

Current law, which requires sampling and classing by the USDA of every bale of cotton tendered under contracts listed on a U.S. exchange reflects an antiquated picture of the global cotton market. Some market participants need to hedge price fluctuations in foreign markets, and the current law limits their ability to do so. We need to update our law to reflect the modern nature of this marketplace.

H.R. 2620 accomplishes this by providing an option for cotton produced and delivered in foreign markets to be classed by rating facilities closer to the point of delivery rather than by the United States Department of Agriculture. It makes no changes to the treatment of domestically produced and delivered cotton.

This legislation will allow any willing exchange to meet industry demand to design a world cotton contract. For example, ICE Futures U.S., which has already worked with market participants, has publicly announced their intention and preference to list a world cotton contract side by side with the domestically focused Cotton No. 2 contract they already list.

H.R. 2620 allows for an important new contract for cotton hedging to be developed, which would be beneficial to commercial hedgers. However, it is important specifically to me and to others to note, it would not disrupt the industry's benchmark hedging contract, the No. 2 contract, which is relied upon by U.S. cotton producers in my district and around the country.

Before I close, I would like to thank Chairman CONAWAY both for his continued leadership on the Agriculture Committee and his efforts on this legislation. Additionally, I want to thank Ranking Member DAVID SCOTT for working with me on this issue over the last few months. And I would like to acknowledge LYNN WESTMORELAND's work in this as well. He was instrumental in advancing this issue.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 2620.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I, too, have enjoyed working with my colleague from Georgia, the chairman of our Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit, Congressman AUSTIN SCOTT.

Mr. Speaker, our bill, H.R. 2620, will modernize the way in which cotton futures contracts are listed and regulated under the 1916 Cotton Futures Act.

More specifically, as many of you know, the main tool used in the marketplace for hedging cotton is the No. 2 contract. Currently, the No. 2 contract only permits cotton grown within the United States. That cotton is delivered to only five United States cities: Galveston, Texas; Houston, Texas; Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas; Greenville, South Carolina; and Memphis, Tennessee.

Now, under the 1916 Cotton Futures Act, every bale of cotton tendered under a contract listed on a U.S. exchange must be sampled and classed or graded by the United States Department of Agriculture. However, seeing that cotton is grown all over the world, my bill targets cotton that is grown and delivered outside of the United States' borders.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is the problem, the concern that our bill is solving. As I mentioned earlier, because of the fact that there are only five domestic cities that are cotton delivery points listed under the 1916 Cotton Futures Act, there has been much concern that the Cotton No. 2 contract cannot accurately reflect price movement in foreign markets and, therefore, cannot provide an effective risk management tool. That is simply the problem.

Now, to solve this problem, what our bill will do is simply allow U.S.-based future exchanges flexibility in how they handle foreign-grown cotton and foreign delivery points that will never touch the United States at all.

Mr. Speaker, we live now and we operate in a rapidly changing global economy. It is very important that we not put our cotton producers or our commodities exchanges into a disadvantaged position competitively when it comes to being able to get the price fluctuations that occur in foreign markets, thereby providing our businesses with the most effective tool by which they can manage their risk.

So because the United States Department of Agriculture does not have the manpower to deploy personnel all over the world at one time, our bill will allow cotton grown outside the United States to be classed by either a United States Department of Agriculture testing lab inside the United States or an international lab deemed to have comparable comprehensive rules and regulations equivalent to the United States. That is it. It is clean and simple.

Our bill solves this problem. It gives our cotton producers and it gives our exchanges that ability to be able to know how prices are sliding in each foreign country that is producing cotton while, at the same time, our producers and our exchanges, without that, cannot apply good risk management. That is why this is so essential.

So let me state again, as my colleague from Georgia, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT, made clear, I, too, want to make clear that our bill does not change the fact that 100 percent of all domestically produced and delivered cotton will be classed by the United States Department of Agriculture. There is absolutely no change here.

Furthermore, the bill does not change or alter the Cotton No. 2 contract. What our bill does is simply allow our U.S.-based futures exchanges that much-needed flexibility that is needed in order to list cotton that will never touch the United States through a world cotton contract.

As I said, we live in a global marketplace. It is important that our rules and regulations reflect the modernization that has happened in our global markets since this act was written 100 years ago. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we keep the United States economy the strongest economy in the world, and our bill, H.R. 2620, will do just.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2620.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, Mr. SCOTT, and I have said, this is simply a necessary, minor change. I would just ask all Members to support passage of H.R. 2620.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2620, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HEADQUARTERS CONSOLIDATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1640) to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1640

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HEADQUARTERS CONSOLIDATION PROJECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project within the National Capital Region. Such report shall include each of the following:

(1) A proposed occupancy plan for the consolidation project that includes specific information about which Department-wide operations, component operations, and support offices will be located at the site, the aggregate number of full time equivalent employees projected to occupy the site, and schedule estimates for migrating operations to the site.

(2) A comprehensive assessment of the current and future real property needed by the

Department in the National Capital Region in order to carry out the mission of the Department to secure the homeland and defend the Nation against future acts of terrorism.

(3) An analysis of the difference between the current and needed capital assets and facilities of the Department.

(4) A current plan for construction of the headquarters consolidation at the St. Elizabeths campus that includes—

(A) the estimated costs and schedule for the current plan; and

(B) any estimated costs savings associated with reducing the scope of the consolidation project and increasing the use of existing capacity developed under the project.

(5) A current plan for the leased portfolio of the Department in the National Capital Region that includes—

(A) the total rentable square feet, number of personnel, and proposed utilization rates;

(B) the replacement and consolidation plan, including—

(i) an end-state vision that identifies which Department-wide operations, component operations, and support offices do not migrate to the St. Elizabeths campus and continue to operate at a property in the leased portfolio;

(ii) the number of full time equivalent employees who are expected to operate at each property, component, or office; and

(iii) timing and anticipated leased terms, for leased space under the plan referred to in paragraph (4); and

(C) the costs and benefits of leasing and construction alternatives for the headquarters consolidation project.

(6) A detailed list of alternatives considered by the Department during the development of the plan referred to in paragraph (4), including the costs and benefits of alternatives to such plan.

(b) UPDATE OF COST AND SCHEDULE ESTIMATES.—Not later than 180 days after date of the submittal of the report required by subsection (a), the Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services, shall complete the update of the cost and schedule estimates for the portions of the consolidation project that are not yet complete as of such date based on the information contained in the report. Consistent with the recommendation of the Government Accountability Office in GAO-14-648, such estimates shall conform to relevant Federal guidance for cost and schedule estimates.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW.—

(1) REVIEW REQUIRED.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall review the update of the cost and schedule estimates under subsection (b) to evaluate the quality and reliability of such estimates.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the completion of the update of the cost and schedule estimates under subsection (b), the Comptroller General shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the results of the review required by paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) The term “National Capital Region” has the meaning given such term under section 2674(f)(2) of title 10, United States Code.

(2) The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

□ 1615

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1640. Mr. Speaker, since 2006, the Department of Homeland Security and the General Services Administration have been working towards completing a consolidated headquarters on the historic St. Elizabeths campus in Washington, D.C.

However, as with many other Federal projects, the consolidation has run up against cost overruns and construction delays, at times estimated to be more than \$1 billion over budget and 12 years behind schedule.

Earlier this year, I visited the site personally to see firsthand the progress being made and the immense challenges that lie ahead. I remain concerned that taxpayers' dollars will be put at risk without better management.

This bill, H.R. 1640, the DHS Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services, to investigate and submit a report on the estimated costs and property needs of the project.

While we were encouraged by the updated DHS St. Elizabeths plans published earlier this year, we still believe that increased oversight of the consolidation project will help ensure accountability and the efficient use of our constituents' taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, accountability is a fundamental aspect of citizen-ruled government and something that our constituents expect their representatives to uphold. H.R. 1640 does just this, and I look forward to the bipartisan support this legislation will receive.

I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, June 15, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Ford House Office Building, Washington,
DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 1640, the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 1640, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mu-

tual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the house floor.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, June 17, 2015

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER, Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1640, the “Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015.” I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will not seek a sequential referral on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing a sequential referral of this bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support a request by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman,
Committee on Homeland Security.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 1640, the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006, 3 years into the Department of Homeland Security's existence, President Bush proposed consolidating the headquarters functions of the Department and its components from the more than 50 locations to the St. Elizabeths campus in southeast Washington, D.C.

Construction began in 2009, but between sequestration and tightening budgets, appropriations for the project have been \$1.2 billion less than President Bush and President Obama requested.

Naturally, Congress' failure to consistently and adequately fund the project has greatly slowed construction and led to increased costs. It has also forced DHS to revisit its master plan and reduce the scope of the project.

At this juncture, it is important that the Department have a realistic and

achievable plan. The legislation under consideration seeks to do just that. If enacted, this legislation would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress an updated plan for St. Elizabeths to inform future funding decisions.

Importantly, H.R. 1640 requires the submission of a proposed occupancy plan for St. Elizabeths that includes a list of components and offices to be housed there. A key consequence of the Department having to scale down the breadth of its consolidation plans is the reality that its portfolio of leased space will need to remain large.

In fact, with up to 69 percent of DHS' commercial leases in the national capital region expiring between fiscal years 2016 to 2020, we should all be aware that DHS will be forced to embark on the expensive process of re-competing and possibly relocating its operations and personnel.

Before I reserve the balance of my time, I would like to acknowledge that I am pleased that the bill includes an amendment I offered to give the Department adequate time to engage the General Services Administration, the construction manager for the project, in preparing the updated plans, assessments, and estimates.

GSA's participation in the development of these key materials is essential to ensuring that what is submitted to Congress is realistic and achievable.

As a supporter of the St. Elizabeths project and DHS' Unity of Effort initiative, I urge passage of H.R. 1640. Collocation of DHS' personnel in one headquarters has the potential of not only achieving cost savings, but fostering an environment where integration and collaboration drives more effective and efficient operations.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I appreciate the bipartisan approach taken on this legislation. The St. Elizabeths project is about more than real estate; it is about ensuring the Department of Homeland Security has a home where diverse components can come together.

That is the thinking behind the Secretary's Unity of Effort initiative. Enactment of this legislation will help to ensure that DHS has a realistic plan for St. Elizabeths.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) for their work on this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I, once again, urge my colleagues to support this strong bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1640, the "Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015."

I support this bipartisan legislation which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee for unanimously supporting the inclusion of my amendments to H.R. 1640.

Together, the Jackson Lee amendments offered a comprehensive look at the Department's real estate obligations related to its headquarters consolidation project at St. Elizabeths, as well as its leased portfolio in the National Capital Region.

Further, the Jackson Lee amendments help clarify how DHS will relocate its personnel and operations at the headquarters level and across its components at St. Elizabeths as construction continues on the headquarters consolidation project.

Mr. Speaker, since DHS initiated its headquarters consolidation in 2006, it has progressed despite changes in senior leadership and waning funding support from Congress.

As a result, in April 2015, DHS and GSA announced that the construction sequence and timetable for the headquarters consolidation would be adjusted to reflect reduced funding by Congress.

DHS must now re-compete up to 69 percent of its commercial leases in the National Capital Region as they are scheduled to expire between 2016 and 2020.

My first amendment directs DHS to provide information related to the expected timing and terms of any lease renewals in the National Capital Region.

My second amendment requires the Department to report on the numbers of its full-time equivalents who are expected to occupy each DHS-leased or owned property, which will guide the Department in adjusting its expenditures on the headquarters consolidation project.

Together, they will ensure that DHS and GSA develop a comprehensive picture of which employees and operations will migrate to St. Elizabeths and which will not.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in strong support of the suspension bill, H.R. 1640, the "Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation Accountability Act of 2015."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WALKER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1640, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DHS PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 1633) to provide for certain improvements relating to the tracking and reporting of employees of the Department of Homeland Security placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1633

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "DHS Paid Administrative Leave Accountability Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IMPROVED INTERNAL TRACKING AND REPORTING OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296; 6 U.S.C. 101 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 104. INTERNAL TRACKING AND REPORTING OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR PERSONNEL MATTERS.

"(a) INTERNAL REPORTING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the DHS Paid Administrative Leave Accountability Act of 2015, and quarterly thereafter, the head of each component of the Department shall submit to the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department—

"(1) the number of employees of the component who had been on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters for a period of six consecutive months or longer as of the last day of the period covered by the report;

"(2) the total cost to the component associated with such administrative leave and such paid non-duty status (including salary and benefits) for the period covered by the report; and

"(3) the average duration that employees are placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as of the last day of the period covered by the report for the component.

"(b) CHCO TRACKING.—The Chief Human Capital Officer shall—

"(1) maintain records of the number of employees of the Department who are placed on administrative leave or paid non-duty status without charge to leave for personnel matters and the costs (including salary and benefits) associated with such leave or non-duty status; and

"(2) in consultation with the head of each of the components of the Department, determine any appropriate actions to be taken by the Department to resolve any personnel matter objectively, appropriately, and expeditiously or to reduce the use of administrative leave and paid non-duty status without charge to leave in addressing any personnel matter.

"(c) PERSONNEL MATTERS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'personnel matters' means, with respect to an employee, any personnel investigation (including any investigation into misconduct and any national security or suitability investigation), any criminal matter, or any adverse action proposed or taken by the Department, including any action under chapter 75 of title 5, United States Code.

"(d) LEVERAGE OF EXISTING SYSTEMS.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary is