

with duplication and waste. Consequently the \$20.7 million authorization level was adopted.

The interstate natural gas pipeline industry spends over \$800 million per year on pipeline safety. This reflects the fact that primary responsibility for overseeing pipeline safety rests with the pipelines themselves, not the Department of Transportation. The Department should not be funded at levels sufficient for it to duplicate the safety activities of the pipelines; instead, its role is to ensure that pipeline safety laws and regulations are being enforced.

I do not believe more money will make the Office of Pipeline Safety run better or more efficiently. Thus, although I do not plan to offer an amendment to reduce the appropriated level to the Committee-approved authorized level, when H.R. 1323 comes to the floor I do not intend to raise its authorization levels.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the bill.

There are many areas of concern in this bill and I would like to point out some that I find particularly troubling.

Originally, I had considered offering an amendment to restore some funding to the pipeline safety fund. However, I will not offer an amendment. I feel compelled to take this opportunity to impress upon this body the absolute necessity to continue pipeline safety as a priority within the Department of Transportation.

Minnesotans unfortunately know first-hand the loss and destruction that can occur when a pipeline fails. In the district I represent, several people have lost their lives and there has been millions of dollars in property damage due to pipeline failures resulting in explosions and/or massive spills. Nationwide the numbers are staggering. In 1994 alone, the Department of Transportation reports that there were 465 accidents involving liquid and gas pipelines resulting in 22 deaths, over 1,000 injuries, and over \$130 million in property damage. Our Federal role with interstate pipelines is absolutely essential for safety, health, and environmental reasons.

We cannot prevent every accident, but with many caused by third party damage, we certainly can prevent some through a comprehensive one-call notification system that can alert an excavator to the location of a pipeline before an accident occurs. I commend the committee for acknowledging the importance of developing a one-call system in this bill's report language, and including some funding for such a system. However, this bill only earmarked \$1 million of the State Pipeline Safety Grant Program for developing and implementing a comprehensive one-call program; a program with the proven potential of saving lives and millions of dollars.

Unfortunately, once again in this Congress the new Republican majority has responded to the oil and gas carries rather than consumers; industry over the individual. The administrations budget sought an additional \$1.2 million for the State Grant Program. This measure denies such funding and instead in essence provides a \$7.5 million tax break to the pipeline industry.

The total appropriations for pipeline safety in the bill is within the proposed authorization. However, I would quickly point out that the authorization bill has not even been considered by the House or Senate, and yet the committee feels constrained by such a tentative

measure. It is my hope that the Senate, when considering pipeline safety, gives it the priority and funding it deserves.

Review of other aspects of this transportation appropriation points up other problems with this legislation which undercut important and basic worker protections by repealing section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act. This section of Federal law, which maintains basic worker collective bargaining rights, has been in existence for over 30 years. During that time these protections have worked and have ensured a fair and livable wage for transit workers.

Today, we are asked to sacrifice the standards of living for middle class working families at the altar of cost reductions and local flexibility. It is ironic that the supporters of repeal includes major transit authorities. While those managers continue to collect their compensation, they are seeking to cut the wages of the workers who make these systems function. Such a duplicitous policy is wrong and should be rejected outright.

I am displeased that the House Rules Committee has not left the section 13(c) repeal subject to a point of order and that the rights of the workers can not be protected. It is another bad example of re-writing policy in an appropriation measure in violation with the rules of this House.

Another egregious provision in this bill is the proposal to cut mass transit operating assistance by \$310 million. That is a 40 percent reduction—representing 60 percent of the cuts in transportation funding. These cuts directly affect those in our society who can least afford them: The low income senior citizen who relies on mass transit to remain independent; the disabled person whose only means of transportation is mass transit; the welfare recipient whose only way to get to a new job is mass transit; the college student who uses mass transit to get to class; the middle income worker who depends on mass transit to get to their job. These are the people who will suffer from this cut, and these people will not be able to afford the 120 percent increase in their fares that the majority in this Chamber would like to impose upon them. This funding helps hold our urban areas together, we must not abandon commitments to our cities.

Mr. Chairman, once again we are faced with tough decisions on reducing Federal spending. As the majority party has done time and again, when the issue of cutting spending is raised, the first victims are safety, the poor and the rights of working families as graphically illustrated in this measure today. I urge the Members to reject this legislation and to enact a Transportation Appropriations bill that is fair and does not cripple our transportation and pipeline safety programs.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 2002, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, on rollcall vote 554 from July 21, 1995, on final passage on the agriculture appropriations bill, my card did not work. Had it worked, I would have voted in the affirmative.

THE OVERALL TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address an important issue on which we started the dialog tonight. Mr. Speaker, that involves the overall transportation budget. No matter what part of the country you are from, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me it is very important we look at an integrated system and not only make sure we improve our roadways in this country, but also make sure we improve mass transit. That is why tonight I support the Foglietta-Fox amendment, which would have increased \$135 million for an operating subsidy.

Our mass transit system is the logical other half of our transportation network here in this country. While we need to improve roadways in certain areas and build new ones in still others, for those in areas that are suburban, urban, and rural, that depend on buses, trains, and subways to either be created or to be operated, we need to make sure we properly fund those kinds of programs.

□ 2215

It gives us the proper balance for our transportation system. Furthermore, it reduces gridlock and pollution, increases mobility. Many of our citizens across this country, Mr. Speaker, do not drive or do not have a vehicle at their disposal and therefore can take advantage of van pooling, transit systems, whether they are jitneys or buses, trains or subways.