committee itself by unanimous consent, so it is a very uncontroversial piece.

This area of northwest Alabama is adjacent to the State of Tennessee and the State of Mississippi as well, so my colleagues in the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT), both are cosponsors of this piece of legislation.

As the chairman referred to and the ranking member referred to in their remarks about H.R. 2628, this area of northwest Alabama has an extraordinary history of involvement. Native Americans were active in this particular area, and we have an Indian Mound Museum there that is one of the most extraordinary museums in the country.

As we move on through history, the Tennessee River has defined our area culturally as well as in terms of transportation issues as well. In the early 1920s, the Wilson Locks and Dam was built there even before TVA came into existence. At the time it was the largest lock and dam on the Tennessee River and one of the largest dams in the country as well.

President Roosevelt visited that area and was so impressed by the potential that he saw there that he was inspired to form the Tennessee Valley Authority, which has given us a significant part of our prosperity there, not only in the State of Alabama but in Tennessee and the entire region as well.

But as the chairman referred to, we are the home of the W. C. Handy Festival. That is a blues festival. W. C. Handy, unbeknownst to a lot of people in the country, is the ''Father of the blues.'' He was born in Florence, Alabama, which is located in northwest Alabama. This festival has existed for 20 years and has brought thousands of music specialists from all over the country.

We have a verbal history that is available in our area of the music tradition that is there. Now, the Muscle Shoals Studio was a recent era of music that really was born out of the blues era. It is a sound recording studio that has been used by many musicians around the world. All of that kind of heritage was started back in the early 1920s and built on from there as well. So this feasibility study would give us the chance to catalogue a lot of that information.

Helen Keller was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama. That is within 5 miles of this Tennessee River, and within 10 miles of Florence, Alabama as well. Her home, Ivy Green, was preserved as a museum. There is a Helen Keller Festival there as well. A lot of Helen Keller relatives come back to that area to this particular festival.

Jesse Owens was born in Lawrence County, again, another 7 miles from the very center of the area we are talking about. There is a museum to celebrate his contributions to American history there as well.

The Frank Lloyd Wright structures we have in this area all combine to give our area of Alabama a unique history which we think is deserving of this declaration as a National Heritage Area study place.

I want to thank again the committee for giving us this opportunity, and I urge my colleagues to pass this important bill, H.R. 2628.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2628.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the five bills just considered, H.R. 3421, H.R. 3909, H. Res. 261, H.R. 2109, and H.R. 2628.

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

There was no objection.

STRENGTHENING SCIENCE AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ACT

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 64) to provide for the establishment of the position of Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology of the Environmental Protection Agency, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 64

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 ''Strengthening Science at the Environmental Protection Agency Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the Agency;

(2) the term ''Agency'' means the Environmental Protection Agency;

(3) the term ''Deputy'' means the Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology appointed under section 4; and

(4) the term ''research'' means research, development, and demonstration.

SEC. 3. RESEARCH MISSION OF AGENCY.

Conducting, sponsoring, and evaluating environmental science and technology research shall be a central mission of the Agency. The results of such research shall be used to help initiate, formulate, and carry out the Agency's agenda, and the Agency shall seek to increase the public's understanding of environmental science and technology by making those research results available to the public.

SEC. 4. DEPUTY.

(a) APPOINTMENT.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology, who shall coordinate and oversee the science and technology activities of the Agency and ensure that Agency decisions are informed by the results of appropriate and relevant research.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Deputy shall—

(1) provide advice to the Administrator regarding science and technology issues and their relationship to Agency policies, procedures, and decisions;

(2) participate in developing the Agency's strategic plans and policies and review the science and technology aspects of those plans and policies;

(3) coordinate the acquisition and compilation of relevant science and technology information available from academic sources, government agencies, and the private sector;

(4) develop and oversee guidelines for the dissemination of research results conducted, sponsored, or cited by the Agency to the public, including historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, minority communities, and rural communities; and

(5) develop and oversee guidelines for peer review of science and technology research.

(c) QUALIFICATIONS.—An individual appointed under subsection (a) shall be a person who has an outstanding science and technology background, including research accomplishments, scientific reputation, and public policy experience.

(d) CONSULTATION.—Before appointing an individual under subsection (a), the President shall consult with the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the Science Advisory Board of the Agency, and other appropriate scientific organizations.

(e) COMPENSATION.—The Deputy shall be compensated at the rate provided for level III of the Executive Schedule pursuant to section 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

(f) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5314 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology of the Environmental Protection Agency.''.

SEC. 5. ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) TITLE AND TERM.—There shall be an Assistant Administrator for Research and Development of the Agency, who shall also have the title of Chief Scientist of the Agency. Appointments to such position made after the date of the enactment of this Act shall be for a term of 5 years unless sooner removed by the President.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—An individual appointed under subsection (a) shall be a person who has an outstanding science and technology background, including research accomplishments, scientific reputation, and experience in leading a research and development organization.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 64, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 64, the Strengthening Science at the Environmental Protection Agency Act.

Time and time again I have heard my colleagues say, ''What I really want is the use of sound science at the EPA.'' The perception of how EPA decision-makers use science in their regulatory actions seems to fall into two camps: One view comes from the regulated community who claims that controversial decisions have ignored the underlying science. The other view comes from environmental and public advocacy communities who claim that the Agency ignores the underlying science while letting the regulated community unduly influence the process.

While these constituency may forever disagree on controversial decisions, one theme is common to both camps and to Members of Congress and the Judiciary, they doubt that the EPA uses science appropriately in its regulatory decisions.

How should the EPA use science? Is science simply a cudgel used to win a court battle? Is it simply an afterthought to the regulatory process? No. Rather, science should be at the beginning, middle, and end of the agency's decision-making process. It should infuse every issue from the beginning of discussions on that issue.

Several independent reviews have concluded that there are significant problems with the way science is used within the EPA's decision-making structure. These reviews include expert panels of scientists commissioned by the Congress, the EPA, the MITRE Corporation, and the National Academy of Public Administration. The latest and most influential review, the National Academy of Sciences' 2000 report concluded: ''The importance of science in EPA's decision-making process should be no less than that afforded to legal considerations. Just as the advice of the Agency's general counsel is relied upon by the administrator to determine whether a proposed action is legal, an appropriately qualified and adequately empowered scientific official is needed to attest to the administrator and the Nation that the proposed action is scientific.''

H.R. 64 provides for that qualified scientific official. This legislation would establish a new Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology to serve as an advocate for, and reviewer of, sciences at the most senior levels of the Agency. Second, the legislation would convert the position of the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Research and Development to a set term and give that position the title of Chief Scientist for the Agency.

The Deputy Administrator position will bring a much-needed change to the culture of the EPA and ensure that science has a higher profile in the Agency's decision-making process. This person would not only be accountable to the administrator for improving and overseeing science at the Agency, but would also be accountable to the Congress. This relationship would bolster Congress' confidence in the appropriate role of science at the EPA and, therefore, in regulatory decisions.

The Deputy Administrator is also needed to coordinate research between the regulatory and scientific arms of the Agency. A common problem with trying to ensure that science is involved throughout the regulatory process is that the head of the scientific arm of the Agency, the Assistant Administrator for ORD, shares the same rank as the heads of the regulatory offices. The authors of the Academy report argued since the new Deputy would rank higher than the existing Associate Administrators, this person could foster research relationships between the Office of Research and Development and the regulatory offices.

While this first objective of H.R. 64 is intended to increase the political impact that science has at the Agency, the second objective, to establish a set term for the Associate Administrator of the Office of Research and Development, seeks to decrease political pressures on this office. Although the political aspect of the Associate Administrator's job often receives attention, the most important aspects of the job are not political. Since the Deputy Administrator could bear many of the political pressures inside the Agency, the Associate Administrator could focus his or her role as the Agency's chief scientist on inspiring and supervising a world class scientific organization.

Before I close, let me mention that this legislation has garnered support from a wide array of outside groups. It has received backing from prestigious scientific groups such as the American Chemical Society, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and the Society of Toxicology; from business groups, including the National Association of Manufacturers and the Business Roundtable; and from universities and other interested parties, including the National Association of State universities and Land Grant Colleges, and members of EPA's Scientific Advisory Board.

The time has come to strengthen science at the EPA. Congress can act now by passing H.R. 64.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 64, a bill that will strengthen the use of science at the Environmental Protection Agency. I am proud to cosponsor this legislation.

The chairman has done a great job of describing the bill. I would like to make just a few additional points. H.R. 64 will ensure that science plays its proper role at the EPA, providing the basis for sound regulations that do not unduly impede economic development while protecting our environment.

The bill creates the new position of Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology. It also makes the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Research and Development a 5-year position, much like the directors of the NIH and the National Science Foundation.

There is another important section that clarifies that research is integral to the mission of EPA to protect human health and the environment.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, the bill is supported by a wide array of business and scientific organizations. I believe the Committee on Science has crafted a good bill that will help ensure that the best and most recent science is considered when the administrator makes regulatory decisions.

Ultimately, it will be up to the EPA administrator to listen to the scientists, but this bill will provide the experts with an opportunity to present their findings in a timely fashion. There are concerns both from the administration and environmental groups that this bill might create yet another layer of bureaucracy at the agency. This conceivably could occur by giving the deputy administrator a veto over regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) whether he agrees or disagrees with that view, and whether he would be willing to work with me and others to address continuing concerns within the bill?

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BAIRD. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to continue to work with the gentleman on these issues.

I would like to comment that the issue of creating another layer of bureaucracy has been raised by other Members, and that is totally false. It does not create another layer of bureaucracy, it creates two positions side by side in the same layer, and I believe it is an appropriate role for the science administrator to have an equal status with the administrator who runs the rest of the agency.

That is the real objective of this bill, to have science at a higher level, and I do not consider that an additional layer of bureaucracy; but I am pleased to work with the gentleman.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the clarification, and concur with the gentleman's position.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) for his outstanding work on this bill and his

leadership of our committee. I also thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for his work.

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), the chairman of the Committee on Science, and also express my appreciation for his work on this issue.

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

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to Members that this measure is brought forward by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), a doctor, a distinguished scientist in his own right, who is providing invaluable service to the Committee on Science. He and another gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), are a dynamic duo who have worked tirelessly to advance this bill to the point where we have it on the floor today under the Suspension Calendar, which is reserved for noncontroversial measures. This is noncontroversial.

No Member in their right mind can come up with any logical reason why we should not have a chief scientist in the Environmental Protection Agency. No one in their right mind can come up with any reason why we should not have, as this bill provides, a deputy administrator for science and technology. We are in an institution and in a town where people love to say that they favor science-based decision-making. Some of those people favor it as long as it is politically convenient. When the conclusion of the scientist is not politically convenient, they look elsewhere. There will be no escaping what this bill does, and its intent. We want to have the best possible scientific guidance for the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and we want the Environmental Protection Agency to give the administration and Congress the best possible advice that is based on sound science.

If we have that, I am convinced we can continue to go forward in a very responsible way to deal with such issues as global climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for his work on this, and the dedicated work of the staff on both sides of the aisle. The Committee on Science has an outstanding staff. I think it is second to none, very capable individuals, individuals with advanced degrees in various science disciplines, and that serves us all well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to pay attention to what we are doing here today, and I would expect unanimous support for this very worthy bill.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for his leadership on this issue.

I think the words which have been spoken are particularly instructive. As a member of the Committee on Science for a number of years, and having oversight over the Environmental Protection Agency, this legislation that provides for an administrator for science and technology emphasizes the partnership between what the agency does and science.

Everything that we have had the opportunity to investigate in the Committee on Science permeates the words ''science and technology,'' and particularly over these last years we have been utilizing the concept of technology: Technology and weather, technology in the science of pollution and clean air, technology as it relates to education, technology as it relates to the whole concept of keeping our communities safer and cleaner. So in order to provide greater advice to the administration and to ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency is an agency that is strengthened with science, I believe this legislation is the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that as this legislation moves, we will be able to implement the position very quickly because I am seeing with the changing focus on the utilization of science and technology, the greater need for that expertise, expertise to the Congress and to the administration. It is my pleasure to add my support to this legislation because it strengthens the Environmental Protection Agency upon which we rely greatly as well as our local communities, and it gives the insight that is necessary to make the process of the environment and science holistic.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), who has worked so hard on science issues, particularly the need to recruit women and minorities into science.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) for yielding me this time, and offer my commendation to the chairman of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL), and the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) for this piece of legislation that comes before us today.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in support and as a proud cosponsor of H.R. 64, the Strengthening Science at the Environmental Protection Agency Act. This bill makes important changes to the administrative structure at the EPA, establishing for the first time a clear chain of command for EPA science, and a dedicated office responsible for maintaining the highest possible standards.

With this bill, the House Committee on Science continues its mission to advance common sense bipartisan legislation that directly confronts deficiencies in our scientific enterprise. I am proud of our work together, and I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) for upholding that tradition in bringing the bill before us today.

Recent reviews of the Environmental Protection Agency have rated the quality of the science high. As individuals, the dedicated men and women of the EPA are doing their jobs with the professionalism and integrity we have come to expect, and have every right to demand. They should be proud of their efforts.

Unfortunately, these same reviews have been critical of the organization and focus of the research. The work is piecemeal, and not always directly applicable. The overall mission is unclear, and important areas are unsupported. We clearly need a more top-down approach, and this bill provides one.

Sound science requires strong leadership. Administrator Whitman has made a commitment to improve oversight of the S&T initiatives at EPA, and I applaud her efforts to conduct a thorough review of her agency. She has the will, and it is time for Congress to provide the way. This bill would create a deputy administrator for science and technology, and provide a clear mandate for the coordination and oversight of research activities. It also provides a chief scientist for the agency to provide guidance and perspective. These improvements are sorely needed.

Two years ago, the National Research Council issued a comprehensive review of EPA, and specifically called for the offices created by this legislation. In that review, the NRC highlighted the growing concerns about EPA science. They found the quality of work extremely high, but the perception low. The committee unanimously judged the lack of a top science official a major contributor, calling this state a ''formula for poor scientific credibility outside the agency.'' This is simply not acceptable.

The EPA's work is too important to suffer from poor perception. A regulatory agency cannot function without the public's trust. As the agency with primary oversight of the Nation's environment, the scientific basis for EPA's regulatory decisions must be beyond reproach. We will always have debates over trade-offs between environmental and economic prosperity, between fair use and exploitation, and too much regulation and not enough. We cannot afford to have debates about the science. It must be reliable, timely and sound.

No corporation is run without a head and no enterprise succeeds without a leader. The EPA needs a clear hierarchy and a dedicated office to oversee the science portfolio and take responsibility for its focus and direction. The

importance of the work requires it. The impact of the decisions demand it, and the American people deserve no less. I urge Members to support H.R. 64.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 64, the Strengthening Science at the Environmental Protection Agency Act, legislation that will ensure that science plays a proper role at the Environmental Protection Agency. We must be sure that science will serve as the basis for sound regulations that do not unduly impede economic development.

I want to thank Congressman SHERWOOD BOEHLERT and VERNON EHLERS who worked closely with myself and Congressman RALPH HALL to craft a truly bipartisan piece of legislation. This legislation addresses recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences and will do much to improve the quality of science at the Environmental Protection Agency.

This legislation emphasizes that research is integral to the mission of EPA to protect human health and the environment.

The creation of a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology will ensure that science has an equal seat at the table when important decisions are made. Any regulation issued by the EPA must be based on the best scientific information available. I believe that the elevated status of this new position will ensure this is the case.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 64.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation sponsored by my good friend and colleague from Michigan, Mr. EHLERS.

This legislation, which establishes a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology at the Environmental Protection Agency, fulfills a recommendation made in a report of the National Academy of Sciences. It is intended to give science a more visible role at EPA and to ensure a sound foundation for science at the agency.

As many in this body know, there is a widespread perception that politics more than science influences regulatory decisions at EPA. This bill addresses this problem, but it is only the beginning.

There needs to be a real change in the culture at EPA. Many have asked whether it is appropriate to have a regulatory body conducting and overseeing the science used to support its regulatory determinations. It seems to me that there is an inherent conflict of interest in such an arrangement. Even when EPA science is sound, there is an inescapable perception that the regulatory decision drove the science, not the other way around. This bill is a good start at raising the profile and centrality of science at EPA.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan for his leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 64.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 64, the Strengthening Science at the Environmental Protection Agency Act.

In a report published in June of 2000, the National Academy of Sciences recommended the restructuring of the EPA's science programs to strengthen the role that science plays in the decision-making process. The National Academy's recommendations call for the establishment of a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology and an appointment for the position of Assistant Administrator for Research and Development.

I am pleased that Mr. EHLERS introduced H.R. 64, which will make these recommendations a reality. Protection of our environment is dependent on science both to assess problems and to develop solutions. This bill enhances the mission of the Environmental Protection Agency to include conducting, sponsoring, and evaluating environmental science and technology research. The agency will then use the results of this research to carry out the EPA's agenda with regard to protecting the environment.

With this shift to a more science-based decision-making process at the Environmental Protection Agency, it only makes sense that the people who oversee science and technology at the EPA should be well-respected researchers who understand the scientific process. This bill directs the President to appoint a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology and an Assistant Administrator for Research and Development (or Chief Scientist) who both have outstanding backgrounds, including research accomplishments, scientific reputation and leadership experience.

Although I support this effort, I wanted to sound one cautionary note. As we pass this bill, we will need to monitor its implementation carefully. We want to make sure that our direction that EPA has a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology and an appointment for the position of Assistant Administrator for Research and Development not be distorted by anyone with a political agenda. We want to make sure the people who fill these new positions at EPA are truly scientists, not politicians intent on using junk science or biased science to fulfill a political agenda. That is equally true for pro-industry and pro-environmental positions.

All too often in the environmental arena we see decisionmaking being dictated by a reliance on studies created or funded by industry. In many instances, we don't have access to the raw data underlying these studies. As any scientist will tell you, this is a perversion of the peer review process that is the basis of all good science. We have also seen groups make wild claims that have no basis in scientific analysis.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 64 is a well-intentioned bill and a step forward to see that our decisions are guided by the best available data. I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 64, 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.

EXTENDING AUTHORITY OF EXPORT-IMPORT BANK UNTIL MAY 31, 2002

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2248) to extend the authority of the Export-Import Bank until May 31, 2002.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 2248

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF EXPORT-IMPORT BANK.

Notwithstanding the dates specified in section 7 of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945 (12 U.S.C. 635f) and section 1(c) of Public Law 103–428, the Export-Import Bank of the United States shall continue to exercise its functions in connection with and in furtherance of its objects and purposes through May 31, 2002.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 2248, and to insert extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this Member rises today in support of S. 2248, which is being considered today under suspension of the rules. This legislation simply extends the authorization for the Export-Import Bank until May 31, 2002, nothing more. Under current law, the most recent short-term reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank expires on April 30, 2002. If this subsequent short term authorization extension is not signed into law, the Export-Import Bank could not engage in new transactions and would have to wind down its current operations as of today, April 30.

Without the passage of this legislation the Export-Import Bank will not have the legal authority to issue new financing commitments in support of the export of U.S. made goods and U.S. origin services.

□ 1530

Each year, the bank supports more than 2,300 export transactions. Eighty-six percent of those transactions are for small and medium-sized businesses. The bank processes a daily flow of export cases and any expiration of the bank's charter will jeopardize pending sales and the jobs of U.S. workers tied to those transactions.

Even more important to small business, the Export-Import Bank has a Credit Committee which approves small business transactions. This Credit Committee meets often each week. If this extension is not passed, the Credit Committee will not be able to do their business, and small businesses in turn will be hurt the most.