

H.R. 4481, THE AIRPORT STREAMLINING APPROVAL PROCESS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to H.R. 4481, the Airport Streamlining Approval Process Act, which encourages the construction of airport capacity expansion projects at congested airports like Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

LAX is the third largest airport in the United States, serving approximately 65 million air passengers per year. Nevertheless, the operator of LAX had proposed a massive expansion plan that could have increased the airports' capacity to as many as 120 million air passengers per year. A diverse coalition of over 80 cities and several grassroots organizations, known as the Coalition for a Truly Regional Airport Plan, organized to oppose LAX expansion and support a regional approach to Southern California's air transportation needs.

The proposed expansion of LAX would have had a severe impact upon the surrounding communities. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report released by LAX expansion proponents, increased traffic in and out of LAX would have added 1,592 tons of pollutants per year to Los Angeles' air; an additional 7,150 persons would have been exposed to noise levels above 65 decibels; and inadequate noise mitigation efforts would have forced residents to remain indoors or move. Because of these negative impacts, many residents of the surrounding communities expressed strong opposition to LAX expansion.

Furthermore, the proposed expansion of LAX would have interfered with the development of a regional solution to Southern California's air transportation needs. While the communities surrounding LAX have been forced to endure a disproportionate share of the region's air traffic, other communities are eager for the economic benefits of development at their local airports. The expansion of LAX would have made it extremely difficult for these communities to attract service to their local airports. Residents and businesses in these communities would have had no alternative other than to commute to an expanded LAX for their air transportation needs, resulting in an increase in traffic congestion on the streets surrounding LAX. Clearly, the proposed expansion of LAX would not have ended air transportation-related gridlock in the Southern California region.

On April 18, 2002, I sent a letter to Chairman MICA and Congressman LIPINSKI, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, regarding the effect of airport streamlining legislation on the Southern California region. This letter, which was signed by three other Southern California Representatives, explained that we would oppose any legislation that would prevent the State of California and its regional and local governments from enacting a regional solution to our future aviation needs, including limiting or prohibiting the proposed expansion of LAX.

Airport expansion should not be carried out over the objections of local communities. It

would be both unfair and unwise for the Federal government to disregard local concerns or override the authority of state and local officials to plan local airport development.

I strongly oppose H.R. 4481, the Airport Streamlining Approval Process Act. Airport expansion is a local issue. It should not be encouraged by the Federal government.

H.R. 5094, GOOD GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING ACT

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 11, 2002

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, our confidence in the financial information reported by U.S. corporations was shaken by the disclosures of accounting irregularities discovered on the books of some of the largest companies on the New York Stock Exchange. Congress is taking important steps to improve the financial reporting requirements for every public corporation. The public should have similar confidence in the financial information it hears about our own Federal Government. This is not an obscure subject—literally trillions of dollars are at stake.

Two laws—The Chief Financial Officers Act passed in 1990, and the Government Management Reform Act passed in 1994—require Federal executive branch agencies to prepare audited financial statements, in accordance with undefined “applicable standards.” Who would set these standards and make sure they were fairly applied to all government agencies? In October 1990, the Secretary of the Treasury, Director of OMB and Comptroller General of the Government Accounting Office jointly agreed to create and sponsor the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, better known as “FASAB,” to play a major role in establishing the rules that assess the government's efficiency and effectiveness. FASAB is entirely different from the Financial Accounting Standards Board, or “FASB,” that governs private sector standards.

In carrying out its mission, the government's FASAB has published 18 Federal Government accounting standards and four accounting interpretations, covering topics as diverse as direct student lending, social insurance, and deferred maintenance of federal property. In addition, FASAB writes technical bulletins and releases, and makes a public reading room available to any citizen who wants more information on Federal Government accounting standards.

On January 11, Treasury, OMB, and GAO published a Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, that announced a restructuring of FASAB. This MOU is designed to enhance the independence of FASAB and increase public involvement in the setting standards process. It became effective June 30, 2002. I am introducing legislation that simply takes the President's MOU and puts it into law. This bill, called the “Good Government Accounting Act,” has already gained bipartisan support. It establishes FASAB as an independent entity, operating under the terms of the structure that has just been put into force.

Like the private sector, the Federal Government can benefit from using unbiased, equitable accounting standards with disclosures

that increase public understanding of how our government works. FASAB should exist by law—not just by agreement between Treasury, OMB, and GAO.

This bill, H.R. 5094, makes a major step forward to ensure that public accounting standards that govern trillions of dollars in taxpayer funds are well spent and reported accurately to the American people.

TEXTILE AND APPAREL RECOGNITION ACT (TARA)

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 11, 2002

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to join with my colleague, Representative JOHN SPRATT, along with 40 other original cosponsors to introduce the “Textile and Apparel Recognition Act” (TARA). This legislation recognizes the significant contributions the U.S. textile industry continues to make to our economy while also acknowledging that this industry is confronting a terrible crisis and deserves our attention.

Though it still employs nearly half a million Americans, the textile industry is in a state of crisis. Since 1994, a staggering 675,000 jobs have been lost in textiles and apparel. Last year alone the industry lost nearly 150,000 jobs and 2002 appears to be more of the same. These negative effects are not only being felt by the many thousands of textile workers who have lost their jobs, but by our local communities and states as well. As tax revenues have fallen as a result of plant closings, funding for schools, water infrastructure improvements, and basic services, such as garbage collection, have also been negatively affected.

Closed foreign markets, which persist despite trade policies that have opened our own markets; continuing large-scale customs fraud and transshipment; and currency devaluation in several textile-producing nations along with a strong dollar have all contributed to a prolonged period of industry-wide downsizing and plant closings. Those of us representing U.S. textile and apparel producers have seen thousands and thousands of jobs in our districts disappear.

We remain encouraged by the attention this administration has given to the crisis confronting this important sector of our economy and believe that this resolution offers an opportunity to show our support for continued efforts in this regard. I encourage my colleagues to join with us in this effort by cosponsoring this resolution, and I thank the Speaker for yielding me this time.

TRIBUTE TO QUEEN CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 11, 2002

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Queen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church on the occasion of their celebration of a new sanctuary after 136