

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. 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.R. 1309.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM ACT  
OF 2011

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 340 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. 1309.

□ 1234

## 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. 1309) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, to achieve reforms to improve the financial integrity and stability of the program, and to increase the role of private markets in the management of flood insurance risk, and for other purposes, with Ms. FOXF 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 gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. I'd like to thank Ms. WATERS and all the Members from both sides of the aisle who helped to craft this bill.

On May 13, the Financial Services Committee favorably reported the Flood Insurance Reform Act by a unanimous vote of 54-0. This bill is important and reflects the hard work and bipartisan support of the Financial Services Committee.

It would reauthorize for 5 years the National Flood Insurance Program, NFIP. The bill would enact a series of reforms designed to, number one, improve NFIP's financial stability; two, to reduce the burden on taxpayers; three, restore integrity to the FEMA mapping system; four, to explore ways to increase private market participation; and, five, to help bring certainty to the housing market.

For over 40 years, taxpayers have subsidized flood insurance premiums for policyholders. To improve NFIP's financial stability, H.R. 1309 phases in actuarially sound rates for policy-

holders and phases out taxpayer-subsidized rates. As a result, the Congressional Budget Office stated that the bill generates \$4.2 billion; and absent a Katrina-like catastrophe, the bill will actually accelerate NFIP's payments on its \$17.75 billion debt to the taxpayer. As it stands, NFIP has already paid back taxpayers about \$1.8 billion.

But perhaps most importantly, H.R. 1309 eliminates a barrier to the development of a private flood insurance market and puts us on a path towards a responsible, long-term plan that eliminates taxpayer risk.

For the first time, policyholders can choose private flood insurance over government flood insurance without the risk of lender rejection; and the bill eliminates taxpayer-subsidized rates so that the private sector can offer consumers increasingly competitive rates as compared to the NFIP. Second, FEMA is required to solicit bids to determine the cost to the private sector, not to the taxpayer, bearing the risk of flood insurance.

Third, it requires that GAO and FEMA evaluate the feasibility of voluntary, community-based flood insurance. And, fourth, the bill reiterates FEMA's existing authority to purchase reinsurance from the private sector as an alternative to the U.S. Treasury and taxpayers serving as a backstop to NFIP.

Finally, the bill addresses many of the concerns that Members have raised with us about new maps, especially as they relate to the dam and levee decertifications. It allows communities to suspend the requirement to purchase flood insurance while they work to construct or fix their flood protection systems.

Madam Chairman, when Congress created NFIP, there was no viable private-sector flood insurance market. Taxpayers were providing increasing amounts of direct assistance through disaster relief to flood victims. Without reforms contained in this bill, taxpayers will never be paid back the debt they are owed; homeowners and businesses will have limited or no access to flood insurance; and Congress will inevitably have to bail out flood disaster victims, as it did prior to 1968. We cannot allow this to happen.

This bill is the first significant reform to the program in nearly a decade. The NFIP is too important to let lapse and too in debt to continue without reform. I look forward to today's amendment debate and urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,

Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,  
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: I am writing concerning H.R. 1309, the "Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011," which is scheduled for floor consideration soon. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 1309 that fall within the Rule X jurisdic-

tion of the Committee on the Judiciary, we are able to agree to forego action on this bill in order that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1309 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1309, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,  
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Ray-  
burn House Office Building, Washington,  
DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. I agree that there are provisions in the legislation that fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting Floor consideration of H.R. 1309.

Further, I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Judiciary is not waiving its jurisdiction. I will include this exchange of letters in our Committee Report on H.R. 1309 and the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

SPENCER BACHUS,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COM-  
MITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY,  
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,  
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology in H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. H.R. 1309 has been marked up by the Committee on Financial Services. The amended version of the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Based on discussions that the staff of our two committees have had regarding this legislation and in the interest of permitting your Committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive consideration of this bill. However, agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as waiving, reducing, or affecting the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Additionally, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology expressly reserves its