□ 1654

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 146, I was unavoidably detained, and I missed the vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 146 on H. Res. 605, recognizing the importance of increasing awareness about autism, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, personal reasons prevent me from being present for legislative business scheduled after 3 p.m. today, Wednesday, May 5, 2004. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on the motion to instruct conferees on S. Con. Res. 95 (rollcall No. 145); and ''yea'' on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 605, a resolution recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of autism (rollcall No. 146).

EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR THE INTELSAT INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Commerce be discharged from further consideration of the Senate bill (S. 2315) to amend the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to extend the deadline for the INTELSAT initial public offering, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 2315

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF IPO DEADLINE.

Section 621(5)(A)(i) of the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 (47 U.S.C. 763(5)(A)(i)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''December 31, 2003,'' and inserting ''June 30, 2005,''; and

(2) by striking ''June 30, 2004;'' and inserting ''December 31, 2005;''.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I support S. 2315, a bill that would extend the deadline for the INTELSAT initial public offering (IPO).

During debate on the ORBIT Act several years ago, I voiced concerns regarding the specific licensing criteria that INTELSAT and Inmarsat were required to meet to gain access to the U.S. telecommunications market. One provision required each company to conduct an initial public offering by a date certain. I would prefer that the Government not be in the business of requiring companies to go public. At the very least, however, the Government should not be forcing companies to go public when market conditions are unfavorable.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what is now happening, unless we approve the bill before us. The ORBIT Act requires INTELSAT to complete its IPO by June 30—just two short months away. And while we all hope that our economy is on the upswing by then, forcing INTELSAT to conduct an IPO next month is bad policy and will cost INTELSAT's owners, including many U.S. investors, hundreds of millions of dollars.

The bill before us today, S. 2315, amends the Communications Satellite Act to give INTELSAT an additional year to conduct its IPO. Although I would prefer that this bill be addressed through regular order, time is short. A one-year extension is what has passed in the other body, and, in the interest of time, we should pass this bill and allow INTELSAT another year to conduct its IPO.

The satellite marketplace has changed significantly from when the ORBIT Act became law, and the repeated Congressional action to postpone the Act's IPO requirements raises serious questions about whether additional changes need to be made to the Act to ensure that it addresses current market conditions. Accordingly, I hope that the Committee on Energy and Commerce will hold a hearing in the near future on the Act's relevance and effect on today's satellite marketplace.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 2315, the Senate bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2771) to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize the New York City Watershed Protection Program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2771

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

SECTION 1. NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM.

Section 1443(d)(4) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–2(d)(4)) is amended by striking ''1997 through 2003'' and inserting ''2003 through 2010''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on this legislation.

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

There was no objection.

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

I want to recognize my subcommittee vice chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA), for the fine work that he has done on this bill.

The New York Watershed Protection Program reauthorization is bipartisan legislation with 28 cosponsors, including both the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) who are members of our full committee. In fact, the bill has 19 Democrats as cosponsors and 12 Republicans. This bill is a perfect example of fair-minded people from all parts of the political spectrum coming together to support legislation that is good for the environment.

The New York City Watershed covers an area of over 1,900 square miles in the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River Valley. The watershed is divided into two reservoir systems, the Catskill/Delaware watershed and the Croton watershed. Together, the two reservoir systems deliver approximately 1.4 billion gallons of water every day to nearly 9 million people in the New York City area.

In December 1993, EPA concluded that New York City was able to avoid filtration of its drinking water and assigned New York over 150 conditions relating to watershed protection, monitoring, and studies. Unfortunately, New York City met several key roadblocks to implementation of these requirements, including not being able to obtain a land acquisition permit or approval of revised watershed regulations from the State of New York.

Congress addressed this problem in Section 128 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, when the New York City Watershed Protection Program was first enacted. The program authorized $15 million per year for fiscal years 1997 to 2003 for EPA to provide matching grants to the State of New York for approved demonstration grants projects that were part of New York's watershed and source water protection program.

In practice, this has been a successful program and has saved the economic vitality and the environmental quality of upstate New York communities in the watershed region, while also saving American taxpayers billions of dollars that would otherwise be necessary to build water filtration systems. Witnesses at our subcommittee hearing on this bill all spoke highly of this program, and they need to see it fully extended.

Of note, EPA Administrator Leavitt has also testified that one way to reduce the financial needs of drinking

water delivery systems is to encourage more conservation efforts, and I believe programs like the New York City watershed are good examples of public and private partnerships paying environmental and economic dividends.

The House faces a simple question: should we as Congress provide legal authority for the Federal Government to assist this watershed? I believe we should. It is a simple bill that extends the authorization of the New York City Watershed until 2010. Let us take a step toward bipartisan protection of the environment and New York's source water in particular. I urge Members to vote favorably on H.R. 2771.

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, today we are considering H.R. 2771, a bill passed by the Committee on Energy and Commerce to reauthorize the New York City Watershed Protection Program for 7 years.

□ 1700

I am not opposed to demonstration projects for monitoring New York City watershed, but it seems odd that of the more than a dozen core provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act that expired in 2003, the House leadership has managed to find time for consideration of the management of one bill which singles out a small demonstration grant program that benefits only one State for a 7-year reauthorization.

During the Committee on Energy and Commerce's consideration of this bill, Democratic members questioned the wisdom of reauthorizing a provision that President Bush did not include in his 2005 budget. Given that, the subcommittee of the Committee on Energy and Commerce with oversight over this legislation, requested that the Bush administration provide the committee with a witness who could explain the administration's position on the bill, and explain why the President chose not to request funding for the program. The administration did not provide the committee with such a witness or with the requested information.

The ranking Democrat on the Committee on Commerce, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, sent a letter to Administrator Leavitt asking those questions and requesting that he provide an answer by last Friday, April 30, so the House Members could make an informed vote on the bill.

Administrator Leavitt still has not responded to that request.

Mr. Speaker, that letter is as follows:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, April 12, 2004.

Hon. MICHAEL R. LEAVITT,
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC

DEAR ADMINISTRATOR LEAVITT: The Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials held a hearing and markup on Friday, April 2, 2004, on H.R. 2771, a bill to reauthorize financial assistance to the State of New York for demonstration projects implemented as part of the New York City Watershed Protection Program. The legislation would reauthorize Section 1443(d) of the Safe Drinking Water Act to extend the annual authorization of $15,000,000 to the year 2010. None of the other thirteen provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act whose annual authorizations expired in 2003 would be extended or reauthorized.

The Committee majority staff informed the minority staff that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was unable to provide a witness at the hearing to testify on the President's budget requests for the New York Watershed Program. The EPA witness from Region 2 who did appear at the hearing was also unable to provide the Administration's position on H.R. 2771.

Therefore, I request a response to the following questions not later than close of business on Friday, April 30, 2004:

1. Does the Administration support H.R. 2771?

2. Please explain why President Bush's budget for FY 2005 did not contain any requested funding to implement Section 1443(d), the New York Watershed Protection Program. In addition, please explain why none of President Bush's previous budgets for FY 2002, FY 2003, or FY 2004 contained any funding requests to provide financial assistance to the State of New York for the demonstration projects authorized by Section 1443(d).

3. Is it correct that the first financial assistance provided by the EPA from appropriations earmarks to the State of New York for the demonstration projects authorized by Section 1443(d) was on or about September 30, 1997? Is it also correct that the report from the Governor of New York on the results of projects assisted as required by Section 1443(d)(2) was due to be submitted to the EPA Administrator on or about September 30, 2002?

Thank you for your cooperation with this matter. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me or have your staff contact Dick Frandsen, Senior Minority Counsel, at 202–225–3641.

Sincerely,

JOHN D. DINGELL,
Ranking Member.
HILDA L. SOLIS,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, Democratic members expressed concern over the fact that H.R. 2771 seeks to reauthorize the program for an additional 6 years beyond the Senate companion to this bill.

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) offered an amendment to H.R. 2771 during the markup of the bill, a markup that would have reauthorized the bill for one additional year. This 1-year authorization would have ensured authorized funding of the New York City Watershed Project during the appropriations process.

The amendment would have also allowed us to revisit the New York City Watershed Bill during a comprehensive review of the entire Safe Drinking Water Act next year.

Every day we open the newspapers to read about the health concerns of families of Washington, D.C. and members in Washington, D.C. as they deal with excessive levels of lead in their drinking water.

Each of us has heard from our local communities about the urgent need to upgrade our Nation's aging water infrastructure. There is an unquestionable need in all of our States for additional resources to ensure compliance with drinking water standards and make critical infrastructure improvements.

Among the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act that have expired is the State Revolving Loan Fund, which funds critical water infrastructure and compliance needs throughout our country. President Bush's budget requested only $850 million for this critical program, $150 million less than the level authorized by the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act amendments. If we authorized and fully funded that provision, each of our States would receive an additional 1 to $15 million.

Local governments, States, drinking water suppliers and the EPA, all agree there is a tremendous resource gap which will continue to grow for drinking water infrastructure funding needed to protect the public health. This matter calls for corrective legislation. Of course, we support efforts to maintain the availability of safe drinking water in New York. But we should give all the expired provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act the same attention we are giving H.R. 2771 so that families throughout the country can have access to safe drinking water.

Mr. Speaker, we have the time here to name post offices and to commend athletic teams and organizations, and when we do get around to environmental concerns, we only take a teenie weenie bite at the apple. We should give the same amount of attention to the funding needs of all our environment programs. The President's FY 2005 budget cut $2.3 billion in funding for programs that protect public health and the environment. The FY 2005 budget for the EPA is 7.2 percent below the FY 2004 enacted level. Furthermore, the President does not reinstate the Superfund taxes in his FY 2005 budget, a move that would force taxpayers to foot the bill for hazardous cleanup and would deviate from the long-standing ''polluter pays'' principle of the Superfund.

The President does include, however, expected revenues from opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR, to oil and gas exploration despite strong opposition in Congress to this plan.

We should also act to make sure people across the country have clean air to breathe. The Bush administration has severely loosened the requirements of

the Clean Air Act. This administration's new source review regulations allows plants to indefinitely continue to put large amounts of dangerous pollutants in the air. This administration has also proposed mercury regulations that would allow as much as 3 times more mercury to release from power plants than would be released under current law.

We could spend our time passing legislation like the gentleman from California's (Mr. WAXMAN) Clean Smoke Stacks Act, H.R. 2042, to drastically curb emissions of sulpher dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon dioxide and mercury from power plants.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, a couple of quick points. The gentlewoman attacked this bill because Bush did not ask for funding for it. I would also point out that the Clinton administration did not ask for any funding for this bill either, but Congress has a responsibility which we exercised before when we originally authorized it and which we are doing it again.

Regarding the comments about lead in the drinking water, the activity that is going on now is a GAO study that is ongoing at my request to look at that serious situation.

I also want to respond to the comment the lady made about the money in the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Fund. I would point out to her that the Bush administration has asked for more money for that program than the Clinton administration did.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA), the vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for bringing H.R. 2771 to the floor. I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR) for passing this bill to ensure the continued protection of our Nation's largest and most pure source of drinking water.

The overwhelming bipartisan nature of this effort was seen at the subcommittee hearing when New York Members of Congress from both parties, representatives from upstate and New York City, as well as the State Department of Environmental Commissioner Crotty all testified in support of the bill. I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) for their help in spearheading this effort through.

The unanimous vote passing this bill out of the full committee is yet another testament to this bipartisan initiative and backed by every single member of the New York delegation. H.R. 2771 reauthorizes the New York City Watershed Protection Program, as I mentioned, made possible through the landmark New York City Watershed Agreement. The accord resulted from the efforts of Governor George Pataki and his vision to bring together environmental groups, New York City officials, upstate communities and the United States Department of Environmental Protection in 1997.

It allowed for the continued and long-term protection of New York City's drinking water, while safeguarding the economic viability and environmental quality of Upstate communities in the watershed region. The agreement also saves, and this is important, State and Federal taxpayers $8 billion that would be necessary to build water filtration systems in its absence. With a relatively small amount of Federal funding, New York City and State have been able to implement an unprecedented water monitoring and surveillance program for the 1,900 square miles of the region.

This is the Nation's largest source of unfiltered drinking water, providing pristine water to 9 million residents in both New York City and its Upstate communities. Congress recognized the need to fund the New York City Watershed Protection Program in 1996 with the Safe Drinking Water Act amendments. Since then, the Watershed Agreement has made unprecedented advances towards enhancing water quality in both New York and the country.

The $15 million in Federal funds authorized annually provides the seed money for groundbreaking programs and studies. These efforts are used as a nationwide model to improve drinking water for all Americans.

Building on this small base of Federal funding, the City and State of New York have shown a strong commitment towards implementation of the Watershed Agreement. To date, both have spent $1.6 billion on watershed programs. Unfortunately, authorization of Federal funding of the agreement expired on September 30 of last year, leaving its future in jeopardy. H.R. 2771 solves this problem. By reauthorizing the program through 2010, enhancing the protection of New York City's water supply will continue, along with the development of watershed protection models benefiting, again, all Americans.

Today, Congress will act to protect New York City's drinking water. Protect the watershed agreement's breakthrough innovations, protect Upstate farmers and communities and pass H.R. 2771.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS).

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of 2771. This bill is very important to the people of New York. The entire New York delegation supports this bill.

This legislation would reauthorize funding for the New York City Watershed Agreement, helping to ensure safe and healthy drawing for the residents of New York.

New York City's vast water supply provides 1.4 billion gallons of high quality drinking water to more than 9 million New Yorkers every day. Nearly 90 percent of those consumers reside in New York City. To supply millions of people with safe, clean water takes an extensive water supply. In fact, the supply consists of 19 reservoirs in a watershed that spans almost 2,000 square miles. It covers 8 counties, 60 towns, and 11 villages in the Catskill Mountain region and the Hudson River Valley.

The effective protection of this essential national resource is an enormous challenge. Let me point out that environmental groups worked with New York City, State officials, Upstate communities, and the Federal Government to create the New York City Watershed Agreement. While this landmark agreement laid the groundwork for protecting the city's water supply, it could only work if an effective quality water monitoring program was implemented.

So in 1996 Congress responded by authorizing annual funding for 7 years. During this period, Congress has provided a total of $31 million to implement a comprehensive surveillance program, matched equally by grant recipients. Additionally, New York City and State have leveraged those Federal funds by investing $1.6 billion to protect the New York City drinking water supply. By reauthorizing Federal funding for the watershed agreement which expired last September, this bill would demonstrate the Federal Government's continued commitment and help maintain the safety of New York City's water supply.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by thanking the staff, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON); the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR), and of course the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for their hard work on this as well.

Let me say that this is very important to New York City. And I know there has been some concern about the fact that other bills have not been moved or other areas have not included, but let me say that I think a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. And starting with New York, I think that is a good place to start. I cannot think of a better place to start than New York.

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY).

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this legislation. The enactment of H.R. 2771 has significant implications for my district, immediately north of New York City. This includes portions of Westchester, Rockland, Dutchess, Putnam and Orange Counties. Through all of these counties all of New York City's drinking water flows. The entire Croton system of reservoirs, the lower third of this system, is in my district.

New York City's tap water has been called the champagne of drinking waters because of its exceptional purity. And it is because of the actions that take place in my district and other Upstate counties that this water is so pure.

We are happy to partner with the city to protect its water supply in a way that helps preserve the pristine character of the Hudson River Valley. And the 1997 Watershed Agreement has been an essential tool for maintaining this partnership.

Through assistance provided under the Watershed Agreement, communities in my district have been able to develop plans which help preserve their character and protect the water supply for New York City. Without the agreement and the critical assistance of the EPA, the balance we have struck would be undermined. And so the passage of this bill is vital to the continuing partnership in my district.

The cost savings brought by this agreement needs to be considered as well. The cost of a plant to filter New York City's water supply system which would be necessary if this 1997 agreement falls apart, has been estimated at $8 billion. The Watershed Agreement is an area of common ground. We have worked hard to get this agreement going.

I thank my colleagues for considering this legislation that will allow this mutually beneficial process to continue.

□ 1715

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me on this bill.

This bill, H.R. 2771, is a bill to reauthorize the New York City watershed protection program.

We passed this bill out of the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials last month. This legislation addresses a grant for one State, New York. It was the first markup the subcommittee took up in the entire 108th Congress.

I do not mean to belittle the significance of this bill. I am pleased to help out my New York colleagues, but what about the consideration of the 13 other important provisions of the Safe Water Drinking Act whose authorizations have expired in 2003? The New York demonstration project's annual authorization of $15 million represents roughly 1 percent of the over $1.2 billion in total authorizations the Safe Drinking Water Act provides.

By giving priority to only one provision for special treatment, we are failing to address important core provisions of the act, such as the State revolving loan fund that helps all States and assures safe and healthy drinking water for all citizens. The revolving loan fund also expired in 2003 and is seriously short-changed in the administration's budget request at $850 million. That is $150 million less than the authorized level. This fund is critical in helping public water systems finance infrastructure projects needed to comply with the Federal drinking water regulations and to protect public health.

The EPA itself says we need $102.3 billion in additional funding for water utilities just to maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. That figure does not take into account the large and the huge costs of replacing critical water infrastructure.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that public health issues are not a priority for the Republican House leadership.

Far too many environmental and public health issues continue to be ignored. Let me name another issue that has continually been brushed aside.

The importance of Canadian trash into Michigan and the interstate movement of trash in general to neighboring States, like Ohio and Pennsylvania, has been a problem for more than a decade. Although a hearing was held last July in the subcommittee, there has been no effort to pass out any of the three bills that have been introduced to address this issue by members of our committee of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

One of those bills, of which I am a cosponsor, would direct the EPA to enforce an earlier agreement with Canada to stop the importation of municipal solid waste. I would be interested to know if the Republican leadership and the committee leadership are going to consider any of these bills this year.

This is just one of a long list of important environmental issues that the majority has failed to address. Other issues include lead contamination in Washington, D.C.'s drinking water and the need for Federal drinking water standards for perchlorate to ensure that the Department of Defense cleans up widespread contamination at its facilities, like Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

We should give the same amount of attention to the funding needs of all our environmental and public health programs. Instead, the President's budget cuts these programs by $2.3 billion, slashing EPA's budget by 7.2 percent below the fiscal year 2004 enacted level.

Again, as the majority, the Republican leadership, here refuses to address these serious issues, it is America's environment and public health that are continually put at risk.

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

I thank the gentleman for his comments. There are a couple of things I would like to point out.

It is the Republicans on the Committee on Energy and Commerce that caused the broad investigation into lead in the drinking water. It was Republicans on the Committee on Energy and Commerce that asked GAO to look at the perchlorate problem in the water, and I would also point out that the Democrats on the committee were invited to participate in that request and just plain declined to do so.

I would also point out that we have started looking at the problem of the actions of the Defense Department regarding environmental cleanups and that we have also held hearings on the matter of movement of trash both interstate and internationally, and that it was Republicans on the committee that developed and caused to be passed a leaking underground storage bill which is now incorporated in H.R. 6, which is the energy bill, which is still pending over in the Senate.

It is the Republicans on the Committee on Energy and Commerce that have supported changes to the brownfield redevelopment program.

So the thrust of the gentleman's statement that nothing is happening I would take some degree of exception to.

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

Mr. GILLMOR. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the chairman, I agree we have had some hearings.

The perchlorate that I mentioned at Camp Lejeune has been going on for 20 years. We have to get that resolved. We had testimony from Mr. Ensminger and others last week about his daughter who died of leukemia from the contaminant in the drinking water at Camp Lejeune, and no one has taken responsibility or accepted responsibility for doing anything about it.

Mr. GILLMOR. Is the gentleman asking me a question or making a speech?

Mr. STUPAK. The point I want to make, and see, with the trash issue, some 13 years we have had a number of hearings in committee. We had one last July, which I am thankful for.

Mr. GILLMOR. If the gentleman is making a speech, he is doing it on my time.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, can we just report them out like we did this bill? This is the only bill we have reported out. Would my colleagues please report out the Canadian trash bills?

Mr. GILLMOR. Reclaiming my time, we are taking a look at that, and as my colleague knows, we attempted to do that last year, and we had a problem that sometimes occurs around here called shortage of votes; but I am hopeful that we can have an interstate and international waste bill.

The only way we are going to do it is if we have broad bipartisan support, which, as my colleague knows, he and I have both served on this committee a long time, is sometimes difficult to attain.

Mr. STUPAK. We look forward to working with my colleague in a bipartisan manner to move those Canadian trash bills.

Mr. GILLMOR. I thank the gentleman.

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. watershed protection program is a very significant piece of environmental legislation. It is part of the Federal Clean Water Act, itself being one of the most significant pieces of environmental legislation ever addressed by this Congress. The issue here before us is the reauthorization of that New York City watershed protection program, and I urge the Members of this House to support that reauthorization.

The Catskill Mountains provide the protection for the New York City water supply system. That protection is a natural system. The reservoir system itself is a natural system. It is gravity-fed. There are no pumps in it at any point along the way.

The system itself is unfiltered, one of the few major water supply systems anywhere in the country that remains unfiltered. It is important that it remain so. It is important for some of the reasons that have been mentioned, costs certainly; $8 billion is an extraordinary amount of money. In addition to that, it would require another half a billion dollars a year just to operate the filtration system; but if the filtration system were to be built, that would undermine all of the protections that are inherent in this legislation that provide for natural, safe, pure protection of this water supply system.

So I want to express my appreciation to everyone who has been involved with the creation of this bill and bringing it to the floor today and the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) particularly and others on the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

I would also, along with my other colleagues, urge that the other portions of the Federal Clean Water Act be addressed as well and they be addressed expeditiously. The water supplies of this country are incredibly important to the health and safety of all Americans. We value our water supply system in New York. Other communities value theirs as well.

I would urge that the remaining 13 provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act be addressed and be addressed as quickly as possible and be brought to the floor so we can deal with them in the proper fashion.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me, and I rise in strong support of this legislation.

I am proud to serve on the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and when we marked up this bill last week, I was very happy to speak in favor of it.

I represent a district covering Rockland, Westchester and Bronx counties, all of which are part of the 9 million people that this water is so important for.

I am aware that many of my colleagues are unhappy that we are only reauthorizing a very small provision of the Safe Drinking Water Act. I agree with their unhappiness, and I hope that the committee and subcommittee and the full House can reauthorize the rest of the Safe Drinking Water Act; but I would say to my colleagues, please do not hold New York hostage.

All 29 Members of the House representing New York, both Democrats and Republicans, strongly support this bill. I am certainly happy to take care of New York, but my State benefits from the State revolving loan fund as well. So I want to say that the safe drinking water programs are all important and should be reauthorized, and I hope they will be.

This bill is very important to New York. Millions of people rely on drinking water from this watershed, and ensuring that they have safe and clean water is very important to me and my constituents. This is obviously not a perfect bill, but it is an important water quality monitoring program. It is a model program for the rest of the Nation, and I would hope this could be replicated with the rest of the Nation.

So, again, I thank my colleagues for coming together. We want to have safe and clean drinking water in New York. When our Republican colleagues come to New York in August and September for the convention, we want their water to be pure, and I think Democrats and Republicans can all agree on that. So, again, I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

□ 1730

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the gentleman on the issue of lead in the drinking water, in fact, it was the Committee on Government Reform that held hearings on this. Also, this legislation we were considering today was, in fact, the first markup of the 108th Congress in the Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials.

There are so many issues on the environmental agenda. Since we have so few opportunities to discuss those on the floor of the House since they are so rare to come before us, I wanted to just mention, bring to the attention of this body, that there is a very important third edition of the National Resource Defense Council book called ''Rewriting the Rules: The Bush Administration's Assault on the Environment'' which documents more than 150 assaults on our environmental safeguards between January 2003 and March 2004.

Among the most troubling Bush administration environmental actions include: In November 2003, the Bush administration proposed to legalize the release of inadequately treated sewage into waterways as long as it is diluted with treated sewage, a process the agency has euphemistically labeled ''blending.''

In April 2003, in a sweeping legal settlement with then-Utah governor and current EPA administrator Mike Leavitt, the administration renounced the government's authority to conduct wilderness inventories on public lands or to protect more areas for their wilderness values. The sudden settlement involved no public comment or open deliberations, and threatens to open millions of acres of wilderness public lands to drilling, mining, road building and other development.

The Bush administration has refused to regulate mercury through the same tough approach used for other hazardous air pollutants. The Clean Air Act requires the plants meet maximum achievable control technology standards for hazardous air pollutants. The Bush administration's proposal allows more mercury to be admitted, and gives industry decades longer to comply.

Furthermore, in January 2004, it was revealed that at least a dozen paragraphs of the Bush administration's mercury proposal were lifted, sometimes verbatim, from memos sent by a law firm that represents the utility industry.

Eric Schaeffer, the EPA's head of civil enforcement, handed in his resignation after President Bush announced the ''Clear Skies'' initiative. His letter of resignation said he was ''tired of fighting a White House that seems determined to weaken the rules we are trying to enforce.''

In February, 2004, 63 scientists, including 20 Nobel laureates and 19 recipients of the National Medal of Science, issued a statement accusing the Bush administration of ''deliberately and systematically'' distorting scientific fact and misleading the public in order to further its own partisan political objectives.

In a damning report, the scientists detailed numerous examples of the administration's abuse of science, censoring government studies, gagging agency scientists, refusing to confer with or ignoring independent experts, appointing unqualified or industry-connected individuals to Federal advisory committees, disbanding those government panels offering unwanted information, and misinterpreting information to fit predetermined policy objectives.

Having said all that, I would like to say that I think H.R. 2771, limited though it is, is an important step in providing clean, safe drinking water in New York City.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to follow up on a comment by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) who talked about the Republican convention being in New York this year, and that this would help us have good water while we are there. I want to assure the gentleman from New York and other New

Yorkers that I am looking forward to attending the Republican National Convention and sampling what the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) called the ''champagne of water'' while I am there.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the extension of the New York City Watershed Protection Program, and I thank my colleague VITO FOSSELLA for his leadership on this issue.

Ensuring clean drinking water for our communities has always been a priority of mine. Providing a safe and health water supply is not just a public health issue, it is also a homeland security priority.

I am pleased that the bill under consideration today will reauthorize the funding for the Watershed Protection Program through 2010. The program will provide $15 million per year to protect and enhance the quality of New York's water supply, and in the long run will save taxpayers the cost of an alternative water filtration system. This comprehensive initiative demonstrates our commitment to the ongoing preservation of New York's safe drinking water supply, and I am pleased to see communities, environmental groups and state officials join together in support of this cause.

I am happy to support this legislation, which will benefit the health of New Yorkers and the quality of our environment for years to come.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2771.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY ACT

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 27) to amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 to exempt small public housing agencies from the requirement of preparing an annual public housing agency plan, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 27

Be it enacted the 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 ''Small Public Housing Authority Act''.

SEC. 2. PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY PLANS FOR CERTAIN SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES.

Section 5A(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c–1(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN SMALL PHAS FROM FILING REQUIREMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1) or any other provision of this Act—

''(i) the requirement under paragraph (1) shall not apply to any qualified small public housing agency; and

''(ii) any reference in this section or any other provision of law to a 'public housing agency' shall not be considered to refer to any qualified small public housing agency, to the extent such reference applies to the requirement to submit a public housing agency plan under this subsection.

''(B) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'qualified small public housing agency' means a public housing agency that meets all of the following requirements:

''(i) The sum of (I) the number of public housing dwelling units administered by the agency, and (II) the number of vouchers under section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) administered by the agency, is 100 or fewer.

''(ii) The agency is not designated pursuant to section 6(j)(2) as a troubled public housing agency.

''(iii) The agency provides assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that notwithstanding the inapplicability of the requirements under this section relating to resident advisory boards and public hearings and notice, residents of public housing administered by the agency will have an adequate and comparable opportunity for participation and notice regarding establishment of the goals, objectives, and policies of the public housing agency.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation and to insert extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this Member rises today to express his support for H.R. 27, the Small Public Housing Authority Act. The bill, which was introduced by this Member on January 27, 2003, will be considered under suspension of the rules. This legislation, which addresses the annual plan requirements for small public housing authorities passed the Committee on Financial Services by a unanimous, bipartisan voice vote on March 17, 2004. It is important to note that this Member introduced this legislation in the 107th Congress as well.

First, this Member would like to thank both the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Chairman OXLEY) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), the ranking minority member, for their efforts in bringing this measure to the floor.

Indeed, following some concerns and suggestions from the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), compromise language was agreed upon to ensure unanimous support for this legislation. It should be noted for background that the Public Housing Reform Act requires PHAs to submit both a 5-year plan and an annual plan to HUD. The 5-year PHA plan addresses the Agency's mission and their plan to achieve their mission. The annual plan requires PHAs to provide details about updates or changes to the 5-year plan.

Specifically, the annual plan, among other things, has typically asked for the following information: Housing needs of the families in the jurisdiction; strategies to meet these needs; statement of financial resources; and PHA policies governing eligibility, selection, and admissions. HUD has made the effort to streamline this annual planning for small PHAs and for high-performing PHAs. However, incredibly, an example of a streamlined plan was still 47 pages with extensive attachments.

This legislation would exempt small PHAs from being required to submit that annual plan to HUD. Under the bill as it passed the House Committee on Financial Services, a small PHA is defined to be one which has 100 or fewer combined public housing units and section 8 vouchers. PHAs, which are exempt from the annual planning requirement, would still have to prepare a 5-year plan. Moreover, a small PHA which is designated as a troubled housing agency by HUD would still be required to submit that annual plan.

This legislation also includes a provision that tenants of small PHAs which are exempt from the annual planning requirement must continue to have an adequate and comparable opportunity for participation and notice regarding the establishment of goals, objectives and policies of that PHA.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is needed to simply provide some regulatory burden relief to small PHAs which do not have the time, staff or resources to do these annual HUD plans by themselves. Many of these small PHAs only have a part-time executive director. Currently, small PHAs are forced to hire consultants since they do not have the computer software package to complete these annual plans, and these consultants are expensive costs for small PHAs which already face some daunting financial challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that these small PHAs are located across the entire Nation. Today this Member will focus on the small PHAs in Nebraska because I am most familiar with them. For example, in this Member's district, there are 23 PHAs which would qualify under the definition used for small PHAs. There are approximately 60 PHAs in Nebraska statewide which qualify as small PHAs under this bill, especially in the district of the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE), and he will speak on that.

To give a not-atypical example from this Member's congressional district, the village of Beemer is a community of 773 people, according to the last census. They have a PHA which administered just 20 public housing units and no section 8 vouchers. Under the current law, the Beemer PHA is required to submit the extensive annual plan to HUD which I have mentioned.