

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 82.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Madam 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.J. Res. 82.

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

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 703) recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supporting continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 703

Whereas April 26, 2006, marks the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas serious radiological, health, and socioeconomic consequences for the populations of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, as well as for the populations of other affected areas, have been identified since the disaster;

Whereas the Chernobyl Forum, an initiative launched by the International Atomic Energy Agency and supported by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Program, and other United Nations agencies, as well as by the governments of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, examined the scientific evidence of the human health effects and the environmental impact of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the findings of the Chernobyl Forum, issued in September 2005, significantly added to the understanding of the health consequences and economic impact caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the Chernobyl Forum found that approximately 5,000,000 people live in areas of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia that were contaminated by radioactivity;

Whereas the populations of the affected areas who were exposed as children have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer;

Whereas the lives and health of people in the affected areas continue to be heavily burdened by the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas numerous charitable, humanitarian, and environmental organizations from the United States and the international

community are committed to overcoming the extensive consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas the United States has sought to help the people of the affected areas through various forms of assistance;

Whereas humanitarian assistance and public health research into the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster will continue to be needed in the coming decades when a large number of latent health effects are expected to emerge;

Whereas the United States strongly supports improving nuclear safety in Ukraine;

Whereas, in 1997, the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine developed the Shelter Implementation Plan for the purpose of protecting people and the environment from the dangers of the large quantity of highly radioactive material contained in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant;

Whereas as the United States is the largest single country donor to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, which was created with the purpose of funding the Shelter Implementation Plan, having pledged a total of \$203,000,000; and

Whereas the most critical component of the Shelter Implementation Plan will be the construction of a new shelter designed to better protect people and the environment from the radioactive remains of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and expresses sympathy for the ongoing effects of the disaster, including adverse health consequences and deaths;

(2) calls upon national and international health organizations to focus their research into the public health consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster into areas identified by the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, so that the global community can benefit from the findings of such research;

(3) supports continued United States assistance to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, the Shelter Implementation Plan, construction of a facility to store spent nuclear fuel, and other efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; and

(4) urges other countries and the European Union to continue to provide assistance to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund, the Shelter Implementation Plan, construction of a facility to store spent nuclear fuel, and other efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 703, a resolution introduced by Congressman ELTON

GALLEGLY, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the House International Relations Committee. House Resolution 703 recognizes the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and supports continued efforts to control radiation and mitigate the adverse health consequences related to this terrible accident.

I would like to commend Mr. GALLEGLEY for his hard work on this resolution as well as that of Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania; Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio; Mr. LEVIN of Michigan; as well as our distinguished ranking member, Mr. LANTOS of California, for their great interest in ensuring that the international community lives up to its obligations to assist Ukraine and other countries in the region to overcome the continuing health, environmental, and economic problems caused by the Chernobyl accident.

In just a few weeks, on April 26, the world will mark the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl power plant accident, the most devastating civilian nuclear disaster in human history. This disaster caused serious radiological, health, and socioeconomic consequences for the people of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Millions of people, children in particular, suffered severe and debilitating health defects and were forced to flee from their homes.

Although 20 years have passed, the lives and health of individuals within the affected areas continue to be heavily burdened by the aftermath of the nuclear disaster. Ukraine must not only provide care for those affected but also ensure that the radioactive waste and environmental destruction from the explosion do not pose a threat to the region.

The sarcophagus currently encasing the remnants of the destroyed reactor is in disrepair and may collapse at any time. In response to this emergency, the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine developed the Shelter Implementation Plan for the purpose of protecting people and the environment from the large quantity of highly radioactive material contained in the reactor.

The most critical component of the Shelter Implementation Plan will be the construction of a new shelter designed to better protect the surrounding area from leakage of radioactive remains. The total cost of the shelter could well be in excess of \$1 billion. In addition, Ukraine must still deal with the health and economic impact of the Chernobyl disaster, including the treatment of thousands of people who were exposed as children and have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer.

This legislation expresses the sympathy of the House for the ongoing effects of the disaster. In addition, H. Res. 703 calls upon the U.S. and other countries to continue to provide assistance for the construction of a new shelter and a facility to store spent nuclear