Resources Committee. Furthermore, this legislation is thorough in that it has protections for the volunteers who are eligible under this Act. This legislation authorizes the Secretary to accept the services of individuals in hazardous duty only upon a determination by the Secretary that such individuals are skilled in performing hazardous activities and it ensures that an appropriate U.S. officer or employee provides adequate and appropriate supervision of each volunteer. Perhaps most importantly this Act prohibits the Secretary from permitting the use of such volunteers in law enforcement work, in regulatory and enforcement work, in policy-making processes, or to displace any employee. It is vital that when we craft legislation such as this that we make sure it protects paid workers who could be compromised by the presence of unpaid volunteers. It is easy to be in favor of this legislation thanks to the protections instated in the language.

I am in full support of this legislation because it has an altruistic spirit. There are a great many Americans every year who give of their time to others without any compensation or material reward. We should be taking done the barriers that might needlessly keep them from these volunteer pursuits. This legislation allows those interested in volunteering for the Department of the Interior to take part in responsibilities that would have previously been blocked from them. The responsibilities under the management of the Department of the Interior are immense and require a great deal of good and willing manpower. This program will help alleviate that burden in a sensible manner. I hope this program will also be used to recuirt and train volunteers from areas such as the inner-city where many people never been get to see our grand National Parks. Perhaps in the future this program can be supplemented to provide grants and scholarships to college-age inner-city youths to spend time working in our great outdoors. These experiences have been proven to expand the horizons of young people who often only get to see blighted urban landscapes. It is time that Americans from all parts of our great nation get to experience all the various landscapes and environments our vast country has to offer. This legislation is a good start and I hope that we will continue to take the initiative to expand this program.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of bipartisanship, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4170, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SODA ASH ROYALTY REDUCTION ACT OF 2004

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4625) to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4625

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 ''Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act of 2004''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The combination of global competitive pressures, flat domestic demand, and spiraling costs of production threaten the future of the United States soda ash industry.

(2) Despite booming world demand, growth in United States exports of soda ash since 1997 has been flat, with most of the world's largest markets for such growth, including Brazil, the People's Republic of China, India, the countries of eastern Europe, and the Republic of South Africa, have been closed by protectionist policies.

(3) The People's Republic of China is the prime competitor of the United States in soda ash production, and recently supplanted the United States as the largest producer of soda ash in the world.

(4) Over 700 jobs have been lost in the United States soda ash industry since the Department of the Interior increased the royalty rate on soda ash produced on Federal land, in 1996.

(5) Reduction of the royalty rate on soda ash produced on Federal land will provide needed relief to the United States soda ash industry and allow it to increase export growth and competitiveness in emerging world markets, and create new jobs in the United States.

SEC. 3. REDUCTION IN ROYALTY RATE ON SODA ASH.

Notwithstanding section 102(a)(9) of the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701(a)(9)), section 24 of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 262), and the terms of any lease under that Act, the royalty rate on the quantity or gross value of the output of sodium compounds and related products at the point of shipment to market from Federal land in the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act shall be 2 percent.

SEC. 4. STUDY.

After the end of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, and before the end of the 5-year period beginning on that date, the Secretary of the Interior shall report to the Congress on the effects of the royalty reduction under this Act, including—

(1) the amount of sodium compounds and related products at the point of shipment to market from Federal land during that 4-year period;

(2) the number of jobs that have been created or maintained during the royalty reduction period;

(3) the total amount of royalty paid to the United States on the quantity or gross value of the output of sodium compounds and related products at the point of shipment to market produced during that 4-year period, and the portion of such royalty paid to States; and

(4) a recommendation of whether the reduced royalty rate should apply after the end of the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) and the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4625.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wyoming?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the ranking member of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), for his kindness in waiving the rule that establishes the ratio of suspension bills and allowing me to bring this bill up today, rather than having to wait until a later day. I also want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and his staff for all the courteous friendship and work that we have done on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, plainly stated, H.R. 4625 would help balance the unfair playing field in the world market and allow the United States trona producers to face growing competition from countries like China.

The United States soda ash industry, which until recently was the largest in the world, has operations in Wyoming, Colorado and California, with the bulk of the total production through four plants in the great State of Wyoming. The total estimated value of the industry is around $800 million.

If you read the papers or watch the news, you know that current economic indicators show that the Nation's economy on the whole is gaining momentum, but the hard-working men and women of Wyoming in the soda ash industry continue to lose their jobs to countries like China.

Seven hundred jobs have been lost in the Wyoming trona industry. The new, rosy economic numbers do not help these families put food on the table. They do not help them buy a new car or buy homes, and they do not help put their children through college. They do not help them sleep at night either. But this bill will provide reassurance for the 3,000 men and women who now work in the trona industry in Wyoming and the other States in the United States.

The future of the soda ash industry is being threatened by a number of factors, including China's announced plans to increase existing soda ash plant capacity by 600,000 tons this year and to construct another new plant that will produce 900,000 tons when completed. It is distressing indeed to consider this level of production, when we know how the Chinese exploit cheap labor and almost completely disregard environmental standards.

Furthermore, the domestic market for soda ash has been stagnant for

nearly 20 years, and little growth is expected in the foreseeable future to meet the demand for glass or glass packaging.

Add to all of this the rising energy costs, including a 150 percent increase in natural gas prices over the past 4 years, that have only made matters worse. The much-needed growth will have to be found in places like Asia and Australia, and that means we must take the Chinese head on and with every boost our government can give the soda ash industry.

In order to allow all U.S. soda ash producers to compete on a level playing field with the likes of China, India and synthetic producers around the world and, in turn, create jobs here in the United States, we need to promote a lower tax burden on the industry, a reduced royalty rate and more affordable energy costs that are such a crucial part of the economic mix.

□ 1530

The U.S. soda ash industry pays in the ballpark of $100 million in taxes to Federal, State, and local governments. Due to the growth of China's soda ash exports, it is essential that we provide temporary relief to the soda ash industry in the form of royalty rate reduction. This reduction is intended not to increase the bottom line on soda ash companies; it is intended entirely to grow the market and increase the number of jobs.

H.R. 4625 reduces the royalty rate from 6 percent to 2 percent in order to help the industry achieve increased export growth and competitiveness in the emerging world market.

The hard-working men and women in the soda ash industry have my commitment to continue working to help open new markets and create the good-paying jobs that will help our communities grow and to push for a real energy policy for the Nation that will help smooth out some of the volatility in the natural gas markets by increasing domestic production.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4625 is supported by the majority and the minority of the committee, and I urge adoption of this bill.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 19, 2004.

Hon. RICHARD W. POMBO,
Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 4625, the Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act of 2004.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Megan Carroll.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH M. ROBINSON
(For Douglas Holtz-Eakin, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 4625—Soda Ash Royalty Reduction Act of 2004

Summary: H.R. 4625 would provide royalty relief to producers of sodium compounds and related products on federal land. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4625 would increase direct spending by $3 million in 2005 and $15 million over the next five years (with no effect after 2009). Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

H.R. 4625 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The royalty reduction required by the bill would temporarily reduce federal payments to three states—Wyoming, Colorado, and California—by about $3 million a year over the 2005–2009 period.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 4625 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
CHANGES IN DIRECT SPENDING										
Estimated budget authority	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated outlays	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0

Basis of estimate: H.R. 4625 would reduce the federal royalty rate for sodium compounds and related materials produced on federal land over the 2005–2009 period. Based on information from the Minerals Management Service about the amount of royalties expected to be generated by production of those materials under current law, CBO estimates that this bill would reduce federal receipts by $6 million in 2005 and $30 million over the next five years. Those forgone receipts would be partially offset by a corresponding decrease in direct spending for payments to the states in which they are generated. Hence, CBO estimates that the next increase in direct spending under H.R. 4625 would total $3 million in 2005 and $15 million over the 2005–2009 period.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: H.R. 4625 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. The royalty reduction required by the bill would temporarily reduce federal payments to three states—Wyoming, Colorado, and California—by about $3 million a year over the 2005–2009 period.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Megan Carroll, Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Theresa Gullo, Impact on the Private Sector: Crystal Taylor.

Estimate approved by: Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

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

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 4625, the Soda Ash Royalty Relief Act of 2004, authored by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN).

Soda ash, a chemical produced from trona ore, means mining jobs in southwest Wyoming. These jobs, however, may disappear if we do not provide some measure of relief for our domestic trona producers who are fighting to stay competitive in today's global economy.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, unfair competition from China threatens to dismantle the American soda ash industry. The pending bill would, for a limited time, enhance the competitiveness of our domestic producers by providing a royalty reduction on trona produced on Federal lands.

At a time when too many American jobs are being lost, we must do what is necessary to keep our workforce here at home strong and competitive. We, on this side of the aisle, have no objection to passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers; and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) for her work on this issue and for managing so many of the bills today. She certainly does a good job in the committee, and it is great working with her. Always having someone that we can have confidence in really helps move the process along.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4625.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING SANDRA FELDMAN ON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE PRESIDENCY OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 714) honoring Sandra Feldman on the occasion of her retirement from the presidency of the American Federation of Teachers for her tireless efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. Res. 714

Whereas Sandra Feldman was born in New York City and attended its public schools;

Whereas Ms. Feldman is a former public elementary school teacher, having taught 2nd and 3rd graders at PS 34 in Manhattan;

Whereas Ms. Feldman began her advocacy efforts on behalf of children and other disadvantaged individuals during the 1960's civil rights movement;