

This bill ensures that aviation programs, taxes, and Airport and Airway Trust Fund expenditure authority will continue without interruption pending completion of long-term Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization legislation. Because the long-term bill will not be completed before the current authority for aviation programs expires at the end of this week, H.R. 5900 is needed to extend aviation programs, taxes, and expenditure authority for an additional two months, through September 30, 2010.

The most recent long-term FAA reauthorization act, the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (P.L. 108–176), expired on September 30, 2007. Although the House passed an FAA reauthorization bill during the 110th Congress, and again last year, the Senate failed to act until March of this year. The FAA has, therefore, been operating under a series of short-term extension acts, the most recent of which expires on August 1, 2010.

Since passage of the Senate bill in March, we have been working diligently to resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills. To be frank, I had hoped that the House would pass a negotiated, comprehensive, multi-year FAA reauthorization bill this week. We are close to a final package with the Senate, with very few issues left on the table. As it stands now, the negotiated bill would provide the aviation sector with the stability of a multi-year authorization, safety reforms, record-high capital investment levels, several provisions that would accelerate the Next Generation Air Transportation System effort, and a passenger bill of rights.

Unfortunately, the FAA reauthorization bill is hung up in the Senate, primarily over a provision that would significantly increase the number of long-distance flights at Washington National Airport. The Senate provision was included in neither the House-passed nor Senate-passed FAA bills, and it is strongly opposed by Members of Congress and Senators who represent the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region because, they argue, it would create a burden for Washington National Airport by creating congestion at terminals and siphoning passengers away from Washington Dulles International Airport. I also have concerns that the provision, as written, would unduly benefit dominant incumbent carrier, US Airways.

Madam Speaker, on the night of February 12, 2009, a Colgan Air flight operating as Continental Connection Flight 3407 crashed in Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation that followed rocked the airline industry, stunned the American public, and identified the need to closely examine the regulations governing pilot training and rest requirements, with a particular focus on regional airlines.

In response to this tragedy, the Subcommittee on Aviation held a series of hearings, receiving testimony from the FAA, the NTSB, the Department of Transportation Inspector General, pilots' unions, airline representatives, and the representatives of the Colgan 3407 Families.

With regard to the Colgan 3407 Families, they have been a driving force behind aviation safety reform legislation. In the last 17 months they have come to Washington, D.C., more than 30 times to push for legislation. They have served the American public well. It is

time to let them go home now, to know that they have made a difference, to put closure on this tragedy and to pick up the pieces of their lives. Moreover, safety is our highest priority. Therefore, this extension act includes the airline safety and pilot training provisions that we have been able to negotiate with the Senate. These safety provisions will dramatically upgrade the training and experience necessary to be an airline pilot. Key features of this legislation include:

Requiring all airline pilots to hold an Airline Transport Pilot certificate, which requires a minimum of 1,500 flight hours; the current requirement is 250 flight hours.

Directing the FAA to update and implement new flight and duty time rules for pilots within one year, to more adequately address the results of scientific research in the field of fatigue.

Requiring FAA to ensure that pilots are trained on how to recover from stalls and upsets and that airlines provide remedial training to pilots who need it.

Establishing a pilot records database to provide airlines with fast, electronic access to a pilot's comprehensive record.

Some have argued that these safety provisions are one of the strongest selling points of a comprehensive FAA reauthorization package, and that by moving these provisions separately we may put the larger bill in jeopardy. We believe that moving these safety reforms right now, as part of an extension act, is simply the right thing to do. Moreover, we see no reason why Congress cannot return in September and work through the very few remaining issues in a larger FAA bill. We view these safety provisions as just a preview of a very strong comprehensive aviation package that this Congress will deliver for the American public in a matter of weeks.

I thank Chairman LEVIN of the Committee on Ways and Means for his assistance in ensuring the continued operation of aviation and highway programs. I also thank my Committee colleagues—Ranking Member MICA, Subcommittee on Aviation Chairman COSTELLO, and Ranking Member PETRI—for working with me on this critical legislation.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5900.

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, as I have said earlier, this is the strongest aviation safety bill that we are about to pass in decades. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5900.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House, and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of pro-

ceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

MODIFYING DATE THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND APPLICABLE STATES MAY REQUIRE PERMITS

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3372) to modify the date on which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and applicable States may require permits for discharges from certain vessels.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3372

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

SECTION 1. DISCHARGES INCIDENTAL TO NORMAL OPERATION OF VESSELS.

Section 2(a) of Public Law 110–299 (33 U.S.C. 1342 note) is amended by striking “during the 2-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act” and inserting “during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on December 18, 2013”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LoBIONDO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam 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 materials on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 3372. This piece of legislation has been approved twice by this Chamber. Just last week, H.R. 5301, proposed by my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LoBIONDO) passed easily on the floor of this Chamber.

Both S. 3372 and H.R. 5301 are mere extensions of an already existing moratorium. This extension is necessary because the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that discharges from vessels under 79 feet in length are not benign. But the agency needs additional time to expand coverage of its permitting program for these smaller vessels, and the EPA needs additional time to set appropriate Clean Water Act requirements to protect the Nation's waters from these type of discharges.

So I urge my colleagues to join me and support S. 3372.