

offer the small—but important—cultural funding through the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

One of the most important aspects of this bill and of the conference report, I believe, was the decision to honor the commitment we made last year when we enacted the Conservation Spending Trust Fund. I am extremely pleased that both the House and Senate bills contained full funding of \$1.32 billion for these conservation programs—a dramatic increase over the \$1.2 billion that was provided in the current year and \$637 million in Fiscal Year 2000. This six-year effort represents the most significant increase ever approved for conservation spending across federal environmental accounts that will boost land acquisition, maintenance and wildlife habitat protection in national parks, forests and refuge areas. This was an important step taken last year in the House, and I am proud that we have brought the final version of the Fiscal Year 2002 bill to the floor in a form that included all of the funding anticipated in the second year of this conservation spending agreement.

Despite an allocation in conference that was lower than many of us would have preferred, I am very pleased that this conference agreement funds several specific programs at adequate levels, including:

\$85 million for State Wildlife Grants;

\$140 million for stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants;

\$50 million for the new Land Owner Incentive Program;

\$115 million for the National Endowment for the Arts;

A 50 percent increase for the Weatherization program over last year's level;

\$2.2 billion for National Fire Plan activities, \$300 million over the President's budget request.

As the Ranking Democratic Member of the Interior Subcommittee, I want to thank all of my colleagues in the House for the substantial input and advice you have given to me and to our staff, and I assure you that I have made a diligent effort to attempt to address as many of those concerns as possible within the limitations of our allocation. I also want to thank the professional staff of the Interior Subcommittee for the long hours and meticulous attention to detail that has characterized their work on this legislation. Every member of the Subcommittee—Democrats as well as Republicans—appreciates their hard work under tight deadlines.

So I urge my colleagues to approve this bill. I am convinced that it responds to the most urgent environmental needs of our nation at this time, and that it addresses the major priorities of the Interior Department and the related programs with the Departments of Agriculture and Energy.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Both sides have yielded back all time for debate on the conference report.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on adoption of the conference report are postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2904, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2904, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, I call up the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2904) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House without intervention of any point of order.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

(For conference report and statement see proceedings of the House of Tuesday, October 6, 2001, at page H6831).

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I do not intend to object, but I have only reserved the right to object here in order to give the gentleman from Ohio an opportunity to explain what we are doing here.

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

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

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, as the manager of this conference agreement, I do not intend to use any of the hour on general debate; however, I would like to have the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) recognized.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON).

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I too wanted to object with the reservation on this for the purpose of asking the chairman and the ranking member a few questions about the bill. But I also do not intend to object to the bill but I want to reserve the right to do that. So if it is appropriate on the gentleman's time frame, I would like to ask a couple of questions if the gentleman will continue to yield.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to yield to the gentleman on my reservation.

Mr. KINGSTON. I thank both of the gentlemen and I want to say that my office and the gentleman's committee have worked very diligently for over a year now on a housing issue for Fort Stewart, Georgia and the City of Hinesville, Georgia, that I will not go into the details of. It is a project, as we know, that the staff on the committee is somewhat familiar with.

We have worked hard on this and have also had the honor of having the chairman of the committee come to our area and meet with several of the elected officials from Hinesville and Liberty County, Georgia, and I have been assured that we had this project under control and moving in the right direction.

Yesterday upon my return to Washington I was extremely shocked and extremely disappointed to find out that a problem had developed on this project, and even though it did pass the House, when this bill left the House it unfortunately disappeared in the conference committee. Maybe there was some lukewarm support or lukewarm objections from the Senate, but I also understand that there was a glitch with the authorizing committee, which I did not know about. So I wanted to express these concerns to the chairman and the ranking member and kind of flush it out for maybe next year if that is our only fallback position at this time.

Again, this was a very vital and important project for the folks in Hinesville, Georgia and Liberty County and Fort Stewart as well.

Mr. HOBSON. If I may respond, if the gentleman will continue to yield, first of all, I want my colleagues to know that I feel very badly about this because I have been to Hinesville and I have been involved in this project. I want to see this project succeed. This is a new type of situation that we really have not done before in the military, and that is one of the reasons I wanted to do it.

This helps the community, it helps the Army, and I think it helps the mortgage holder of these properties to get out of the property at a better way than they could have before. This is also new for the community to do a project in this way. We thought we had it done. And I want to be very frank, I thought it was done. We put it into our bill. We got into conference where these things are checked again, and we found there were a couple of procedural problems which the gentleman alluded to or mentioned there that were raised.

It became a situation where we cannot overcome that in this conference at this time and get the authorization and the other things necessary to get it done. But I want to make a commitment that I am going to do everything I can to make sure that this project gets done because I think this is a good model. If we can get this done, this is not just good for Hinesville, but this is a good model that we can use elsewhere in the country. So it is very important that we do it correctly.