

GENERAL LEAVE

Presently, 20 countries out of the 26 of the Antarctic Treaty consultative parties have signed the protocol. Most of these countries signed the treaty at Madrid on October 4, 1991. With passage of H.R. 3060 today and, hopefully, swift agreement with the Senate bill that passed the Commerce Committee last week, America will act as a beacon to guide the remaining countries, Russia, Japan, India, Belgium and Finland, to complete the action.

This protocol reaffirms the treaty's reservation of the Antarctic as an area set aside for peaceful purposes and specifically for scientific research. It will protect fauna and flora from the effects of human activities, impose strict limits on the discharge of pollutants, and require environmental impact assessments of all planned governmental and nongovernmental activities. It also protects the Antarctic from all activities except scientific research relating to mineral resources for at least 50 years, unless there is unanimous agreement of the treaty parties.

Let me just briefly highlight a few of the 136 exciting and unique scientific experiments currently going on in Antarctica or dependent on it. These are activity supported by the National Science Foundation. For example, there is research by an Augustana College geologist involving a hunt for dinosaurs and other animal remains from as early as the Triassic period.

Equally intriguing is research led by the University of Wisconsin and the University of California at Berkeley and Irvine, with others, using the largest neutrino detector on earth to look for those high energy subatomic particles that are spawned by supernovas or other sources beyond our galaxy.

The West Antarctic ice cover is being studied by the University of Texas at Austin, again with others, for its rapid and dramatic changes that can lend insight into our effort to learn about the potential rise in sea level across the globe.

Then, too, studies led by Johns Hopkins University involve the launch of one of the world's largest solar telescopes beneath a huge balloon to help understand magnetic fields at the sun's surface.

On a more commercial note, a Coast Guard ship is now being built in a partnership with the National Science Foundation. This is an unusual cooperative adventure, and construction is now underway.

I urge the House to pass H.R. 3060 as a major step toward carrying out our treaty obligations agreed to in 1991. With support from the House Committee on Science, the Department of State, the National Science Foundation, and representatives from the Antarctica Project, Greenpeace U.S., Greenpeace International, and the World Wildlife Fund, this legislation will establish and codify the work of many nations in the Antarctic.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this House for the legislation.

Mr. BROWN of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in connection with the bill before us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GREENE of Utah). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, the bill before us today is H.R. 3060, the Antarctic Environmental Protection Act of 1996. As chairman of the Basic Research Subcommittee, our committee has jurisdiction over the National Science Foundation, the agency who will be most impacted by this bill. They strongly support this bill and my compliments to both sides of the aisle for all their hard work on crafting this legislation.

H.R. 3060 provides the legislative authority necessary for the United States to implement the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. The protocol, which resulted from a United States initiative, represents an important addition to the uniquely successful system of peaceful cooperation and scientific research that has evolved under the Antarctic Treaty.

The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of the protocol in 1992. All that remains for the United States to become a party to the protocol is to enact the necessary implementing legislation.

Implementation of the protocol has been a priority of both Republicans and Democrats since the protocol was negotiated in 1991. The protocol builds upon the Antarctic Treaty to improve the treaty's effectiveness for ensuring the protection of the Antarctic environment.

I feel this bill reflects America's continued commitment to the protection of the Antarctic environment. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3060. This bill will implement the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty that the United States and 25 other countries agreed to in 1991. The protocol builds upon the Antarctic Treaty to extend and improve the treaty's effectiveness as a means for protecting the Antarctic environment.

The Antarctic Continent is larger than the United States and Mexico combined and represents 10 percent of the Earth's land mass. Antarctica has a central role in regulating the Earth's environmental processes and possesses an abundance of fish and wildlife. The unique nature of the region also provides a research environment that is crucial to understanding and monitoring global warming, ozone depletion and atmospheric pollution.

The protocol reaffirms the status of the Antarctica as an area reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes, including in particular scientific research, and sets forth a comprehensive, legally binding system of environmental protection applicable to all human activities in Antarctica. In addition, by ratifying this protocol, the United States is providing international leadership. Of the 26 nations that signed the protocol, only 22 have ratified it. With the U.S. commitment, it is believed that the remaining three countries will soon become parties to the protocol.

I urge all Members to support this importance legislation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WALKER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3060.

The question was taken.

Mr. WALKER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) at 5 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the chair will not put the question on each motion to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today in the order in which that motion was entertained.

Votes will be taken in the following order: H.R. 3364, by the yeas and nays; H.R. 3400, by the yeas and nays; and H.R. 3060, by the yeas and nays.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

WILLIAM J. NEALON UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3364, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. GILCREST] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3364, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 340, nays 0, answered "present" 1, not voting 93, as follows: