

Unfortunately, it did not leave adequate base funding for the State program. While the House-passed version of H.R. 1743 authorizing the program does not require a competitive element, the senate amended this bill to specifically reauthorize the separate competitive regional program which had historically been a part of this program, thereby leaving the State-based program authorized by the House intact. We concur with this approach, and in adopting the Senate-passed language, endorse that approach, providing a competitive element to this program.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minority for the extensive cooperation we have had from their side on this very broadly based, bipartisan-supported bill. I would urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1743.

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

There was no objection.

URANIUM MILL TAILINGS RADIATION CONTROL ACT OF 1978 AUTHORIZATION EXTENSION

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2967) to extend the authorization of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2967

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

SECTION 1. REFERENCE.

Whenever in this Act (other than in section 3) an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978.

SEC. 2. TERMINATION; AUTHORIZATION.

Section 112(a) (42 U.S.C. 7922(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a)(1) The authority of the Secretary to perform remedial action under this title shall terminate on September 30, 1998, except that—

“(A) the authority of the Secretary to perform groundwater restoration activities under this title is without limitation, and

“(B) the Secretary may continue operation of the disposal site in Mesa County, Colorado (known as the Cheney disposal cell) for re-

ceiving and disposing of residual radioactive material from processing sites and of byproduct material from property in the vicinity of the uranium milling site located in Monticello, Utah, until the Cheney disposal cell has been filled to the capacity for which it was designed, or September 30, 2023, whichever comes first.

“(2) For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘byproduct material’ has the meaning given that term in section 11e.(2) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2014(e)(2)).”.

SEC. 3. REMEDIAL ACTION AT ACTIVE PROCESSING SITES.

(a) SECTION 1001.—Section 1001 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 2296a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by striking “\$5.50” and inserting “\$6.25”;

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(B), by striking “\$270,000,000” and inserting “\$350,000,000”;

(3) in subsection (b)(2)(C), by striking “\$40,000,000” and inserting “\$65,000,000”;

(4) in subsection (b)(2)(E)(i), by striking “\$5.50” and inserting “\$6.25”; and

(5) in subsection (b)(2)(E)(ii), by striking “\$5.50” and inserting “\$6.25”.

(b) SECTION 1003.—Section 1003 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2296a-2) is amended by striking “\$310,000,000” and inserting “\$415,000,000”.

SEC. 4. REMEDIAL ACTION FOR THE DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS.

(a) SECTION 104.—Section 104(d) (42 U.S.C. 4914(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘site’ does not include any property described in section 101(6)(B) which is in a State which the Secretary has certified has a program which would achieve the purposes of this subsection.”.

(b) SECTION 108.—Section 108(a)(1) (42 U.S.C. 7918(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “Residual radioactive material from a processing site designated under this title may be disposed of at a facility licensed under title II under the administrative and technical requirements of such title. Disposal of such material at such a site in accordance with such requirements shall be considered to have been done in accordance with the administrative and technical requirements of this title.”

(c) SECTION 115.—Section 115(a) (42 U.S.C. 7925(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “This subsection does not prohibit the disposal of residual radioactive material from a processing site under this title at a site licensed under title II or the expenditure of funds under this title for such disposal.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] each will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER].

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

(Mr. SCHAEFER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2967 reauthorizes the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act, the 1978 law which has been cleaning up the radioactive contamination created by uranium milling operations. The program has been a valuable and generally successful endeavor, and has already completed remediation at a number of uranium milling sites, many of which had been abandoned and at which mill tailings were simply left out on the open ground.

At title I sites, all of the contamination was generated by Federal activities. For the most part, the tailings were created in the process of obtaining supplies of uranium for the Manhattan Project, which produced America's first nuclear weapons. It is fitting that the Federal Government should be responsible for cleaning up these wastes, and the statute maintains a 90 percent Federal, 10 percent State split for remediation of these sites. Title II sites encompass a range of areas which have combined tailings of both Federal and private responsibility. At those sites, the private owners remediated the contamination, then are reimbursed by the Government for that share of tailings which can be traced to Federal activities.

The bill before us extends the authority for title I cleanup from 1996 to 1998. DOE is confident that all its title I sites can be cleaned up by that time. The bill also incorporates a number of changes to ensure that the program can continue to function in an efficient and responsible manner. First, the bill includes an authorization for DOE to keep one of its title I disposal cells open for the receipt of additional tailings from its Grand Junction and Monticello sites. Second, it increases the authorization of expenditures for the Government's share of its costs at title II sites, so that the Federal Government bears a more equitable share of its financial responsibility at these sites. Third, the bill clears up an ambiguity in the current statute to ensure that title I tailings can be disposed of at licensed title II sites. Finally, H.R. 2967 gives the DOE flexibility with the current statute's deed annotation requirement if the affected State has a sufficient program of landowner notification already in place. All of these changes will be of great benefit to the program, and were worked out in a very bipartisan manner within the Commerce Committee. In that regard, I would especially like to thank Mr. DINGELL and the ranking member of the Energy and Power Subcommittee, Mr. PALLONE, for their efforts to move this bill forward. I would also like to thank Mr. HASTERT for his contributions and involvement in this important issue.

Without this legislation DOE will be unable to continue its cleanup of the remaining title I sites. H.R. 2967 is a responsible measure—a positive measure—which allows the Federal Government to continue to clean up its environmental liabilities at uranium mill sites. I strongly recommend the bill's approval by the House.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my support for H.R. 2967. The legislation was considered in the Committee on Commerce and voted out with full support from both sides of the aisle.

I did have some concerns about provisions affecting deed records so that potential homeowners would know whether or not a property had been polluted and, if so, whether the problem had been remediated. Fortunately, we were able to work this out to everyone's satisfaction in the committee.

I want to thank Chairman SCHAEFER for his assistance in perfecting this legislation. I am very happy to support it today.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2967 because it reauthorizes the remediation activities of environmental damage created at uranium mill sites. Without this legislation, the current authorization for cleanup will expire on September 30, 1996.

Uranium mill tailings were created as a result of Federal Government activities to secure supplies of uranium for the Manhattan project—a top-secret activity designed to build the world's first nuclear weapon—located in my congressional district in New Mexico. This development led to continued production of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy production for electric generation.

The milling process separates high-grade uranium from low-grade surrounding rock. These high volume sand-like leftovers emit low levels of radioactivity and consequently need to be disposed of properly by the Department of Energy.

The original Uranium Mill Tailings Control Act of 1978 provided for the cleanup of 22 title I sites—abandoned and inactive sites which were used primarily for Federal purposes.

Due to the significant volume of tailings to be remediated and more strict cleanup standards imposed after the 1978 act, more time and additional funds are necessary to complete the Department of Energy's activities.

H.R. 2967 will allow the Department an additional 2 years to safely complete the cleanup process. This is a good piece of legislation which will address public health and environmental concerns in many western States. I urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 2967.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2967, a bill to extend the authorization of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act [UMTRCA] through 1998.

This bill is sound environmental cleanup legislation, and it marks the final chapter of the cold war. The mill tailings date back to the Manhattan project of 1942 and the national security purchases of uranium by the Federal Government from 1947 to 1970. During this period, there were no environmental cleanup standards for mill sites, nor were any standards enacted into law until the 1970's. The United States and the free world benefited from this program; therefore, it is just that the Federal Government pay for its share of cleanup costs.

Of particular note is the environmental reclamation project at Uravan on Colorado's western slope. The mill tailings date back to Madam Curie's radium research at the turn of the century. In 1942, as part of the war effort, the Manhattan Army Engineering District contracted with UMETCO Minerals Corp. for uranium produced at the site.

Today, UMETCO is in the process of restoring the environment to its former natural beauty. This has been a true success story for the Department of Energy, State of Colorado, local government entities, and UMETCO. The

accomplishments of this project clearly demonstrate that the public and private sector can work together to preserve the environment.

In closing, I would also like to point out that the UMTRCA legislation is fiscally responsible. In Colorado, \$100,000,000 will be saved by keeping the Cheney disposal facility near Grand Junction open so that the mill tailings that are uncovered in future road and nearby utility repair work can be disposed of in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is effective in preserving the environment and should be promptly enacted into law.

I commend my good friend from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] on this sound environmental legislation which takes into account the needs of Colorado communities and the budgetary constraints of the Federal Government.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COMBEST). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2967, 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2967, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1996

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3058) to amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to extend the period for receipt of absentee ballots, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3058

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 "Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1996".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PERIOD FOR RECEIPT OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS.

Section 102 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1) is amended—

(1) by striking out "and" at the end of paragraph (2);

(2) by striking out the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting in lieu thereof "and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) permit absentee ballots to be received at least until the close of polls on election day.".

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT PROVISIONS TO SPECIAL, PRIMARY, AND RUNOFF ELECTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 103(a) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-2(a)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after "general" the following: "special, primary, and runoff"; and

(2) by striking out "States," and inserting in lieu thereof "State".

(b) SPECIAL RULES.—Section 103(c) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-2(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting after "candidate or" the following: "with respect to a general or special election,"; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting after "candidate or" the following: "with respect to a general election".

(c) USE OF APPROVED STATE ABSENTEE BALLOT IN PLACE OF FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT.—Section 103(e) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-2(e)) is amended by striking out "a general" and inserting in lieu thereof "an".

(d) CERTAIN STATES EXEMPTED.—Section 103(f) of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-2(f)) is amended by striking out "general" each place it appears.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to elections taking place after December 31, 1996.

SEC. 4. USE OF ELECTRONIC RETURN OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 104 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-3) is amended—

(1) by striking out "and" at the end of paragraph (8);

(2) by striking out the period at the end of paragraph (9) and inserting in lieu thereof "and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(10) in consultation with the Presidential designee, consider means for providing for expeditious methods for the return of absentee ballots, including return by electronic transmittal, with maximum regard for ballot secrecy, audit procedures, and other considerations relating to the integrity of the election process.".

(b) SECRECY AND VERIFICATION OF ELECTRONICALLY TRANSMITTED BALLOTS.—Section 104 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-3) is amended—

(1) by striking out "To afford" and inserting in lieu thereof "(a) IN GENERAL.—To afford"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) SECRECY AND VERIFICATION OF ELECTRONICALLY TRANSMITTED BALLOTS.—No electronic transmittal or related procedure under subsection (a)(10) that is paid for, in whole or in part, with Federal funds may be carried out in any manner that (1) permits any person other than the voter to view a completed ballot, or (2) otherwise compromises ballot secrecy. At the earliest possible opportunity, the original of each completed ballot that is transmitted electronically shall be submitted in a secrecy envelope to the applicable location in the State involved."

SEC. 5. ELECTRONIC TRANSMITTAL OF BALLOTING MATERIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C.