COMMENDING CHAIRMAN DAVE OBEY
HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, December 29, 2010

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Chairman DAVE OBEY on a remarkable career and to congratulate him on his retirement from the U.S. Congress.

Chairman OBEY has honorably served the citizens of Wisconsin’s 7th district since 1969. When Chairman OBEY began his service in the Congress—succeeding Mel Laird, who was appointed Secretary of Defense—he was the youngest Member of Congress in the United States. He has an impressive record of legislative accomplishments. He is now the longest-serving member of either House of Congress in Wisconsin’s history.

His commitment to the integrity of the House has taught me a great deal about the legislative process. His respect for the minority, interest in listening to all voices and his common-sense leadership have been critical in ensuring civil debate and productive solutions to extremely difficult problems.

Chairman DAVE OBEY is the only Democratic Member of the House to have served on the three major economic committees in the Congress: the Budget Committee, the Joint Economic Committee and the Committee on Appropriation.

Chairman OBEY has been a mentor and a friend and I will miss his leadership in the U.S. House. I thank him for his service to the 7th district of Wisconsin, the country and the world, and wish him the very best in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL W. HODES
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, December 29, 2010

Mr. HODES. Madam Speaker, I missed the following votes from Friday, December 17 through Wednesday, December 22, 2010. I would have voted “yes” on the following votes:

Friday:

H.J. Res. 105—Making Further Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2011 (Representative OBEY—Appropriations) (Voice vote)

1. H. Res. 1377—Honoring the accomplishments of Norman Yoshio Mineta (Representative HONDA—House Administration)

2. Senate Amendment to H.R. 1107—To enact certain laws relating to public contracts as title 41, United States Code, “Public Contracts” (Representative CONEYNS—Judiciary)

3. Senate Amendment to H.R. 628—To establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges (Representative ISSA—Judiciary)

4. H. Res. 1733—Recognizing Mark Twain as one of America’s most famous literary icons on the 175th anniversary of his birth and the 100th anniversary of his death (Representative SNYDER—Oversight and Government Reform)

5. H. Res. 1621—Recognizing the 100th anniversary of the historic founding of Catholic Charities USA (Representative HOLT—Oversight and Government Reform)

6. H. Res. 1767—Commending the Wisconsin Badger football team for an outstanding season and 2011 Rose Bowl bid (Representative BALDWIN—Education and Labor)

7. H. Con. Res. 335—Honoring the exceptional achievements of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and recognizing the monumental contributions he has made to United States national security policies, and peaceful resolutions of international conflict (Representative LOWEY—Foreign Affairs)

8. S. 3874—Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act (Senator BOXER—Energy and Commerce)

9. H.R. 6533—To implement the recommendations of the Federal Communications Commission report to the Congress regarding low-power FM service (Representative DOYLE—Energy and Commerce)


12. H.R. 5510—Aiding Those Facing Foreclosure Act of 2010 (Representative KAPTUR—Financial Services)

Tuesday:

Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H. R. 5116—America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (Representative GORDON—Science and Technology) (228–130)

Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2142—Government Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Performance Improvement Act (Representative CUellar—Oversight and Government Reform) (216–139)

Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2751—FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (Representatives WAXMAN/DINGELL—Energy and Commerce) (215–144)

Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 3082—Making Further Continuing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2011 (Representative OBEY—Appropriations) (206–60)

Motion to Concur in the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2908—Estate Tax Extenders Act of 2010 (Representative MCELHINNY—Energy and Commerce) (206–60)

Bills Adopted By Unanimous Consent (13):


2. S. 3481—Amending the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify federal responsibility for stormwater pollution (Senator CARDIN—Transportation and Infrastructure)

3. House Amendment to S. 372—Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (Representative MURPHY—Oversight and Government Reform) (181–16)

4. H. Res. 1461—Supporting Olympic Day on June 23, 2010, and congratulating Team USA and World Fit participants (Representative LANGEVIN—Oversight and Government Reform)

5. S. 4036—A bill to clarify the National Credit Union Administration authority to make stabilization fund expenditures without borrowing from the Treasury (Senator DODD—Financial Services)

6. S. Con. Res. 67—A concurrent resolution celebrating 130 years of United States-Romanian diplomatic relations, congratulating the Romanian people on their achievements as a great nation, and reaffirming the deep bonds of trust and values between the United States and Romania, a trusted and most valued ally (Senator VONNICH—Foreign Affairs)

7. Senate Amendment to H.R. 6560—Removal Clarification Act of 2010 (Representative HANK JOHNSON—Judiciary)

8. H. Res. 1779—Honoring the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Riders (Representative JOHN LEWIS (GA)—Judiciary)
Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Extensions Act, 2011

Speech of
Hon. Betty McCollum
Of Minnesota
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, December 21, 2010

Ms. McCollum. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3082, a continuing resolution that would fund federal government operations on a temporary basis through March 4, 2011. Regrettably, one of the last votes of the 111th Congress has become the first vote of the Republican-controlled House of Representatives.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I take seriously my annual responsibility to assess funding priorities, perform oversight, and allocate federal dollars where they are most needed and will make the greatest impact. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues in the House and Senate are choosing to abandon this important work. They are blocking action on a fiscal year 2011 funding package that would respond to the current needs of the American people and make critical investments in our communities.

Due to Republican obstruction, the House is forced to consider this appropriations measure, which places the Federal Government on auto-pilot for two months. All difficult decisions are being delayed until another day. Critical federal agencies including the Federal Aviation Administration and Department of Defense are being subjected to enormous—and avoidable—uncertainty. And the uncertainty created by this short-term continuing resolution goes far beyond Washington. Every state and community across the country will be debating the ramifications for stormwater runoff from buildings, facilities, and wastewater treatment plants.

These are significant figures, especially given that urban areas cover only 3 percent of the nation’s waters that any other private business, landowner, or homeowner would otherwise be responsible for paying.

Polluted runoff from urban areas is the fastest growing source of water pollution in America. As urbanization increases, impervious surfaces such as highways, roads, parking lots, and buildings replace non-impervious surfaces that absorb stormwater.

Runoff from impervious surfaces is a central cause of pollution for the nation’s waters, and is estimated to be the primary source of impairment for 13 percent of rivers, 18 percent of lakes, and 32 percent of estuaries in the U.S. These are significant figures, especially given that urban areas cover only 3 percent of the land mass of the country.

Even here, in the Nation’s Capital, pollution from stormwater runoff poses a significant challenge to the quality of local receiving waters, and negatively impacts the overall environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, stormwater runoff from urban and suburban areas is “a significant source of impairment to the Chesapeake Bay.” According to Agency statistics, 17 percent of phosphorus, 11 percent of nitrogen, and 9 percent of sediment loads to the Bay come from stormwater runoff.

In addition, chemical contaminants from runoff can rival or exceed the amount reaching local waterways from industries, federal facilities, and wastewater treatment plants.

Several states and municipalities, including the District of Columbia, have taken aggressive action to address these ongoing sources of pollution. Yet, when a significant percentage of property owners take the position that they cannot be held responsible for their pollution, it places a greater financial burden on our States, cities, communities, and local-ratepayers, and makes it less likely that significant reductions in stormwater pollution can be achieved.

I applaud the outstanding work of the sponsors of this legislation, the distinguished Senator from the State of Maryland (Mr. Cardin), as well as the sponsor of the House companion for this bill, the Delegate from the District of Columbia (Ms. Norton), for their efforts to move this legislation so quickly to the President’s desk.

Madam Speaker, simply put, this legislation clarifies that Federal agencies and departments are financially responsible for any reasonable Federal, State, or locally-derived charges for treating or otherwise addressing stormwater pollution that emanates from Federal property.

Existing section 313 of the Clean Water Act states that “Each department, agency, or instrumentality . . . of the Federal Government . . . shall be subject to, and comply with, all Federal, State, interstate, and local requirements . . . including the payment of reasonable service charges.”

Unfortunately, over the past few months, Congress has learned of several Federal agencies, including some here in the Nation’s Capital, that have made the determination that stormwater management fees are “taxes” for which the agencies have claimed sovereign immunity and have refused to pay.

This has left several State and local municipalities with the financial responsibility of addressing ongoing sources of pollution to the nation’s waters that any other private business, landowner, or homeowner would otherwise be responsible for paying.

This temporary appropriations measure underfunds critical priorities in every area of American life from education and agriculture, to transportation and energy. It is inexusable to withhold necessary investments in the American economy while adding to the deficit with tax cuts for the wealthiest in our society. But this is exactly what Congress is doing this month as a result of the reckless game of brinkmanship my Republican colleagues are playing with the American people.