

or memos issued just on the eve of the consideration of this legislation, and I want to make four points to reassure those who have expressed concerns about the effects of this bill on environmental procedures.

One, the bill specifically provides there is no preemption or interference with any practice of seeking public comment or the authority of States or the authority of airport operators to decide on which projects they wish to undertake.

Two, the bill does not give any new authority to the FAA to create exemptions from the environmental requirements.

Three, States have a choice of whether they want to participate in a coordinated process.

Four, if another agency does not comply with the coordinated schedule developed by DOT, the other agency does not lose its authority. It does have a remedy, a report to Congress.

I think on balance we have taken into consideration the concerns expressed in the course of the hearing and subsequently about the effects of this legislation on environmental processes, and I urge the adoption of the bill.

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first, again, I want to thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) for his cooperation and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Aviation, for his kind assistance.

This legislation is authored by the chair of our full committee, the distinguished gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and it is cooperation of this nature that allows us to move important legislation forward. Although again not very newsworthy or legislation which brings on a great deal of debate and controversy in the House, today we are passing a significant measure which will allow airport streamlining for the approval process that is so important.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this bill saves time and this legislation saves money. This legislation maintains our protections, important protections over the environment, and this legislation maintains important local and State control and authority.

I believe it is important to move this legislation forward because it does move our aviation infrastructure projects which are so necessary across the country and particularly in our congested regions of the Nation, and also this is important because it will move our economy forward, which we know is so dependent on aviation and aviation infrastructure.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this legislation and support for H.R. 4481.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to put on record my concerns regarding the Air-

port Streamlining Approval Process Act of 2002 currently under discussion in the House.

No one can quarrel with the concept of coordinating the extensive environmental review process required for major infrastructure projects such as the airport construction. Major transportation, education, energy, and other essential infrastructure projects warrant expedited environmental review, as long as the review is thorough and complete. However, it is critical that the same standards of review be used for all such projects. In Northern California there is a very controversial and disputed proposal to expand the runways at San Francisco International Airport by filling in approximately one square mile of San Francisco Bay. For the last several years, I have impressed upon federal and state officials the importance of analyzing this proposal from the perspective of meeting the long-term challenges facing commercial aviation throughout Northern California.

The runway expansion and Bay fill proposal is seen as a solution to the problem of too much air traffic and air traffic delays at SFO. But, this solution will only compound the problem of traffic gridlock on our existing freeway and highway system to and from the airport. The permanent damage to San Francisco Bay caused by the Bay fill would only relieve aviation congestion problems on a temporary basis, it does nothing to address the larger issue of moving people and goods throughout California in the most reasonable, efficient, and environmentally prudent manner. In fact, it makes this challenge more difficult.

As we discuss expedited review by the Federal Government of major projects such as the San Francisco Bay fill/airport expansion proposal, we must be mindful of thoroughly reviewing all alternatives. In the case of San Francisco, have we considered the use of existing, under-utilized or abandoned aviation facilities in the San Francisco/Northern California region as an alternative to filling the Bay? Do the increased security concerns resulting from September 11 support such an expansion or would it be more prudent to improve other regional facilities? Has consideration been given to segregating SFO in terms of limiting or eliminating air cargo operations at that facility in order to maximize passenger aviation opportunities?

I have long suggested the Federal Government coordinate its review of all major projects in order to have a timely resolution and avoid endless litigation and delay. Our policies in this area, however, must be consistent and exercised with fairness, and the review must be thorough.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition of the Airport Streamlining Approval Process Act of 2002, which continues this Congress' focus toward the expansion of airports and ignores the quality of life issue forced on many of our constituents who live near airports—aircraft noise.

I fully recognize the vital role the aviation industry plays in our nation's economy, but it is time for this congress to stop focusing solely on what's good for the airport industry and to start focusing on what's also good for the countless individuals who live near airports and are constantly subjected to the thunderous roar of giants jets overhead.

While this measure does include provisions that address aircraft noise, I firmly believe that those steps are inadequate and do not prop-

erly address the issue of aircraft noise. Instead of addressing legislation seeking solely to expand this nation's airports, this Congress should also focus its attention on legislation that eliminates aircraft noise. One measure I have introduced would ban the two loudest types of airplane engines from all general aviation airports in the 20 largest metropolitan areas in the country. It is time that we shift our attention away from solely the expansion of airports and toward the problem of aircraft noise which hampers the quality of life for countless American citizens.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4481, 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. MICA. 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 material on H.R. 4481, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

ARMED FORCES TAX FAIRNESS ACT OF 2002

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5063) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for members of the uniformed services in determining the exclusion of gain from the sale of a principal residence and to restore the tax exempt status of death gratuity payments to members of the uniformed services.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5063

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 "Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2002".

SEC. 2. SPECIAL RULE FOR MEMBERS OF UNIFORMED SERVICES IN DETERMINING EXCLUSION OF GAIN FROM SALE OF PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 121 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to exclusion of gain from sale of principal residence) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(9) MEMBERS OF UNIFORMED SERVICES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—At the election of an individual with respect to a property, the running of the 5-year period described in subsection (a) with respect to such property shall be suspended during any period that such individual or such individual's spouse is serving on qualified official extended duty as a member of the uniformed services.