

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2001

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the House Science Committee, I rise in strong support of the FY 2002 VA, HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriations Conference Report. My good friends Chairman WALSH, and Ranking Minority Member MULLOHAN have put together a conference report that is very good for science, good for the space program, and good for the environment. I thank them for their outstanding leadership.

Chairman WALSH shares my belief that basic research provides the foundation for economic growth and for the tremendous advances we have made in areas like biomedical research. The appropriation for the National Science Foundation contained within this conference report reflects these beliefs. Chairman WALSH is to be commended for the more than 8 percent increase that he has provided for the Foundation.

The bill also contains funding for the National Mathematics and Science Partnerships Program that was proposed by President Bush and that is authorized by my bill—H.R. 1858—that was unanimously reported out of the Science Committee. This program will bring colleges and universities and school districts together to form partnerships to improve the quality of elementary and secondary math and science education. I look forward to working closely with Chairman WALSH and NSF to see that this program is properly implemented.

I want to particularly thank the conferees for including funding for the Noyce Scholarship Program. Named for the co-founder of Intel, this program provides scholarships to talented mathematics, science, and engineering students in exchange for a commitment to teach two years for each year of scholarship. I am passionately committed to attracting young people to the profession of teaching and look forward to welcoming the first class of Noyce Scholars.

I also want to commend the Committee for providing funding for the Tech Talent Act that I introduced on October 15, of this year. This program will encourage colleges and universities to think more creatively about how they educate our future scientists, mathematicians and engineers.

The conferees are also to be commended for a bill that protects and expands NASA's scientific programs in Science, Aeronautics, and Technology while striking the right balance for the Space Station. This bill sends a clear signal that Congress is not going to bail

out NASA for its management failures. It also makes clear that we're willing to work with the Administration to identify additional resources to improve station capabilities, if we see the right management reforms and performance improvements at NASA.

Yesterday, the House Science Committee heard testimony from Tom Young, the Chairman of the International Space Station (ISS) Management and Cost Evaluation (IMCE) Task Force and Sean O'Keefe, the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The Task Force concluded that without significant management and budget reforms, NASA would not be able to complete the U.S. Core Complete station within the budget that was agreed upon earlier this year. Mr. Young and Mr. O'Keefe recommended, and I concur, the NASA must be required to demonstrate to Congress that it can manage the U.S. Core Complete Station—both on time and on budget—before any decisions are made to expand the capabilities of the station.

I also want to stress that the ISS was intended to be a research platform that would permit scientists to carry out research that could only be conducted in a space environment. It is important that we not lose this focus upon science and that we closely examine the research program that will be supported by the station. The Science Committee has asked the National Academy of Science to review this research program and I look forward to their findings. I concur with the conferees' recommendation that this study be expanded to evaluate the research programs that could be conducted on the ISS with a three- or a six-person crew.

I particularly appreciate the Committee's commitment to new space technology and its effort to bridge the gap between NASA and the Air Force. By directing a modest amount of funding to the Air Force Research Lab, the bill encourages NASA and the Air Force to pool their efforts on technologies that will benefit both agencies and the American people. Space based radar technology, for example, is vital to our national security, but also has immense applications in Earth science. A development program that reduces the cost of synthetic aperture radar technology will benefit both.

Similarly, the bistatic radar technology developed at the Rome Research Laboratory has immense potential for upgrading our national launch range tracking capabilities at a low cost. By demonstrating this technology, we may finally break the logjam that has undermined our space launch competitiveness.

The conferees have also, at my request, addressed a matter that is of great importance to me—the LANDSAT Data Continuity Mission. The Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-555) directs the LANDSAT Program to consider options, with preference given to a commercial solution, to maintain the continuity of LANDSAT data beyond LANDSAT 7.

While NASA's Earth Science Program has responded to several of my concerns, I con-

tinue to be deeply concerned that NASA's acquisition strategy for the LANDSAT Data Continuity Mission (LDCM) places too much emphasis on government satellite engineering and design during the formulation phase of the program. I urge that the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy continue to review this program to ensure that preference is given to technically and economically sound commercial data buy proposals that will meet our nation's data continuity needs. I applaud the conferees for including language in the conference report that restates our expectation that NASA will pursue commercial data purchase approaches to all Earth Science Program Announcements for Opportunity.

Let me turn for a moment to the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency, an agency that Congress should elevate to cabinet level status. I appreciate the efforts of Chairman WALSH and his colleagues in the House and Senate to provide a responsible budget to help meet the nation's environmental needs. On the whole, the conference report is good news for EPA. Clearly, many of us would prefer to see higher funding levels for some of the agency's programs, but the conferees have done an admirable job of balancing competing needs and working within difficult fiscal constraints.

As Chairman of the Science Committee, I am particularly pleased the bill increases funding for the Science and Technology account from \$640 million in the budget request to \$698 million.

Admittedly much of this funding is for site-specific or project-specific activities. Even so, I think it is important to continue a trend of increasing agency resources for basic and applied research, including drinking water research under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Mr. Speaker, the recent experiences with arsenic confirm the importance of science in making key regulatory decisions. I commend the Administration and the conferees in advancing the effort to replace the 50 parts per billion standard with a more protective 10 parts per billion standard. I hope Congress will provide additional funding to research and develop more cost-effective technologies to meet the SDWA standards as contemplated by Administrator Whitman.

As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Congressional Water Infrastructure Caucus, I am pleased the conference report rejects the proposed cut to the Clean Water SRF but I'm disappointed it doesn't provide more than \$1.35 billion for the program. I appreciate the constraints facing the conferees but would encourage the Appropriations Committee to find a way to fund some of the important water infrastructure and ecosystem restoration programs, such as the new sewer overflow control grants program and the reauthorized Clean Lakes program. I hope there are opportunities down the road to target assistance for such efforts.

I would also continue to note my concern with the Superfund program. The bill provides \$1.27 billion. The Appropriators are doing their

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best under the circumstances. Congress needs to change the circumstances; comprehensive reform and, at a minimum, a reauthorization of the Corporate Environmental Income Tax (which expired on December 31, 1995) should be the next course of action.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill for science, a good bill for the space program, and a good bill for the environment. It aptly illustrates the tremendous leadership provided by my good friend from New York, Chairman WALSH, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2001

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2001

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I join Chairman YOUNG in introducing (by request) the Ad-

ministration's bill to reauthorize the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) hazardous materials program. Given the recent threats to our nation's security, it is particularly important that we have in place a program that strengthens the Department of Transportation's inspection and enforcement authority over hazardous materials movements. To address the threats to the security and safety associated with the transportation of hazardous materials, DOT inspectors need clear authority to open and inspect packages they believe might contain hazardous materials and to issue emergency orders to stop unsafe practices that pose an immediate threat to life, property, and the environment.

The bill also addresses the problem of undeclared hazardous materials shipments by mail. The bill authorizes the United States Postal Service to collect fines and recover damages for violations of hazardous materials regulations. The proposal calls for substantial increases in penalties for those who would violate Federal hazardous materials laws and regulations.

However, I have a number of concerns with the Administration's proposal that I hope we will address during consideration of any hazardous materials legislation. This is not the time to compromise on the safety and security of hazardous materials transportation.

The risks from serious hazmat releases to employees of hazmat transporters and the public-at-large are simply too great to allow for legislation that offers anything but the highest level of protection. I look forward to working with the Chairman, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Administration to craft a hazardous materials reauthorization bill that will best meet the needs of hazardous materials transporters, their workers, and the American people.