

Nevertheless, the Conference Report includes several broad new categorical exclusions from the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. These new exclusions lack flexibility or adequate standards and will limit public participation and careful consideration of transportation projects that can have devastating impacts on neighborhoods and our natural, cultural and historic resources. In the end, the purpose of these provisions is to speed up highway construction, not by cutting alleged "red-tape" but by making it harder for local communities to gather information and have input in projects that may go right through their backyards.

Unbelievably, the Conference Report also includes a radical new idea that agencies should be fined, through rescission of up to 7 percent of their budgets, for missing arbitrary deadlines for environmental reviews. Given that the main reason agencies struggle to complete these reviews quickly is a lack of funding and staff, cutting their budgets as punishment will only make the problem worse.

Inclusion of funding for the Secure Rural Schools and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes programs are positive steps, while removal of divisive, unrelated provisions on coal ash and the Keystone Pipeline are welcome improvements, compared to the House Republican bill.

Finally, the process used to develop this Conference Report was unfortunate. Conferees have been asked to sign an agreement we have had little or no time to review and the substance of the agreement was negotiated largely without input from most conferees.

This Conference Report will harm those living and working near transportation projects in the future and fails to address some of the most pressing conservation needs facing this nation. We can and should do better.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST.
PAUL YACHT CLUB

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Saint Paul Yacht Club in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the organization. For a century, this venerable institution has been providing safe and affordable boating opportunities to residents of Saint Paul and surrounding communities.

Since 1912, the Saint Paul Yacht Club has played a central role promoting and providing access to Minnesota's premier waterways. Originally known as the Saint Paul Motorboat Club, the early club served an active and growing speed boating population on all three of Minnesota's major rivers, the Mississippi, the Minnesota, and the Saint Croix. Early members could rent boat slips for 10 cents per foot, and purchase gasoline for 10 cents per gallon. To retrieve the gasoline, 5 gallon cans were lowered by a rope from the Wabasha Bridge to the boaters on the water.

In addition to providing helpful services to its members, the Saint Paul Yacht Club organized picnics, boat races and other social and recreational events. Boat races were particularly popular in the 1920s and 1930s. On one occasion, Christopher Columbus Smith—

founder of the iconic Chris Craft boat company—set a world water speed record at a club organized boat race.

The Saint Paul Yacht Club has remained in continuous operation since 1912, and currently manages two state of the art harbor facilities within the jewel of the Saint Paul public parks—Harriet Island Regional Park—on the Mississippi River in the city's downtown. Today, the harbor remains a hub of activity, hosting 230 boat slips for vessels that are up to 50 feet long, and serving as home to a thriving year-round live-aboard and seasonal boating community. Boaters come from near and far to enjoy the tremendous views of Saint Paul and the surrounding natural beauty of the Mississippi River National River Recreation Area.

Throughout its century of service to the boating public, the Saint Paul Yacht Club has served as a model of responsible stewardship to Minnesota waterways. By promoting safe and accessible boating activities, the club has provided a tremendous service to many Saint Paul residents and visitors. The Saint Paul Yacht Club is truly an exemplary asset to our city and state.

Mr. Speaker, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the Saint Paul Yacht Club, it is a privilege to submit this statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5972) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chair, later this week, the House is scheduled to consider H.R. 5972, the Transportation & Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2013. This bill funds the agencies that address our nation's housing and transportation needs, and is one of the most important pieces of legislation the House will consider this year. The THUD bill represents a tremendous opportunity to improve our economic competitiveness and ensure the wellbeing of working Americans, and I rise to offer some preliminary observations on the bill that will be debated over the next several days.

I serve as a proud Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and my home district is home to some of the busiest freeways, railways and ports in the country. I also have the privilege of representing many economically disadvantaged individuals who benefit from the fair housing initiatives and grant programs covered in this bill.

I have long advocated, and will continue to advocate, on behalf of the 37th Congressional

District of California for an enlightened transportation policy that will position the United States to compete and win in the global economy of the 21st Century. Since many amendments will have to be considered before the vote on final passage, I am reserving my final judgment as to how I will cast my vote. Nevertheless, I would like to take a moment to commend Mr. LATHAM and Mr. OLVER, the Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, for their work, including nine major funding requests that I submitted to the Committee in the bill reported to the House. Specifically the bill includes the following:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. CDBG is the centerpiece of the federal governments efforts to help more than 1200 cities, counties and states meet the needs of their low and moderate-income people and communities. It revitalizes communities—with proven results. CDBG helps fund a wide range of activities including housing investments, public infrastructure improvements, public services, and local economic development projects where the private market is absent. The Committee recommended \$3.344 billion, which was \$44 million above my request.

Fair Housing Initiatives Program. FHIP is a competitive grant program and is the primary source of funding for fair housing education and enforcement activities at the local level. Local fair housing organizations funded by FHIP protect the housing rights of the public and educate people about their fair housing rights. The program is vital given the extreme fragility that currently exists in the housing market. The Committee met my request by continuing funding at the FY12 level of \$42.5 million.

Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program. HUD's Section 8 programs help low-income elderly, families with children, and people with disabilities secure and maintain decent, affordable homes. In both urban and rural communities, Section 8 rental assistance provides the foundation for millions of individuals and families to live with dignity, maintain steady work, and improve the lives of their children. The Committee recommended approximately \$19.1 billion for this program, or \$60 million above my request.

Community Planning and Development from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD's The Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) seeks to develop viable communities by promoting integrated approaches that provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons. The primary means towards this end is the development of partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector, including for-profit and non-profit organizations. The Committee recommended \$103.5 million. Although this was slightly below my request, it exceeded the FY12 level of funding by \$3.5 million.

Indian Community Development Block Grant. The Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program provides competitive grants to Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages for housing, community facilities, and economic development. ICDBG funds community infrastructure like roads and sewer systems that improve the quality of available housing units while making new housing more affordable and accessible. The Committee met my request of \$60 million.