals created under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(b) INSPECTORS GENERAL FORENSIC LABORATORY.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Inspectors General Forensic Laboratory within the Department of the Treasury. The Inspector General Forensic Laboratory is established for the purpose of performing forensic services for offices of inspectors general created under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Inspectors General Forensic Laboratory shall be administered by an Executive Director who shall report to an inspector general for an establishment as defined in section 11 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.)—

(A) designated by the President’s Council on Integrity and Efficiency; or

(B) if that council is eliminated, by a majority vote of the inspector generals created under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(c) SEPARATE APPROPRIATIONS ACCOUNT.—Section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(33) a separate appropriation account for appropriations for the Inspectors General Criminal Investigator Academy and the Inspectors General Forensic Laboratory of the Department of the Treasury.”.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001 and each fiscal year thereafter.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 1707.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 1707 would make the position of Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority a presidential appointment. The bill would also authorize a Criminal Investigator Academy and Forensic Laboratory for the Inspector General community.

Offices of Inspector General are independent, nonpartisan, and objective units that exist in nearly 60 Federal de-

partments and agencies, including all Cabinet departments, major executive branch agencies, and many smaller boards, commissions, corporations, and foundations.

The primary distinction between the offices of Inspector General in the larger Federal agencies and those in smaller government entities is the method by which the Inspector General is appointed. Inspectors General at larger agencies are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Inspectors General at smaller Federal entities are appointed, and can be removed from office by the head of the agency.

Regardless of the process, however, the mission of all Inspectors General is the same: to conduct audits and investigations of agency programs in order to promote an economic and efficient operation, and to combat any waste, fraud, or misuse of public money.

The Tennessee Valley Authority’s board of directors currently appoints and can remove its Inspector General. S. 1707 would turn that responsibility over to the President.

With an annual budget of more than \$7 million and a staff of more than 80 full-time equivalent employees, the Tennessee Valley Authority is larger than some government entities whose Inspectors General are appointed by the President. S. 1707 would elevate the status of the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Inspector General, and would further enhance the independence of this important office.

S. 1707 would also establish a Criminal Investigator Academy and General Forensic Laboratory for all Federal Inspectors General. These facilities would be housed in the Department of the Treasury and would provide high caliber investigative training and forensic services for Inspectors General at all departments, agencies, and government entities, regardless of size.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 1707, as has been mentioned, is intended to enhance the independence of the Inspector General of the Tennessee Valley Authority by making the position presidentially-appointed. Under current law, the Inspector General of the TVA is appointed by the agency head.

As all of us understand, the Inspectors General in all of our agencies perform a very important watchdog function. In order to be able to carry that out effectively, they need to be independent. Therefore, this bill would make the Inspector General of this agency similar to all agencies of the Federal government and require that the President appoint the Inspector General, rather than the agency head.

In addition, this bill authorizes such funds as are necessary to establish a criminal investigator academy and a forensic laboratory for the Inspector