

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I simply want to say thank you to each and every one of the pilots, men and women, who have stepped forward to take a stand to defend the United States and to ensure that our traveling public is safe and that further harm does not come to aviation.

One of the reasons we have changed the rules with TSA in screening passengers is because we have a system like this in place, and they have just announced that this week.

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Mr. Speaker, I would say it is almost impossible to take over an aircraft the way the 9/11 terrorists did. We have armed pilots through this program. We have air marshals and secure cockpit doors. And then we have the traveling public who would never allow that to happen knowing what we know. So now we are changing the focus and these pilots through their efforts and this program have allowed us to look at additional risk such as explosive devices and other threats that we face. We know we are secure again through the efforts of the countless pilots we are honoring who have participated in our Federal Flight Deck Officer program.

So again, on behalf of Chairman YOUNG, who chairs our full committee and Mr. LUNGREN, Mr. KING and Mr. COSTELLO, and my other colleagues, I am pleased to present this resolution to adequately recognize those who have come forward and have helped make this a more secure Nation through the aviation industry.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I have not been a supporter of the Federal Flight Deck Officer program because I believe it creates safety problems which outweigh any security benefits. Without any disrespect for the individuals participating in the program, I rise to remind my colleagues that there is still a lot of work left to do to improve aviation security.

On Monday, the 9/11 Commission released its Final Report on Commission Recommendations. The Commission gave aviation security low to failing grades ranging from "C" to "F".

Three priority issues we must work expeditiously to address in the coming months include: suicide bombers at the checkpoint, checked baggage screening and screener staffing.

SUICIDE BOMBERS

Probably the greatest threat facing aviation is the threat of a suicide bomber getting past airport checkpoint security. We know that we have vulnerabilities at passenger checkpoints, and we need to give our screeners the tools to get the job done.

Earlier this year Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (DHS IG) released a report indicating that our airport screening system still needs improvement. Regarding the causes of poor screener performance, the DHS IG stated "that significant improvement in performance may not be possible without greater use of technology."

While we have made some progress in recent months deploying checkpoint explosive

detection machines like trace portals, the 9/11 Commission report gives checkpoint explosive detection a grade of "C". We can and must do better.

CHECKED BAGGAGE SECURITY

As to checked baggage screening, it is important to install in-line screening systems at large airports given both the increased security such systems provide as well as the cost benefits. In-line EDS systems promote greater security because they are not exposed to the public; screeners are able to focus on screening bags rather than moving them; and fewer people are congregated around machines in the public area.

In addition to these benefits, in-line baggage screening systems have a much higher throughput than stand-alone systems. If we install in-line systems, more bags will be screened by explosive detection systems instead of less reliable, alternative methods.

TSA and airport operators rely on commitments in letters of intent (LOIs) for Federal assistance as their principal method for funding the modification of airport facilities to incorporate in-line baggage screening systems. To date, TSA has issued only 8 LOIs to cover the costs of installing systems at 9 airports.

Earlier this year GAO reported that TSA has estimated that in-line baggage screening systems at the 9 airports that received LOI funding could save the Federal government \$1.3 billion over 7 years. TSA further estimated that it could recover its initial investment of in-line systems at these airports in just over 1 year.

Moreover, TSA officials stated without in-line EDS technology, 27 airports will not comply with the congressional mandate to screen all checked baggage using EDS or ETD.

Yet despite the security benefits and savings that we would clearly gain from installing in-line EDS systems, this Congress has failed to provide sufficient funding to install in-line EDS at more than a few airports. We must fund the installation of in-line EDS systems.

SCREENER STAFFING

TSA's main mission is security. But the agency also has the responsibility to move passengers efficiently, so long as security is not compromised. In both of these missions, TSA has been handicapped by the ill-advised cap of 45,000 full time screeners imposed by the House Appropriations Committee over three years ago, and which is continued in the FY06 DHS Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-90). This cap was imposed without any basis for determining that 45,000 was the right number, and is both arbitrary and counterintuitive. Moreover, this cap does not provide TSA with flexibility that it needs to schedule screeners for training and other skill improvement activities, while continuing to adequately staff security checkpoints.

To add insult to injury, the FY06 Appropriations provides only \$2.4 billion for Federal passenger and baggage screeners, which I am told is tantamount to 43,000 full time equivalent screeners—a decrease of 2,000 screeners below the cap! Passenger enplanements in 2006 are expected to reach upwards of 750 million. Surely this anticipated increase in passenger traffic justifies fully funding TSA up to the 45,000 cap!

I urge my colleagues to support these needed improvements in aviation security.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The question is on the

motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 196.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1721) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize programs to improve the quality of coastal recreation waters, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1721

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

SECTION 1. COASTAL RECREATION WATER QUALITY MONITORING AND NOTIFICATION.

Section 406(i) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1346(i)) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2011".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 8 of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 877) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2011".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1721 to extend the authorization of appropriations for Clean Water Act programs aimed at improving the quality and safety of our Nation's recreational coastal waters. Beaches are a very important part of American life. Each year, over 180 million people visit coastal waters for recreational purposes.

This activity supports over 28 million jobs and leads to investments of over \$50 billion each year in goods and services nationally. Public confidence in

the quality of our Nation's waters is important not only to each citizen who swims, but also to the tourism and recreation industries that rely on safe and swimmable coastal waters.

To improve the public's confidence in the quality of our Nation's coastal waters and to protect public health and safety, Congress passed the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000, commonly called the BEACH Act, in the 106th Congress.

Under the BEACH Act, the EPA has been developing new water quality criteria to protect human health from disease-causing pathogens, and States are updating their water quality standards for recreational coastal waters to incorporate these more protective critical.

The EPA also has been making grants to States to help them implement programs to monitor beach water quality and to notify the public if water quality standards are not being met.

H.R. 1721 reauthorizes the current level of funding for these programs. This includes \$30 million annually through fiscal year 2011 for the EPA to make grants to help them implement their coastal waters monitoring and public notification programs.

H.R. 1721 will help protect public health and safety and continue to improve the quality of our Nation's recreational coastal waters that are so very important to the economies of our coastal communities.

I certainly want to congratulate our colleague, Mr. BISHOP, on sponsoring this bill, and I urge all Members to support this very worthwhile legislation.

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1721, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First I would like to begin by thanking Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR for their support, their leadership and their hard work in moving this important and bipartisan legislation through the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and on to the House floor today.

In addition, I am deeply grateful for the support and contributions of the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), the chairman of the Water Resources Subcommittee, and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), the subcommittee's ranking member, for their steadfast support and commitment to America's coastal environment.

Mr. Speaker, as the distinguished subcommittee chairman has just explained, H.R. 1721 reauthorizes grants under the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 known as the BEACH Act through fiscal year 2011. The record shows that the BEACH Act has been a proven success for 35 coastal States and U.S. territories. It goes a long way towards maintaining pristine coastline, and is a

critical component of preserving our Nation's environment and sustaining the tourist economies of our States.

As someone whose district on Eastern Long Island is almost completely surrounded by beaches, I know that American families expect and deserve clean water for their enjoyment, and in some cases, their businesses, such as tourism and the fishing industries. Indeed, beach-going Americans deserve pristine waterways to enjoy with their families, and we need to protect these areas for future generations.

By fully funding the water quality monitoring and notifications grants established under the BEACH Act of 2000, we can assure the American public that preserving healthy shores is a priority of our environmental agenda.

Over the past 5 years States have made great progress in creating monitoring plans and putting them to good use. The most recent EPA data on beach closings and advisories indicates that only 4 percent of beach days were lost in 2004 due to closures triggered by bacteria monitoring. This is a significant improvement from past years.

In addition, the number of beaches we monitor has more than tripled from about 1,000 in 1997 to more than 3,500 in 2004.

One of the strongest economic forces along America's coast is tourism. Obviously, vacationers, visitors and beachgoers who enjoy the sea certainly do not want to visit beaches that are closed. I am confident, therefore, that this program will continue to be supported by both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers.

I look forward to working with the Senate to advance this bill in order to ensure the BEACH Act's reauthorization without delaying or interrupting the important coastal preservation programs it funds.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is good for the environment, is sound public policy, and continues a critically important program necessary to preserve one of our most precious and beloved natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for his support and for the fine work of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

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

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1721, legislation to reauthorize the BEACH Act. I thank Mr. BISHOP for his vital leadership on this important measure. I also want to thank Chairman YOUNG, Mr. DUNCAN, and Ranking Member OBERSTAR for their efforts to bring the BEACH Act to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, America's beaches are our national treasures. They are an important part of our heritage. They are

environmental assets and economic assets. We want to keep them that way, and that is exactly what this measure will do.

This vital legislation provides State and local governments with grant money to monitor pathogen levels off their shores, and to notify the public when those pathogens levels are above acceptable levels. Pathogens, we all know, can cause illness when people are exposed to them through swimming or consuming fish from contaminated water.

It is absolutely essential that we continue to fund these programs so that States and localities have the resources that they need to protect recreational users from dangerous levels of bacteria, viruses or parasites off their shores. When people go to the beach, including the 981 square miles of coastal waters in New York, it should be pleasant and it should be safe. That is why this bill is so vitally important. I urge my colleagues to support the reauthorization of the BEACH Act to ensure that we protect Americans from potentially toxic coastal water.

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I will simply close by saying that this is a very strong bill for the environment. It is a bill that is important to thousands of cities, towns and small communities along the coast of this country. Not every bill that claims to be for the environment is really a good bill because some of them drive up prices and destroy jobs and hurt the poor and lower income and working people, but this is a pro-environment bill that helps sustain and even creates jobs. I do not know of any negatives with this bill. I think it is something that all of our colleagues can support. I urge its passage.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 1721, a vital measure to reauthorize appropriations for coastal recreation water quality monitoring and notification grants through 2011. Originally passed in the BEACH bill in 2000, this program was added to the Clean Water Act to require states with coastal areas, including those in the Great Lakes region, to adopt minimum standards for water quality, test recreational beach waters, and notify the public when test levels prove unsafe.

In 1999, before the BEACH bill became law, only eleven states tested their waters and reported to the public when there was a presence of bacteria and viruses. Human contact with such waters, especially in the elderly and very young, can result in gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory diseases, and ear, nose, or throat infections. These bacteria and viruses are typically the result of polluted stormwater and runoff, overburdened sewage treatment facilities, and malfunctioning septic systems. Ignorance was not bliss, ignorance was a serious health hazard. While we must certainly do more to eliminate these pollution sources, until they are eliminated, we must test recreational waters and adequately inform those who might be at risk from them.

Poor health conditions from contaminated waters adversely affect those who live by

coastal waters and those who travel to the shore. According to the latest reports from the Travel Industry Association of America, 109.5 million travelers visit the beach per year. Over 36 percent of those tourists stayed for a week or longer, and 41 percent of the travelers were children—those who could most be adversely affected by contaminated waters.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the efforts of our Committee colleague, Mr. BISHOP, in proposing this important legislation. As the representative of the northern part of the Long Island Sound, the gentleman is well aware of the importance of clean beaches and public notification of potential health exceedances for residents and visitors to the Sound. I commend the gentleman's hard work in reauthorizing funding for this program.

I support this reauthorization and I urge my colleagues to let "a day at the beach" continue to be a pseudonym for recreational relaxation and enjoyment, not a risk of pollution and ill health.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, as one of the original authors of the BEACH Act five years ago, I rise in support of H.R. 1721 and thank my friend from New York, Mr. BISHOP, for working to move this legislation forward.

The BEACH Act of 2000 took major steps towards improving water quality testing and monitoring at beaches across the country, which is critical to protecting the health of beachgoers. The Act had three provisions: requiring states to adopt current EPA water quality criteria to protect beachgoers from getting sick; requiring the EPA to update these water quality criteria, developed in 1986, with new science and technologies to provide better, faster water testing; and providing grants to states to implement coastal water monitoring programs.

The bill before us extends the authorization for appropriations under this third provision, which expired at the end of this fiscal year, until 2011. This is an important step because every coastal state now has a beach water monitoring program that relies on federal grant funding. However, we need to realize that there are still outstanding issues in the implementation of the other portions of the BEACH Act that merit Congressional involvement.

In particular, EPA was to have completed new water quality criteria by October of this year to make sure that all Americans can feel safe swimming at the beach without worrying that they will get sick. My office has spoken extensively with EPA about this, however, and it seems that this will likely not be completed until 2011. EPA is spending nearly a decade studying water testing methods, waiting to collect data on freshwater beaches before even beginning to test marine beaches.

This delay, likely due at least in part to insufficient funding from the Administration and this Congress, has prevented EPA from helping communities implement rapid water testing methods that could shorten the time for beginning and ending beach closures from two days to merely a few hours. Such an improvement would provide much greater protection to beachgoers and help shore economies by avoiding unnecessary closures.

I intend to work with my colleagues here and with EPA to improve the implementation of the original BEACH Act and keep our coastal waters as clean as possible. In the meantime, I am pleased to see the House extend the grants program through this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1721.

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.

FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3963) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to extend the authorization of appropriations for Long Island Sound.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3963

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

SECTION 1. LONG ISLAND SOUND AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 119(f) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1269(f)) is amended by striking "2005" each place it appears and inserting "2010".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3963 to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Long Island Sound program under the Clean Water Act.

More than 8 million people live within the Long Island Sound watershed. The sound generates more than \$5 billion annually for the regional economy from boating, swimming, and commercial and sport fishing, plus other activities. The Long Island Sound, like many estuaries around the Nation, supports multiple uses and demands and provides habitat for a multitude of fish and wildlife species.

Yet despite its value, the sound is experiencing stress from increasing population growth and development. Storm water and agricultural runoff, wastewater discharges with high nutrient levels, industrial pollution, and commercial and recreational waste all have

led to water quality issues arising in the sound. The Long Island Sound is one of the estuaries in the EPA's national estuary program. A long-term estuary management plan has been developed and approved for the sound. The Long Island Sound program was created in part to help carry out the goals of the sound's estuary management plan.

H.R. 3963 reauthorizes the current level of funding for the Long Island Sound program to continue implementing the sound's estuary management plan. This includes \$40 million annually through fiscal year 2010 for the EPA to make grants to State and local parties for projects and studies aimed at improving water quality in the sound. H.R. 3963 will help the local States and the EPA to restore and protect Long Island Sound, which is so important to the economy of this very important region of our country.

I want to especially congratulate the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for sponsoring and pushing this bill to the floor here today. I urge all Members to support this bill.

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

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 3963, bipartisan legislation offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS). This bill is important to all of us who rely on the sound as an economic engine for our communities and as a clean source of water and food for our families.

It is important to recognize nationally designated estuaries such as Long Island Sound, not only for the economic growth they generate, but also their important role in the global environment. Estuaries provide feeding and nursing grounds for diverse plant life, wild birds and fish, along with other animals.

In addition, countless families and businesses in my district and indeed throughout the northeast rely on Long Island Sound for their livelihood, enjoyment and peace of mind. The sound plays an integral role in not only the 8 million people who live in the immediate vicinity, but also the tens of millions who visit the area each year.

In fact, this dynamic body of water produces \$5.5 billion in revenue for State and local economies in the tourism, fishing and boating industries in the northeast each year.

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I am proud to have participated in developing this legislation, and today's consideration ensures that we will be renewing our commitment to preserving Long Island Sound for future generations of Americans.

On a more personal note, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage each of my colleagues to visit the sound and experience its grandeur. Again, I appreciate