

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE WEST DELTA FIELD

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to join my colleagues Mr. Tauzin and Mr. John in introducing legislation that will correct a wrong suffered by the State of Louisiana over a decade ago.

I believe that all of my colleagues know that most of the Federal Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas development occurs off the coast of Louisiana and, indeed, off the coast of my Congressional district. Large portions of the Gulf of Mexico are among the very few areas of the OCS where offshore drilling is not prohibited by the Administration's recently announced leasing moratorium.

To put the contribution of the State of Louisiana in perspective, in fiscal year 1997 \$3.2 billion of the slightly over \$4 billion of OCS revenue received by the Federal government was generated off the coast of Louisiana. Louisiana has been making this type of contribution to the Federal government's effort to develop its oil and gas resources every year beginning in the early 1950's.

Throughout the entire history of Federal oil and gas development off the coast of Louisiana, the state and the Department of the Interior have cooperated on the development of oil and gas resources that might underlie both the state and Federal offshore waters. Obviously, the interest of our state and our delegation is that the revenues generated by the development of oil and gas resources owned by the people of Louisiana be returned to the treasury of the state of Louisiana. Where oil and gas resources occur in underground formations that underlie both state and Federal waters, the state and the Federal government have developed these areas through cooperative agreements that ensure that neither sovereign develops the resources of the other.

Unfortunately, this spirit of cooperation broke down in the mid-1980's in the development of a natural gas field along the seaward boundary of Louisiana called the West Delta Field. For the first and only time in the history of Federal OCS development off the coast of Louisiana, the Department of the Interior refused to cooperate with Louisiana in protecting Louisiana's resources from being developed by Federal lessees. As a result, Federal lessees drained over \$18 million of Louisiana's natural gas, the revenues from which went to the Federal treasury rather than the State of Louisiana's treasury. In 1989, an Independent Fact Finder appointed by the Secretary of the Interior at the direction of Congress confirmed these facts. Section 6004 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 authorized an appropriation to repay the State of Louisiana and its lessees for the \$18 million of gas developed improperly by the Federal lessees, plus interest. Today, the total authorized payment to the State and its lessees, with interest, is approximately \$32 million.

The State of Louisiana and its lessees have never received this money. Therefore, this legislation authorizes an alternative means of compensating the State and its lessees. Under this legislation, the state lessee in the West Delta Field would be authorized to withhold its Federal royalty payments on other OCS production in the Gulf of Mexico, using these funds to pay the State of Louisiana and itself until the authorization in Section 6004 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (U.S.C. 2701 note) is satisfied. At that point, the lessee would resume its royalty payments to the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to close this unhappy chapter in the relationship between the State and Federal government on Federal OCS oil and gas development. Louisiana has been a good host to the Federal government with respect to OCS development. Louisiana expects the Federal government to honor the authorization enacted in 1990. I respectfully encourage all of my colleagues to support this long-overdue legislation and ensure its swift enactment this year before Congress departs in the coming month.

IN RECOGNITION OF 1998 LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK IN THE STATE OF OHIO

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an important series of events taking place this week in the State of Ohio. The week of Monday, September 21 through Friday, September 26, 1998, has been officially designated by Governor George V. Voinovich as Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week.

This recognition works to ensure that citizens throughout the State of Ohio are better informed about the ongoing concerns for lawsuit abuse. To this end, the Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (OCALA) has undertaken a public awareness campaign to voice their concerns and continue to draw attention to the impact of lawsuit abuse on Ohio's consumers and economy. Citizens from all across Ohio have helped the campaign and have organized behind OCALA to spread the message.

Mr. Speaker, lawsuit abuse is not merely a concern for the State of Ohio. Lawsuit abuse is an issue with both State and national implications, and undoubtedly affects each American. Unfortunately, our society has become very prone to litigate in recent years. In fact, some estimates show that the number of lawsuits filed each year is almost 300,000. The sheer number of these lawsuits requires millions of dollars in expenses and thousands of hours from employees. There is no question that litigation abuse is a deterrent to economic growth.

As the number of lawsuits continues to climb, the impact on the American public is evident. The increasing number of lawsuits results in higher operating costs for businesses, the withdrawal of certain products from the market, and a weakening of growth and expansion. These costs are inevitably passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices for goods and services, lost opportunity, and fewer jobs.

Mr. Speaker, with these serious issues facing the United States, it is increasingly important for groups like Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse to be recognized for their hard work and efforts on behalf of Ohioans and all Americans. We need the kind of dedication shown by OCALA and other groups to keep up the battle with lawsuit abuse and overall legal reform. I would urge my colleagues to stand and join me in recognizing the week of Monday, September 21 through Saturday, September 26, 1998 as "Ohio Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, due to illness I was unavoidably detained and missed roll call votes 457, 458, 459, and 460. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on roll call vote 457, H.R. 4112, the Legislative Branch Appropriations conference report for fiscal year 1999. On roll call vote 458, I would have voted "yes" on H.R. 3616, the Department of Defense Authorization conference report for fiscal year 1999. On roll call 459, I would have voted "no" on the Watt Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 3736, the Workforce Improvement and Protection Act. On final passage of H.R. 3736, roll call vote 460, I would have voted "yes."

IN HONOR OF ST. WENCESLAUS DAY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the annual celebration of the Feast of St. Wenceslaus which will be celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish on September 27, 1998.

St. Wenceslaus is the patron saint of Bohemia. He was born near Prague in 903. His father was the Duke of Bohemia as Wenceslaus was growing up, his grandmother, also a saint, taught him the values of Christianity. In the year 922, when an anti-Christian faction killed Wenceslaus' father and took over the government, Wenceslaus staged a coup and was

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

named the new ruler. During his reign, Wenceslaus attempted to reduce the oppression of the peasants by the nobility and promoted Christianity.

His younger brother, Boleslaus joined a group of dissenters after he lost succession to the throne as a result of the birth of Wenceslaus' son. Boleslaus invited his brother to a religious festival, and while Wenceslaus was on his way to mass on the morning of September 28, 929, Boleslaus and a group of followers ambushed him. Wenceslaus' last words were, "My God forgive you, brother." Wenceslaus was immediately venerated as a martyr, and was celebrated as the nation's patron saint by the end of the century.

Today, St. Wenceslaus is remembered for his concern for the poor in a popular Christmas carol, where he leaves his castle with a page during a winter storm to deliver food and wood to a peasant. As the storm worsens, the page follows in Wenceslaus' footsteps which miraculously warm his freezing feet. By following the path of righteousness the two were led out of their respective storms. Wenceslaus was led into sainthood, and the page was led out of the storm. The parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes also try to follow the path of righteousness and St. Wenceslaus' example. They are celebrating his feast day this weekend with a mass and a traditional Czech meal.

A TRIBUTE TO TAKIS SALPEAS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. P. Takis Salpeas, an extremely talented and capable manager with the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) who recently resigned his position in Millbrae, California, to take a position with the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA) in Washington, DC.

Mr. Salpeas has served BART with distinction since 1991, first as project manager for the BART Colma Station Extension, then as Executive Manager of West Bay Extensions, and was in charge of the extension of BART to the San Francisco International Airport, which lies in my Congressional district.

Under Mr. Salpeas' leadership, the BART rapid rail system cleared numerous political and financial hurdles in order to begin construction of the important 8.7 mile BART Extension to the San Francisco International Airport. The BART Extension to the airport will connect the existing 95-mile multi-county BART system with a new international terminal at the airport.

Mr. Salpeas has more than 25 years experience in rail transit planning, engineering and construction, and he has been an invaluable leader at BART. Mr. Salpeas has been selected for the position of Assistant General Manager of Transit System Development at WMATA.

Prior to coming to BART in 1991, Mr. Salpeas worked for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA), which serves the Philadelphia metropolitan area. At SEPTA, he was project manager for reconstruction of elevated rail guideways and stations, and later directed its engineering development program.

Mr. Salpeas is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers; the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council, the American Public Transit Association (APTA) and the APTA Construction Committee; and the Federal Transit Administration's Construction Roundtable. A graduate of Athens University and the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Salpeas holds two masters's degrees in systems engineering and civil engineering. He is the author of more than 30 professional papers on rail transit topics, and has taught civil and transportation engineering at Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity to recognize Mr. Takis Salpeas and in wishing him well in his new position at WMATA. Mr. Salpeas has served our community well and made a difference in the lives of Pennsylvania residents. Takis will be missed by those who worked with him, he will be missed by his friends in the Bay Area, and he will be missed by countless others in our community who do not know him, but who have benefitted from Takis' work and dedication in bringing BART to the airport.

I would like to place a copy of an article which appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle last year, which I believe captured the essence of Mr. Salpeas' character and accomplishments at BART.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Sept. 1, 1997]

HE'S HELPING DRIVE BART'S TRAIN TO SFO ENGINEER AIMS TO GET IT DONE FAST, INEXPENSIVELY

(By Benjamin Pimentel)

While politicians take credit for BART's grand plan to go to San Francisco International Airport, many say an engineer named Takis Salpeas—known to few outside BART and local political circles—is the project's real driving force.

Part commander and part cheerleader, the 47-year-old Greek immigrant has spent the past five years working out details for BART's eight-mile march to SFO and Millbrae, one of the biggest transit projects in Bay Area history.

In many ways, Salpeas is just the person to lead BART's bulldozers when construction begins next month: a dedicated railroad-builder full of brashness and bravado who hasn't lost his optimism in the face of dozens of obstacles.

"BART is one of the best systems in the world. There will be no margin of error," Salpeas said. "Everything will be efficient. We have to go for it."

The airport project is the biggest in Salpeas' career—and the most controversial. It has been the target of lawsuits, opposition from local groups and the airlines and political battles in Congress.

At a time when few believe the line will open by the early 21st century, Salpeas says he's sure he can complete the job on schedule in 50 months.

And even though critics predict that the extension will cost more than its projected \$1.2 billion price tag, the feisty engineer claims he can do the job efficiently enough to save up to \$240 million.

Salpeas' gung-ho attitude has rubbed some people the wrong way.

Although local leaders are excited about the economic benefits of the BART extension, many complain that BART planned the extension without adequately consulting them—and that Salpeas has tried to steamroll them. But few are willing to publicly criticize a man they will have to negotiate with in the coming years.

"You're either on his side or (you're) the enemy," one government official said. "We have this love-hate relationship with the man."

Others, like San Bruno Mayor Ed Simon, say they appreciate Salpeas' directness.

"He's a straight shooter," he said. "Some people think he's abrasive because he doesn't try to sugar-coat things."

Salpeas acknowledges that he has been blunt in dealing with cities.

"Whatever I tell them is the truth, the honest, professional truth," he said. "I never promise anything I can't deliver."

Born and raised in Athens, Salpeas is the son and grandson of railroad engineers. His family sent him to study civil engineering at the University of Pennsylvania in the early '70s, hoping he would return to become director of Greece's national railroad system.

Salpeas decided to build his career in the United States instead. After a stint with Philadelphia's rail transit agency, Salpeas moved to the Bay Area in 1991 to build BART's Colma station.

He was later tapped to head BART's SFO extension team.

Until recently, when BART finally got a federal funding commitment, it was unclear if the project would ever get started.

The weekend before the Federal Transit Administration signed the agreement, Salpeas said he was nervously scribbling plans for radically cheaper alternatives.

Because the line will pass through several cities, Salpeas has had to calm fears about how construction will affect communities. Along the way, he's had to contend with cities' demands, such as extending a sidewalk or building tracks underground—demands that usually get turned down.

"Everybody wants something out of this project—and yet I have fixed resources," he said.

BART board member Dan Richard, who negotiated with cities for the agency, said there were times when he wished Salpeas would take a softer approach.

"There's a reason why there are few engineers in public office," he said. "They sometimes use the direct approach, which is what you need to build things—but isn't always the most politic way. Every once in a while, we have to guide the missile in a different direction."

Simon recalled how Salpeas would fidget with his tie whenever discussions seemed to be reaching a stalemate.

"It's like he wants to take his tie off and put on another shirt to start working," Simon said. "He just wants to build the darn train."

And Salpeas wants to build it fast and cheap.

To do this, BART is changing the way it issues contracts. In the past, BART dealt with dozens of contractors whose job was to build whatever BART had designed. BART's recently completed East Bay extensions, roughly the length of the airport project, involved 51 contractors.

By contrast, the SFO extension will involve four contractors in charge of both designing and building the line. Fewer contractors will likely mean fewer delays and shorter construction by more than a year, Salpeas said.

The process, called design build, is commonly used in private construction projects—but this is the first time it will be used to build a major Bay Area transit project.

Many things could still derail Salpeas' game plan. BART must lobby Congress every year for its annual appropriation, and some local groups still think the project is too expensive and impractical.

But he remains optimistic.