

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. I wanted to thank the gentleman from the Lake Okeechobee region of Florida (Mr. MURPHY) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER) for the very effective manner in which they have handled themselves in bringing this to our attention. And I want to thank the chair for accepting this important amendment, which is so important to Florida.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Again, I thank the chair and ranking member for their hard work, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) assumed the chair.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

#### ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. CASSIDY

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. POE of Texas). The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, line 16, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$5,000,000)".

Page 26, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$5,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 641, the gentleman from Louisiana and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is about setting priorities. The Army Corps of Engineers construction account has a serious backlog of over \$60 billion. According to a recent CRS report, there is a backlog of more than 1,000 authorized studies and construction projects.

The President's budget inadequately addresses this backlog, only allocating \$1.1 billion for these important infrastructure projects, a 32 percent reduction over fiscal year 2014-enacted levels.

Now, I applaud the committee for providing \$48 million more for Corps construction over the 2014-enacted levels, but more needs to be done. This is especially prevalent with the recent passage of the bipartisan water re-

sources conference report, which contained authorizations for existing projects, such as the Louisiana Coastal Area, and new projects, such as Morganza to the Gulf.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment transfers \$5 million out of the Department of Energy's administrative account and moves that money into the Corps of Engineers construction budget. The goal is to move more projects forward, to reduce the backlog, and to open up the door for projects across the country vital to our Nation's waterways, our economy, and our ability to export.

Louisiana, for example, contains 3 million acres of coastal wetlands. Louisiana's coast is home to over 2 million people, supporting vital ecosystems, national energy security, thousands of jobs, and a unique culture.

As you may know, our coastal wetlands are rapidly disappearing. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that if present land-loss trends continue, Louisiana will lose 2,400 square miles of land between 1932 and 2050. That is an area about 25 times that of Washington, D.C.

Morganza to the Gulf, which is one of five new projects authorized in WRRDA's hurricane and storm damage risk reduction subsection, is of immense importance to Louisiana's coastal restoration and protection efforts. The project's purpose is to protect the remaining fragile marsh and wetlands from hurricane storm surge. This is one of many projects around the country that needs funding and is vital to our Nation's infrastructure.

Taxpayers wish to see this backlog cleared out and other projects important to our Nation's economy moved forward. That is what this amendment intends to help achieve.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Chairman, I must rise in opposition to the amendment.

I appreciate the gentleman's passion for coastal restoration. I know it is a high priority for his district, his State, and, in fact, for the country.

The committee often hears complaints that projects take too long and cost too much to build, in large part attributed to inefficient funding. If that is true, then the only responsible way to allow for new starts is to finish understanding the impacts of the selected new starts on the Corps' future budget requirements and on the expected costs and timelines of ongoing projects. Unfortunately, we do not have that information, and the administration has shown no willingness to provide it.

The fiscal year 2014 act allowed for a limited number of new construction starts, with the requirement that the administration provide information to show that these projects would be affordable at reasonable construction account levels and that these new

projects would not unduly delay or increase the cost of ongoing projects.

To say that the so-called analysis from the administration was inadequate would be an understatement. And no information at all was provided for the new start proposed in the fiscal year 2015 budget request.

Additionally, the administration continues to propose budgets with significant cuts to the construction account, including a 32 percent cut for fiscal year 2015. In fact, several individual projects authorized in the recent WRRDA are each estimated to cost more than what the administration requested for the entire nationwide construction program. Clearly, as promising as some new projects may be, it would be fiscally irresponsible to initiate new projects with no information on the impact of doing so.

I understand that some Members with authorized projects in their districts are anxious to get construction underway. I also understand, however, that many Members with projects already under construction in their districts want to see those projects completed and to start realizing the benefits of these Federal, State, and local investments.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASSIDY. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BEN RAY LUJÁN OF NEW MEXICO

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 3, line 16, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$15,000,000)".

Page 7, line 3, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$15,000,000)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 641, the gentleman from New Mexico and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I rise to amend the Energy and Water Appropriations bill to increase the construction account by \$15 million to ensure local governments like the city of Rio Rancho, the county of Bernalillo, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District get reimbursed for work they have done in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Corps of Engineers works with local governments in New Mexico to construct levees, implement flood control measures, and other important infrastructure for the safety of the public.

More specifically, the city of Rio Rancho entered into a reimbursement contract with the Army Corps of Engineers and has not been paid back for several years due to the lack of appropriations. The same goes for the county of Bernalillo, the Middle Rio Grande