

components enjoyed in the last Congress.

This bill will accomplish two things that have already become a key characteristic of all of our efforts here in the 111th Congress: It will create jobs and it will save energy. The Water Quality Investment Act will support quality paying jobs by ensuring that workers receive no less than local prevailing wages. By authorizing funding for cleanup of the Great Lakes, the bill will improve opportunities in the fishing, swimming, boating, agriculture, and shipping industries, which support approximately 40 million people in the Great Lakes Basin whose livelihoods are directly dependent upon clean water resources.

This bill has a thoughtful eye on the future by taking into account energy efficiency and water conservation. As a westerner, I understand the vast challenges we face with regard to our water supply. Establishing our water infrastructure that encourages and promotes conservation is of incredible importance for regions that will only see their water sources become fewer and farther between. In Colorado, we rely on clean water not only for municipal and agricultural use, but entire communities are supported by visiting kayakers, fly fishermen, and outdoorsmen from across the country who flock to our pristine rivers and streams. Our environment, communities, industries, and businesses all stand to gain under the provisions of this law. Without the infrastructure investments in this bill, the EPA has projected that our water quality could be set back decades to pre-Clean Water Act levels.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the rule and to vote "yes" on the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMISSION TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING DURING PROCEEDINGS TODAY

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during proceedings today in the House and in the Committee of the Whole, the Chair be authorized to reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any questions that otherwise could be subjected to 5-minute voting under clause 8 or 9 of rule XX or under clause 6 of rule XVIII.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks on H.R. 1262 and include extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

WATER QUALITY INVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SUTTON). Pursuant to House Resolution H. Res. 235 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1262.

□ 1058

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1262), with Mr. PASTOR of Arizona in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill pending before us has been so well described in the discussion of the rule that it seems superfluous to repeat the major items of the pending legislation.

At the Rules Committee yesterday, I said, and our floor manager for the Rules Committee restated, that we bring to the House bills that passed the House in the 110th Congress individually. The gentleman from Colorado read off the votes, which were overwhelming, well over 300-plus votes in favor of each of those bills; just bipartisanship, nonpartisanship, overwhelming support for these measures.

Unfortunately, they went to the other body, never to be heard of again. So we thought it would be a better approach this year to combine those all into one bill, and maybe the other body can do one bill instead of five, we are hoping.

The commitment to clean water, though, cannot be taken so slightly, cannot be just subject to "hotline holds" by the other body, cannot be subject to undisclosed holds, cannot be subject to indifference to action. The agenda for clean water is ours. It's for the next generation. It's to hand on to the next generation water in better condition than we received it from the previous generation.

I have been on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure from the time it was the Committee on Public Works. I started my career in this House in January of 1963 as Clerk

of the Subcommittee on Rivers and Harbors, the oldest committee of the House, the first committee of the House.

Our work has evolved over many years to encompass a wide range of issues related to investment in the Nation's well-being, but none more fundamental, more important, than water. All the water we ever had on this Earth, or ever will have, is with us today. We aren't going to create new water from any technological source. No comet is likely to come into our orbit and deposit new ice to form water. Our responsibility is to care for the water we have.

Every day, 42 trillion gallons of moisture passes over the continental United States. Ten percent of that falls as moisture, 4.2 trillion gallons. Of that, some .4 trillion gallons is absorbed by the soil or evaporates. The rest, some 680 billion gallons, goes into surface waters of the United States. That is all we have every day, 680-some billion gallons.

We have to manage it well, make sure that we use it properly, that we return to the streams and lakes and estuaries of the Nation water in clean condition. This legislation will move us in that direction.

The centerpiece of this \$18.7 billion package of bills is restoration of and reauthorization of the State Revolving Fund from which funds are borrowed by municipalities to build wastewater treatment facilities, sewer lines, interceptor sewers, separate storm and combine storm and sanitary sewers. But for a dozen years, until the 110th Congress, that legislation had expired and had not been reauthorized. The funding was continued, but at lower levels of appropriation, for each of those 12 years until the 110th Congress.

That leveled off, because the authorization legislation could never make its way to the House floor, even though our committee was prepared to do that. We had bipartisan support within the committee, but could never get it to the House floor.

Well, we brought it to the floor in the 110th and passed it overwhelmingly, as I said earlier. It went to the Senate, and that has not moved.

The stimulus legislation provides funding of \$4.6 billion, half in loans and half in grant funds to the State Revolving Funds to create jobs and to deal with the backlog of need in State wastewater treatment programs and sewer upgrades. Hardly a week goes by that I don't read of a major main break or a sewer line break somewhere in this country.

It is commentary on the aging wastewater structure of this country and the need to rebuild it, need to upgrade our sewage treatment plant facilities built in the 1970s and some in the 1980s that are beyond their capacities or that are in need of new technology upgrades. This legislation will move us in the direction of dealing with those needs.