GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1309.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2011

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 340 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1309.

□ 1234

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1309) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, to achieve reforms to improve the financial integrity and stability of the program, and to increase the role of private markets in the management of flood insurance risk, and for other purposes, with Ms. FOXX in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. I'd like to thank Ms. WATERS and all the Members from both sides of the aisle who helped to craft this bill.

On May 13, the Financial Services Committee favorably reported the Flood Insurance Reform Act by a unanimous vote of 54–0. This bill is important and reflects the hard work and bipartisan support of the Financial Services Committee.

It would reauthorize for 5 years the National Flood Insurance Program, NFIP. The bill would enact a series of reforms designed to, number one, improve NFIP's financial stability; two, to reduce the burden on taxpayers; three, restore integrity to the FEMA mapping system; four, to explore ways to increase private market participation; and, five, to help bring certainty to the housing market.

For over 40 years, taxpayers have subsidized flood insurance premiums for policyholders. To improve NFIP's financial stability, H.R. 1309 phases in actuarially sound rates for policyholders and phases out taxpayer-subsidized rates. As a result, the Congressional Budget Office stated that the bill generates $4.2 billion; and absent a Katrina-like catastrophe, the bill will actually accelerate NFIP's payments on its $17.75 billion debt to the taxpayer. As it stands, NFIP has already paid back taxpayers about $1.8 billion.

But perhaps most importantly, H.R. 1309 eliminates a barrier to the development of a private flood insurance market and puts us on a path towards a responsible, long-term plan that eliminates taxpayer risk.

For the first time, policyholders can choose private flood insurance over government flood insurance without the risk of lender rejection; and the bill eliminates taxpayer-subsidized rates so that the private sector can offer consumers increasingly competitive rates as compared to the NFIP. Second, FEMA is required to solicit bids to determine the cost to the private sector, not to the taxpayer, bearing the risk of flood insurance.

Third, it requires that GAO and FEMA evaluate the feasibility of voluntary, community-based flood insurance. And, fourth, the bill reiterates FEMA's existing authority to purchase reinsurance from the private sector as an alternative to the U.S. Treasury and taxpayers serving as a backstop to NFIP.

Finally, the bill addresses many of the concerns that Members have raised with us about new maps, especially as they relate to the dam and levee decertifications. It allows communities to suspend the requirement to purchase flood insurance while they work to construct or fix their flood protection systems.

Madam Chairman, when Congress created NFIP, there was no viable private-sector flood insurance market. Taxpayers were providing increasing amounts of direct assistance through disaster relief to flood victims. Without reforms contained in this bill, taxpayers will never be paid back the debt they are owed; homeowners and businesses will have limited or no access to flood insurance; and Congress will inevitably have to bail out flood disaster victims, as it did prior to 1968. We cannot allow this to happen.

This bill is the first significant reform to the program in nearly a decade. The NFIP is too important to let lapse and too in debt to continue without reform. I look forward to today's amendment debate and urge my colleagues to support the underlying bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: I am writing concerning H.R. 1309, the ''Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011,'' which is scheduled for floor consideration soon. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 1309 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, we are able to agree to forego action on this bill in order that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1309 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1309, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. I agree that there are provisions in the legislation that fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting Floor consideration of H.R. 1309.

Further, I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Judiciary is not waiving its jurisdiction. I will include this exchange of letters in our Committee Report on H.R. 1309 and the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

SPENCER BACHUS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BACHUS: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology in H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. H.R. 1309 has been marked up by the Committee on Financial Services. The amended version of the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Based on discussions that the staff of our two committees have had regarding this legislation and in the interest of permitting your Committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive consideration of this bill. However, agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as waiving, reducing, or affecting the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Additionally, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology expressly reserves its

authority to seek conferees on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this, or any similar legislation. I ask for your commitment to support any request by the Committee for conferees on H.R. 1309, as well as any similar or related legislation.

I ask that a copy of this letter and your response be included in the report on H.R. 1309 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill.

I look forward to working with you as this important measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

RALPH M. HALL,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2011.

Hon. RALPH M. HALL,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space and Technology, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HALL: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. I agree that the section requiring a study on graduated risk in this important legislation falls under the jurisdiction of both the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Science, Space and Technology. I am most appreciative of your decision not to request a referral in the interest of expediting consideration of H.R. 1309.

Further, I agree that by foregoing a sequential referral, the Committee on Science, Space and Technology is not waiving its jurisdiction. I will include this exchange of letters in our Committee Report on H.R. 1309 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

SPENCER BACHUS,
Chairman.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairwoman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. Before I begin my remarks, I would like to thank Chairman SPENCER BACHUS, Chairwoman JUDY BIGGERT, and Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK for their assistance and support with this bill.

We were able to work in a bipartisan manner on this bill in our committee passing it on a vote of 54–0. The spirit of cooperation between Republicans and Democrats on this bill has been extremely welcome, and this is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill.

□ 1240

Madam Chairwoman, earlier this year I introduced similar legislation, H.R. 1026, the Flood Insurance Reform Priorities Act. A version of my bill passed the House last year on a bipartisan vote, and I hope that the bill offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois will also pass the House with significant support from both parties.

The flood insurance program is more important now than ever before. Floods are the most common natural disaster and flood insurance is the most effective means for helping families to rebuild after a flood. Therefore, it is vital that flood insurance remain accessible, affordable and available to the 5.5 million homeowners with policies and the many more who may want or need to purchase them.

Unfortunately, the lack of a long-term authorization has placed the flood insurance program at risk. The program lapsed three times last year. These lapses meant that FEMA was not able to write new policies, renew expiring policies or increase coverage limits. Given the current crisis in the housing market, this inability in the flood insurance program is unacceptable and must be addressed. I am pleased that the gentlewoman's bill not only reauthorizes the program for 5 years but also provides the program with the tools it needs to return to a strong financial footing while protecting homeowners.

The bill also addresses the impact of new flood maps on communities. The mapping process has caused confusion and financial strain on homeowners who now find themselves in flood zones and subject to mandatory purchase requirements. I saw this firsthand in my home city of Los Angeles. Last year, I was able to assist homeowners in the Park Mesa Heights area of the city who had been mistakenly placed in a flood zone. In that case, FEMA acted quickly to respond to new data and correct the mistake. However, there are thousands of homeowners nationwide who now find themselves in flood zones and subject to mandatory purchase requirements.

The gentlewoman's bill would ease the financial strain on newly mapped homeowners by allowing for a 3-year delay of the mandatory purchase requirement and allows for a 5-year phase-in of actuarial rates afterwards. In addition, I know that the gentleman from Alabama, the chairman of the committee, will be offering an amendment similar to the one I offered at markup that would extend the 3-year delay to 5 years. I know that the gentleman has worked with a bipartisan coalition of members of the House Levee Caucus, led by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO), and I look forward to passage of that amendment.

To make sure that FEMA issues the most accurate maps, the bill establishes a Technical Mapping Advisory Council. By improving the mapping process, the council would prevent instances of erroneous flood maps, like the one I encountered in Park Mesa Heights. The bill also makes other improvements to the program by phasing in actuarial rates for pre-FIRM properties, raising maximum coverage limits, providing notice to renters about contents insurance, and allowing homeowners that receive letters of map amendment to be reimbursed for their costs.

Madam Chairwoman, I believe that the gentlewoman from Illinois and I have produced a good bill that will protect homeowners, the flood insurance program, and taxpayers. I hope that we can pass this bill today and that the Senate takes up flood insurance reform in short order so that we do not risk another lapse when the program expires on September 30 of this year. Again, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for her tremendous work on this bill, and I strongly urge an ''aye'' vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the legislation that is before us today to reform the National Flood Insurance Program.

I would like to thank the gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS) for their hard work to bring forth a bipartisan bill which addresses many of the concerns to a program hampered by extraordinary losses and currently facing about $18 billion of debt.

H.R. 1309 provides a long-term extension of the National Flood Insurance Program, but it makes a significantly indebted program more fiscally sound. A 5-year reauthorization will give the certainty that is needed to a program that has been without it for the past 2 years. It is irresponsible and unfair to communities and individuals, especially those who live in flood-prone areas such as mine, to pass short-term extensions and allow temporary lapses when more than 5 million policyholders depend on it for financial security against flooding. Unless congressional action is taken, on September 30, 2011, these policyholders will again be put in danger of losing protection.

Unfortunately, the persistence of subsidized rates for properties in high-risk areas has left the NFIP underfunded and at risk. This bill makes needed reforms to put premiums more in line with risk by incorporating actuarial rates for at-risk properties. Increasing the limit on annual premium rate increases will gradually phase out subsidized premiums and help reduce taxpayer exposure. At the same time, this legislation allows properties relief from the mandatory purchase requirement for up to 3 years so they may be able to plan better for being newly mapped into special flood hazard areas.

Most importantly, this bill gives us a chance to give long-term certainty to policyholders as well as insurers who participate in the program. In a still unsure housing market, it is critical that we provide as much clarity as possible to current and future homeowners.

I am very pleased that this legislation looks at privatization initiatives and the possibilities that the private market as well as reinsurance can play in protecting communities against future flood damages. It is my hope that we will pass this bill.

Again, I want to congratulate the chairwoman for her hard work.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairwoman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY). She has been very much involved in the development of this legislation and has worked very hard.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) for yielding me this time. It has been a pleasure working with her. I would also like to thank Chairman BACHUS and Subcommittee Chair BIGGERT with whom we have worked. This is something that is important to both of our districts. I also thank Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK.

Madam Chairman, H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011, reauthorizes the National Flood Insurance Program for 5 years, but it also provides much needed reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program.

My district in Long Island, especially the community of Valley Stream, was included in the early rounds of FEMA's implementation of the flood map modernization process, and we have experienced much of the frustrations associated with the process. The whole idea of redoing what we're doing in this flood map is hopefully to prevent other Members of Congress from being frustrated as much as I have when they're trying to help their community.

Since our maps were enacted in the fall of 2009, I hear daily from our frustrated homeowners who are required to purchase flood insurance because of the updated maps and who feel they did not have the time or the tools necessary to understand and respond to the maps' results. H.R. 1309 contains provisions to better inform homeowners who are required to purchase flood insurance because of updated maps. For example, the bill requires FEMA to notify federally elected officials when there are changes to a flood zone or a map directly in their district.

The bill also requires FEMA to create a method for flood insurance policies to be paid for with installment payments, to ease the burden of having to pay the up-front full payment which can cost thousands of dollars. The bill also allows for homeowners who are in the reduced cost preferred risk policy program to enter into the 5-year phase-in for full actuarial rates when the extended rate expires in 2013.

To ensure the accuracy of the data and process FEMA used in creating the updated maps around the country, H.R. 1309 also creates a Technical Mapping Council made up of agency employees and experts in the field of mapping to develop new mapping standards for future map modernization activities. We need to use every tool available to bring relief to homeowners who are being burdened by FEMA's map modernization process, and the bill before us is a good start.

□ 1250

I would like also to say, once again, working with my colleague Mrs. BIGGERT, working on the subcommittee has been a really good process. We have been able to bring our experiences, what happened in my community in Valley Stream and the frustration that homeowners have gone through. This legislation, although it doesn't cure everything, it will help constituents. And those who have not had their maps done yet, this is a good way for going forward.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chair, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FINCHER), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. FINCHER. Madam Chairman, I stand before you today because my district recently suffered severe flooding this spring and summer which we are now just beginning to recover from. The flooding of the Mississippi River, caused by an unusual amount of rain from back-to-back storms, left thousands of Tennesseans with flood damage. In my district alone, over 3,000 homes were damaged by storms and floods, and over 4,000 registered for disaster assistance.

Because the Mississippi River borders 110 miles of Tennessee's Eighth Congressional District, many small towns and farms are subject to unpredictable flooding each year. With this in mind, I am pleased to support H.R. 1309 today.

H.R. 1309 reauthorizes the National Flood Insurance Program for 5 years, which would provide some certainty for the economy and to the national housing market. During a period of 9.2 percent unemployment, we need this certainty to boost the housing construction industry and to help create badly needed jobs.

Another reason I am supporting H.R. 1309 today is this legislation encourages greater private sector participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Madam Chairman, if we are to reduce Federal spending and the size of government in our lives, we need to put every program on the table and analyze ways we can encourage the private sector to shoulder more government risk.

I am pleased to support H.R. 1309 and encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairwoman, I am so pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER). He has a long history in this area, and the National Flood Insurance Act of 2004 bears his name. I appreciate his support.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentlelady's courtesy, as I appreciate her leadership and the leadership of Chair BIGGERT for bringing this important legislation to the floor.

It is true, I have been working in these areas for the last 10 years to make sure that the program is stable in the long term and encourages participation. Here we are raising rates where necessary to more accurately reflect flood risk.

For too long, homeowners in low-risk areas have been subsidizing those in high-risk areas, all backed by the Federal taxpayers. This bill will make the program closer to being actuarially sound. I appreciate the work done to deal with repetitively flooded properties, which comprise 2 percent of the properties insured by the program but are responsible for 30 percent of the claims.

We do people no favors by paying them to rebuild in the same way, in the same place, time and time again in harm's way. That's why I strongly support the amendment that has been included in the en bloc to reauthorize and streamline a number of mitigation programs targeted towards repetitive flood programs.

I authored, with my colleague Doug Bereuter of Nebraska, a program to provide mitigation assistance for ''severe repetitive loss properties.'' Unfortunately, since 2004, we found the program has been hard for FEMA to administer. When they have been able to get the program off the ground, it has allowed mitigation of almost 600 properties and saved $125 million. But if we are able to move forward here, allowing the program to work right, it can make a huge, long-term difference both in the lives of property owners as well as the fiscal stability of the program.

The Waters amendment addresses the administrative programs by combining three mitigation programs into one streamlined provision, removes red tape, and enables FEMA to more easily work with the communities to mitigate the properties.

It is important to note that it does not cost the taxpayers any money. The money for mitigation comes from the flood insurance fund made up of premium dollars, and each dollar spent on mitigation saves the fund far more in the future.

I appreciate the work of Mrs. BIGGERT, Ms. WATERS, Chair BACHUS, Ranking Member FRANK, and the committee to dig into the details here to ensure that FEMA will continue to have the tools it needs to address the properties that are costing the program the most. This is going to go a long way toward helping people out of the cycle of flooding and will help reduce the heavy drain that these properties have on the flood insurance program.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CANSECO), another great member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. CANSECO. I would like to thank Chairman BIGGERT for her leadership on this bill which makes vital reforms to a troubled program.

Madam Chairman, we are all aware of the importance of flood insurance. Back in Texas, floods are a common occurrence. And when they happen, they destroy homes, property, and even entire communities.

Yes, this program provides flood victims with the monetary compensation necessary to begin rebuilding their

homes and their lives; yet we cannot forget that the only reason this program is still operating is because taxpayers have bailed it out as, by any measure, it has been insolvent.

That is why I am offering a very simple amendment to this bill that accomplishes three things:

Number one, it adds a provision to the bill that recognizes that while flood insurance is important to millions of Americans, this program is deeply in debt to the American taxpayer and there is currently no tangible plan to pay that money back;

Number two, it requires the administrator of FEMA to report back to the Congress within 6 months a 10-year plan to pay back the $18 billion it currently owes taxpayers;

Number three, it adds accountability to a program that is far from being fiscally sound.

Let's keep in mind that if the National Flood Insurance Program were an initiative solely of the private sector, it would have declared bankruptcy long ago. Remember also that the person propping up this program, the American taxpayer, is very weary and tired from continually being held responsible for bailing out government's failed initiatives. For years the taxpayer has been asked to pick up the tab for government programs no matter how effective or how solvent they may be. The argument was that we could hold off worrying about overspending until we reached a crisis point. Well, with each American family now responsible for over $120,000 of the Nation's debt and with annual trillion-plus dollar deficits, we are now at that crisis point.

Madam Chairman, my amendment and this bill are a step toward bringing fiscal responsibility back to this program. But, more importantly, it stands up for the American taxpayer whose voice has been ignored in Washington for too long.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairwoman, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT). Mr. SCOTT has been a strong advocate for his constituents, making sure that they could afford it. The installment part of this bill is all because of his work.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Let me commend Ms. WATERS and Mrs. BIGGERT for their extraordinarily important work on this legislation that is very much needed. People all across this country are very grateful that we are finally bringing some help here.

Madam Chair, nothing is more devastating to a family, to a community, than to lose, almost in the flick of an eye, to lose your home to a flood—I mean, totally underwater—to lose businesses. This happened in my State in a devastating manner in 2009. It was the worst flood in modern history of the State of Georgia. We lost over 20,000 homes throughout the State, but no area was more impacted than my own congressional district. Ten people statewide lost their lives. There was a cost of over $500 million to lost businesses and homes. And of those 10 people who lost their lives, seven of them were from my congressional district.

□ 1300

To even make this more pointed, seven of them were from one county in my district. Douglas County and Cobb County were just devastated by this flood. The communities of Austell and Powder Springs and Douglasville and Lithia Springs and College Park had to all virtually start over. Imagine yourself as a child with your whole school under water. It was an extraordinarily unfortunate situation. To make matters worse, Madam Chair, most of these individuals had no flood insurance. The reason they didn't have any flood insurance was the cost of flood insurance and the requirement that you had to pay for your flood insurance in one lump sum.

Thanks to this committee, thanks to this bill, thanks to the work of Ms. WATERS, Mrs. BIGGERT, Chairman BACHUS, and Ranking Member FRANK, we have galvanized this. Thanks to the Federal Government and FEMA and now thanks to this bill and the amendment that you all were kind enough to adopt, which was mine, individuals can now purchase their flood insurance in monthly installments.

What a relief. What a great measure. This is what the American people expect of us—to come up here and immediately respond to a pressing need. This is a great day. It is a great bill. I want to thank all of you for working with us on this.

Madam Chairman, again, I want to thank Mrs. BIGGERT and Ms. WATERS for their excellent work, for a job well done. The people of this country thank us, too, as they can pay for their flood insurance in installments.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, may I inquire of the Chair how much time both sides have remaining?

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Illinois has 20 minutes. The gentlewoman from California has 16½ minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan, CANDICE MILLER.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I certainly thank the gentlelady for yielding some time to me.

I hate to rain on this bipartisan parade. I know that there's a bipartisan effort here, but I think this program needs to be eliminated, not to be reformed, and I would start with this basic premise:

Why in the world is the Federal Government in the flood insurance business?

If you read the Constitution, what does it say? Actually, in the preamble, it says the first and foremost responsibility of the Federal Government is to provide for the common defense. I can't find anywhere in that Constitution that says we're supposed to be in the Federal flood insurance business. I just can't find it. I'll tell you what. I know we're trying to reform what, I think, is an unnecessary boondoggle, ridiculous program, but rather than reforming it, as I say, I think it needs to be eliminated.

This program started in 1968, and we started writing policies in 1972. The FEMA administrator just recently testified, I believe before the Financial Services Committee, and said this Federal Flood Insurance Program is in debt. As has been mentioned here, it is almost $18 billion in debt. We have to raise the debt ceiling for the Federal Flood Insurance Program to about $25 billion, and the FEMA administrator is telling us that it is always going to be in debt—forever—massive debt.

The biggest issue facing Congress today is what we are going to do about the $14 trillion in debt we are currently faced with and raising the debt ceiling for that. So, as we are struggling with all of this, it is almost ludicrous to me that we are talking about raising the debt ceiling on a program that the Federal Government should not be involved in. One of the reasons it's not doing particularly well is—guess what? big surprise—the Federal Government is probably not the best insurance agent in the world. I mean, when you see that 1 percent of the policyholders is getting 40 percent of the claims, something is seriously wrong.

I am going to be offering amendments shortly to eliminate this program, and I'll speak more to it at that time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chairwoman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR), who has worked very hard to make sure that we open up communications with communities that are located in areas where flood insurance rate maps have not been updated in 20 years.

Mr. CUELLAR. I want to thank Congresswoman WATERS for her courtesy and, of course, for her leadership on this issue. I also want to thank the subcommittee chairwoman, Mrs. BIGGERT, as well as Financial Services Chairman BACHUS and Ranking Member FRANK, for their bipartisan work on this piece of legislation.

I consulted with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle with regard to my amendment, and I believe this will be included en bloc with the other amendments.

Homeowners, businesses and regions throughout the country are hit by flood disasters every year, and I understand that, in such traumatic and desperate times, our communities must be prepared and equipped with the most up-to-date information and resources. I have repeatedly met with my constituents and district county judges, specifically Judge Eloy Vera from Starr County in South Texas, who experienced flooding issues recently. I learned that flood zone maps had not been updated for decades—decades—and that this hampered economic development when they were struck by a

flood recently. The reasons for outdated flood maps vary, and maps from the 1970s are not uncommon, but there is a need to strengthen the relationships between entities that handle flood insurance maps to address regional concerns.

My amendment is simple and bipartisan. It encourages FEMA, State emergency agencies and localities to increase communications to resolve outstanding issues and to provide necessary, tailored information in an effort to decrease the prevalence of outdated flood zone maps. Flood-threatened areas with outdated flood zone maps are not only contradictory, but can result in serious problems for the region. Increasing FEMA, State and local relationships is a practical and effective way to assist communities and to ensure a steady process to modernize flood maps.

So we are ready when a disaster strikes, I urge support for my commonsense amendment that will be included en bloc.

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. BERG).

Mr. BERG. This has been a very tough spring for North Dakota as well as for many other districts along these overflowing rivers. Unprecedented flooding has devastated many communities, leaving property destroyed, thousands without homes and hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland flooded. Roads and bridges are severely damaged as well.

This year's flooding is unusual both in the scope of its damage as well as in how long the flooding has lasted. Many North Dakotans purchased flood insurance to be prepared for the floods and to protect themselves and their families from the losses that these floods cause. Unfortunately, FEMA's current policy fails to account for a long-lasting flood event like the one that we've seen along the Missouri River.

I support the 30-day waiting period. If individuals purchase insurance 30 days before their properties are damaged, they should be protected regardless of when FEMA declares a ''flood in progress.'' That declaration could be counties or even States away or unexpectedly worsened by the Corps' decision to increase the outflows from dams along the flooded rivers upstream and to do this with very little warning.

The Terry-Berg amendment would protect these individuals who have played by the rules. We need responsible policies that help plan for the uncertainty of natural disasters. We also need to protect and help the people who have suffered when these disasters hit home. This amendment will do both. So I urge my colleagues to support these victims by voting in favor of this amendment.

□ 1310

Ms. WATERS. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I thank the ranking member for her work on this and the chairwoman of the subcommittee. Thank you for coming together and creating a process that allowed us to interact and work for our constituents.

Recognizing the gentleman from North Dakota, I have actually been on those flood flights that he's experiencing and am very appreciative of what he brought forward.

Today, I have a pretty simple amendment, I think, that addresses a real issue that we're having.

Over the past decade, there have been two real changes to the levee system that protects our communities in this country. The first, of course, was FEMA increasing the amount of information and the due diligence they're doing on recertification of levees. That's appropriate after Hurricane Katrina. Secondly, the private engineering firms that perform the recertifications are facing astronomically increased costs from their private insurers.

No one wants to insure a levee in a flood-prone area other than the rest of the community, thus the government. Together, these two changes have added increasingly high costs to our local communities as they're trying to protect their residents and keep their levees up to standards. It has created an extra burden on these communities that they can ill afford. This amendment offers a solution.

The Army Corps of Engineers stands ready and able to perform these levee certifications. In many cases, they built the levees. They can do it at a significantly reduced cost to the local communities. But under legislation passed in the 2000 Water Resources Development Act, State and local communities cannot hire the Corps of Engineers to do the work; they must first go to private contractors. It's exactly what happened in my town of Mankato, Minnesota. The north Mankato levee, which was designed and built by the Corps, needed to be recertified because of these changes. Because they couldn't use the Corps of Engineers, our local officials had to scramble and go out of their way to find a private contractor willing to do the work at an added cost of tens of thousands of dollars. At no fault to the private contractors, their insurance of liability was so high they had to pass the cost on to the local communities.

This approach was worked on in the last Congress with then-Representative BOOZMAN, now-Senator BOOZMAN. It has the support of the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and the National Association of Towns and Townships. And here's the good thing: The Congressional Budget Office has certified this amendment will cost nothing to the taxpayers. Our taxpayers on the local level are paying far more as it is. This is a way to get it right, use the Corps that we already have, save taxpayers money, increase the efficiency of our levees, and reduce the claims that are made by this.

I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation, and once again I thank the committee for their outstanding work on the underlying bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

Mr. TERRY. I want to thank the gentlelady from Illinois and the entire Financial Services Committee for working with us on this amendment and recognizing the tragedy and disaster that's currently occurring along the Missouri River, with my constituents, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri.

What occurred here is that at the beginning, when they started realizing there was going to be flooding and the Corps had to run the traps through the dam system, one government agency started telling people downriver to buy flood insurance. Then FEMA steps in and sets a start-of-flood or flood-in-progress date that nullified what the constituents and people bought.

Now, what the Terry-Berg amendment does is, it would protect those individuals during a flood in progress if the individual has purchased flood insurance and has not sustained damage or loss of property within that 30-day window. That's the clear language of the policies that they were purchasing that had been nullified by FEMA's declaration. This amendment does not dispute the 30-day waiting period—which is designed to discourage people from waiting until a flood is imminent to buy insurance—it simply ensures American families who purchase flood insurance are covered if they sustain damage after the declaration of a flood in progress. This resolves the conflict caused between two government agencies and adheres to the intent, and I want to thank the Financial Services Committee for including this in the en bloc package.

Ms. WATERS. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER).

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for her leadership on this important issue.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 1309 and in support of my en bloc amendment that aims to provide more certainty to the National Flood Insurance Program.

My amendment calls on FEMA to take into account the effects and implications of weather conditions when making a flood-in-progress determination. Currently, FEMA's flood determinations are made independently by a FEMA adjustor, allowing a significant amount of room for subjectivity. I appreciate the need for FEMA's flexibility, but taking a more formulaic approach to flood events will provide increased certainty to our river communities. My amendment would also require FEMA to review the process for

providing public notification of a flood event.

When the Missouri River started flooding earlier this summer, FEMA was delinquent in reporting their flood-in-progress determination to the public. That determination was made June 1 but was not announced until June 6. For 5 days, we had no way of knowing that FEMA had made this determination, impacting policyholders and new homebuyers.

We believe that FEMA must look at the policies in place and make recommendations for a more objective and precise determination process, along with public notification standards that will keep policyholders better informed. It is critical that FEMA develop enhanced procedures for flood determinations and communications with the public.

I urge support for my amendment and for the underlying bill.

Ms. WATERS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

With the NFIP's authorization set to expire on September 30, it's really critical that the House pass the bill and work with the Senate to shape a final commonsense reform measure. We have to avoid a recurrence of what happened in the last Congress when the program lapsed and caused turmoil in a recovering housing market. Houses couldn't be closed if they didn't have insurance and if they had a mortgage. At that time, it was simply extended without any reforms. So if there is no viable private insurance market, we're going to have to pay more. So I would suggest that we really look forward to passing this bill.

Madam Chair, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I would like to thank my good friend from Illinois for the time. She has been a wonderful advocate on behalf of homeowners and renters of the United States, and especially in my area.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of this bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program as administered by FEMA through the year 2016.

Granted, the bill before us is not perfect, but homeowners and businesses in my congressional district—that stretches from Miami Beach all the way down to Key West—deserve to see stability brought to this vital program.

Since September of 2008, the NFIP has had 11 short-term extensions, and just last year alone the program was allowed to lapse three times. That is inexcusable. These lapses meant that FEMA was not able to write new policies, renew expiring policies, or increase coverage limits. And for a program that insures over 90 percent of all flood insurance policies nationwide—40 percent of those being in my home State of Florida—this is rightly inexcusable. Just as bad, for each of the 53 days that the NFIP was lapsed, over 1,400 homebuyers who wanted to purchase homes located in floodplains were unable to close on their home purchases.

□ 1320

It is necessary to demonstrate these irresponsible lapses will not occur again; and those of us in south Florida and the Miami Beach area to the Keys will stay prepared for any event that could occur during hurricane season, which is upon us again, and we need to know that the NFIP is there to help us recover. Let us not let another lapse happen right in the middle of hurricane season.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this much-needed, way overdue important reauthorization.

I thank the gentlewoman for the time, and let's pass this bill.

Ms. WATERS. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I yield 9 minutes to our distinguished chairman of the Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. I thank the gentlewoman.

Madam Chairman, this month we're all focused on the debt and the deficit and our negotiations to try to balance the budget. So it's with great pride that I tell the House that all 54 members of the Financial Services Committee, both Republicans and Democrats, have unanimously passed out of the committee a bipartisan piece of legislation which will save the U.S. Government and the American taxpayers $4.2 billion over the next 10 years. It does that without decreasing any of the benefits of the program. It does it in some commonsense ways.

One is that premiums will be actuarially sound. They will be based on the risk, and we will be eliminating subsidies to bring the program into balance. We further insulate taxpayers from losses by adding a reinsurance provision whereby part of the premium that people pay, just as if they do on their house or for wind coverage if they have a home on the beach—part of it is in private insurance laid off into reinsurance. The program today, if you eat up the reserves, then the Treasury is responsible for making up the difference.

After this legislation goes into effect, there will be reinsurance that will be purchased, and the taxpayer will only be exposed after risk-based premiums are exhausted, reinsurance in addition to that is exhausted. So we reduce taxpayer exposure to a tremendous extent.

Also, people have said, why is there not private insurance? Well, we have a provision in here, supported by both parties, that if the private market comes in and offers insurance for the same coverage that people will be free to choose that coverage as opposed to the national flood insurance offered by the government.

You've heard the gentlelady from Florida express her concern that 11 times this legislation has been extended. Where it has been extended, it has retarded economic growth along our coastlines, along our rivers; and you can actually imagine that a lot of the economic activity and the job creation in our country comes in these areas.

And today I think there would be no one in the House that says we want to put the economies of those areas on hold for 3 months or 6 months. We want the economy to have much fewer problems. We don't want to stop home sales; we don't want to stop commercial developments in those areas.

There are other shortcomings with the present program. One is there are disputes over whether or not land should be included within the floodplains, whether coverage should be offered. We make improvements there. We returned to a program several years ago where there's a technical advisory committee that, in addition to FEMA, will make these decisions, and it will be a more professionally based decision. Those areas which are spending money, local areas like Los Angeles, California, Ms. WATERS' district; along the Mississippi River, where local governments have come together and made expenditures to protect against floods, there's acknowledgment of their work, and the phase-in period for them is extended to encourage more of that.

All in all, I think that I would just go back to where I started and say that the Financial Services Committee is no different from any other committee in this House. There are conservatives, there are liberals, there are moderates that serve on that committee, both Republicans and Democrats. But all 54 members—let me stress that again—all 54 members of the Financial Services Committee voted unanimously for this legislation. And we are prepared in our debate as we go forward to accept amendments offered by several other Members, both Democrats and Republicans, to accept those amendments where it does not do violence to the program, where it doesn't increase costs or exposure to the taxpayer.

All in all, I want to congratulate the chairman of the subcommittee, who produced this legislation. I think our constituents for months have been saying to the Congress, please set aside your political differences, please try to work together, please try to cooperate when you can do so without violating your principles.

And Mrs. BIGGERT and Ms. WATERS, the subcommittee ranking member on her side, they put aside their differences. I worked with Chairman FRANK. We had hearings, we had markups, and we produced something that I thought was not possible, and that's a bill that we all think will improve the program tremendously, will reduce the cost and reduce taxpayer exposure and really make the mapping better and

the protection for our communities in flood-prone areas work more effectively.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I am very pleased and proud to be a cosponsor of this tremendous comprehensive legislation.

I would like to thank the chairwoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for her work, her leadership, and her cooperation. And I would like to thank both the chairman of our committee, Mr. BACHUS, and the ranking member, Mr. FRANK, for their support and their cooperation on this legislation.

□ 1330

You heard Mr. BACHUS, our chairman, recount for you that 54 members of the committee unanimously voted to support this legislation. That is pretty unheard of. And I think that the committee, the entire committee is to be congratulated for the tremendous work that we all put in to making sure that we have comprehensive legislation that would afford protection for our citizens and, at the same time, as was mentioned, reduce the costs, but recognize that this has been a long time in coming.

So as a cosponsor of this bill, H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011, this bipartisan effort that has brought us to this point, I would like to say that all of the Members who have spoken today, for the most part, on both sides of the aisle, have been complimentary of this comprehensive work. Of course, we did have one Member who disagreed with government's involvement in this flood insurance program. That's a rather radical view. I think most Members of this Congress believe that we have a responsibility to give support to those who are the victims of natural disaster, disasters that have been caused through, of course, no fault of their own. They're pleased that they have an opportunity to get some protection, with the help of their government, and to make sure that their homes and their families can be supported at a time that can be very traumatic in their lives.

Again, I will have to remind all of my colleagues that unfortunately the lack of a long-term authorization has placed the flood insurance program at risk. The program lapsed three times last year. These lapses meant that FEMA was not able to write new policies, renew expiring policies, or increase coverage limits.

Today, you have heard the Members of Congress again on both sides of the aisle give appreciation for the mapping reform that we have included in this legislation, for the outreach that we have included in this en bloc amendment that would allow the constituents of all of our districts to understand better what FEMA is doing, how it's doing, and how they can be a part of it. I am also pleased that included in this en bloc amendment is protection for small businesses. And I am very, very pleased that we have seen this as an effort not only to reauthorize, but to correct some of the weaknesses in the program and to strengthen the program in general.

With that, Madam Chair, I would ask for support for this bill. I know that there are some amendments that are being introduced a little bit later on; and I think that, again, you will see bipartisan support for most of these amendments. And I look forward to completing the bill with the amendments and to sending this bill on, where I believe we will have like support on the Senate side, and eventually to the President's desk. It's about time. I think that this country's going to be better off for it.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1309. It's a bill to reform and reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program. I think that we have had a great debate, and it certainly is a pleasure to have a bill that has such bipartisan support. I think it's such an important bill.

It's going to enact a series of reforms designed to improve NFIP's financial stability, reduce the burden on taxpayers, restore integrity to the FEMA mapping system, and explore ways to increase the private market participation and help bring certainty to the housing market. It's a $4.2 billion revenue raiser. And I think that that's very important too, that we will really be able to change the scope of this. If we go back to 1968 when this started, there was no private insurance, and this is why this happened. And we have to keep it that way, or we will pay so much more for disaster relief when this happens to so many people who live in floodplains.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I really thank the members of the Financial Services Committee, particularly Ms. WATERS and Mr. FRANK, and on our side Mr. BACHUS, the chairman.

SMARTERSAFER.ORG,
Washington, DC, June 30, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: SmarterSafer.org, a diverse coalition of taxpayer advocates, environmental organizations and insurance interests, urges you to quickly take up comprehensive flood insurance reform, like H.R. 1309, a bill that extends the program for five years and makes meaningful reform to the program.

Congress must act quickly to reauthorize the program before it expires in September, and must couple any reauthorization with meaningful reforms. The flood program is almost $18 billion in debt to the U.S. Treasury, and that amount will likely grow as a result of recent flooding. To ensure the viability of the program so that those at risk can rebuild after a disaster, to protect taxpayers, and to protect environmentally sensitive areas, Congress must make significant reforms to the flood insurance program.

A comprehensive bill, like H.R. 1309, which was the subject of significant hearings and debate, is needed. When you consider this bill, we ask that you look at adopting changes to do the following: phase out all subsidies, extend and streamline the mitigation grants program including making permanent the severe repetitive loss mitigation program; ensure the program is not expanded to additional coverages; and allow for no mapping or mandatory purchase delays. Though we believe that H.R. 1309 is a step in the right direction, with these changes you will be putting the flood program on a sustainable path. Under H.R. 1309 flood maps will be up to date and accurate; subsidies in the program will be phased out; and FEMA is authorized to purchase reinsurance to cover losses and protect taxpayers. We urge you to schedule this bill for consideration.

Sincerely,

Environmental Organizations—American Rivers, Ceres, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Republicans for Environmental Protection, Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy; Consumer and Taxpayer Advocates—American Conservative Union, Americans for Prosperity, Americans for Tax Reform, Center on Risk, Regulation, and Markets—The Heartland Institute, Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Insurer Interests—Allianz of America, Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers, Chubb, Liberty Mutual Group, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, National Flood Determination Association, Reinsurance Association of America, Swiss Re, USAA; Housing—National Low Income Housing Coalition, National Leased Housing Association; Allied Organizations—American Consumer Institute, Friends of the Earth, International Code Council, National Fire Protection Association, Taxpayers for Common Sense, Zurich.

MAY 27, 2011.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of the undersigned associations, we are writing to respectfully urge you to schedule floor consideration of H.R. 1309, the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011 at the first available opportunity. Significant reform and long-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is critically important to the citizens and taxpayers who rely on this vital flood protection program.

Without action, on September 30, 2011, the NFIP authorization will expire. More than 5.6 million policyholders depend on the NFIP as their main source of protection against flooding, the most common natural disaster in the United States. A long-term extension is necessary to provide certainty to recovering real estate, insurance and financial markets and every participant in the economy that the NFIP effects—homeowners, small business owners, builders, real estate professionals, mortgage lenders, investors, insurance agents and insurance companies. All these entities depend on the program for flood damage protection.

H.R. 1309 includes both a long-term reauthorization and important reforms that will optimize the current program with important coverage and rate reforms, needed improvements to the floodplain mapping and appeals processes, and other key reforms which would encourage program participation and put the NFIP back on the path to sound financial footing.

As you know, H.R. 1309 was favorably reported by the House Financial Services Committee with unanimous, bipartisan support. We thank the bill sponsors and the Committee for their leadership on this important issue. We respectfully urge you to work for quick passage of this legislation by the full House.

Sincerely,

American Bankers Association, American Bankers Insurers Association, American Financial Services Association, American Insurance Association, American Land Title Association, American Resort Development Association, American Securitization Forum, Chamber Southwest LA, Commercial Real Estate Finance Council, Consumer Bankers Association, Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers, Credit Union National Association, The Financial Services Roundtable, Independent Community Bankers of America.

Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America, International Council of Shopping Centers, Mortgage Bankers Association, National Association of Federal Credit Unions, National Association of Home Builders, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, National Association of REALTORS®, National Apartment Association, National Multi-Housing Council, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, Property Casualty Insurers Association of America, The Real Estate Roundtable, Reinsurance Association of America, Risk and Insurance Management Society, Inc.

I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD).

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. DOLD. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I do want to talk about the flood insurance program, one that I think enjoys great bipartisan support. I want to thank the chairwoman for her guidance and, obviously, Ms. WATERS for her leadership as well.

Five million, actually, residential and commercial properties across the land rely on this flood insurance. They depend on it for stability. And we have to recognize that there, indeed, are problems. We have debt; there is no question about that. It's undercapitalized, which is placing the taxpayers at risk. But this bill would minimize taxpayer risk by making the program more self-sufficient over time by expanding the private sector's role while allowing—and not allowing for coverage gaps.

It also moves toward actuarially sound rates and creates a new flooding map, which creates a platform upon which risk can be measured and priced by the private sector. This is exactly the kind of solution that we need to have here in the United States Congress, to be able to still provide coverage in areas that need it so desperately and yet move us gradually over to actuarially sound rates.

With that, I thank the gentlelady for her leadership.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of the Flood Insurance Reform Act, H.R. 1309.

Flood insurance is critical for homeowners in our area who rely on this program to protect their hard-earned investments in their homes. The National Flood Insurance Program is the primary source of flood insurance for Americans and people in our district. About 5.6 million homes and businesses nationwide rely on NFIP.

In our district, in Houston and East Harris County, Texas, flood insurance is a top priority. The Harris County Flood Control District does an impressive job of implementing new flood control measures in the way of maintaining bayous, building retention basins, and implementing drainage features, but even the best flood control will be defeated by a particularly bad storm.

While I support the underlying bill, I am especially supportive of measures that I first advocated for in 2007. During Floor Debate of the 2007 bill, I offered an amendment that was adopted, and it is also included in the bill we are debating today.

Our language provides for a limited, five-year phase-in of flood insurance premiums for low-income homeowners or renters whose primary residence is placed within a flood plain through an updating of flood insurance program maps. These homes can be valued at no more than 75 percent of the median home value for the state in which the property is located. This is important to residents of our district, who need the stability and stability that this provision allows.

I want to thank Chairman BACHUS and Ranking Member FRANK for their leadership on this issue and for including this important provision.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, I rise in support of the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011 (H.R. 1309).

The National Flood Insurance Program is the primary source of reliable and affordable flood insurance for over 5.6 million homes and businesses. Today's bipartisan legislation reauthorizes the program for five years through FY 2016 and contains numerous reforms designed to put the program on firmer financial footing.

The bill is supported by the National Association of Realtors, the National Association of Homebuilders, the American Insurance Association, the Property Casualty Insurers Association and the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America, and in my judgment, strikes the proper balance between providing Americans with the flood insurance protection they need at a price taxpayers can afford.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KLINE) having assumed the chair, Ms. FOXX, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1309) to extend the authorization of the national flood insurance program, to achieve reforms to improve the financial integrity and stability of the program, and to increase the role of private markets in the management of flood insurance risk, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 337 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2354.

□ 1340

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes, with Ms. FOXX (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Monday, July 11, 2011, the bill had been read through page 24, line 23.

Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

An amendment by Mr. SESSIONS of Texas.

An amendment by Mr. MORAN of Virginia.

An amendment by Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts.

Amendment No. 5 by Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado.

An amendment by Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia.

An amendment by Mr. MILLER of North Carolina.

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

An amendment by Mr. WELCH of Vermont.

An amendment by Mr. POMPEO of Kansas.

An amendment by Mr. TONKO of New York.

An amendment by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey.

An amendment by Mr. WU of Oregon.

An amendment by Mr. MCCLINTOCK of California.

An amendment by Mr. SCHIFF of California.

An amendment by Mr. GARAMENDI of California.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SESSIONS

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.