

space transportation industry. This bill authorizes two important offices which regulate and promote this industry and renews commercial launch indemnification authority for 5 years beyond its expiration at the end of this year.

America's space transportation industry is still in its childhood as far as maturity goes. It is becoming very dynamic. We are now experiencing and witnessing many reusable launch as well as expendable launch vehicles under development that in the future will serve America well.

In the future, I would hope that the government could shoulder less risk so that the industry is fully motivated to invest in more reliable and safe and reusable launch vehicles. In fact, as the reusables that are under development now and the expendables that are under development now come into fruition, as they are put into practice and they are put into service for the American people, we expect these space transportation systems to be developed and to be further improved so that indemnification will not quite be the issue that it is at this stage in America's space program.

Furthermore, this legislation sets in place an independent process to advise the Congress on how the government and the private sector should share the risk in space transportation activities in the future. So we are preparing for that day when this type of indemnification may no longer be necessary.

In particular, we are asking launch companies, their customers and their insurers as well, to serve and to give us input into how and when we might carefully change the current regime. By renewing the current regime for 5 years and giving industry the opportunity to shape the future, I believe we are serving the taxpayers well and giving America's space transportation companies a stable business environment so they can become more competitive and so that they can develop these new space transportation technologies that will keep America the number one power in commercial space as well as the number one power in some of the space projects that are being developed for dual use with the Defense Department and NASA as well as in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank the gentleman from Wisconsin, the chairman of the committee, for discharging this bill, and for supporting it, and for the leadership he has provided for America's space industry.

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in support of H.R. 2607. This bill has as its central element a provision that would extend the launch indemnification authority that was established in the Commercial Space Launch Act, as amended. That authority established a predictable, well understood risk-sharing regime that has helped the growth of the U.S. commercial space launch industry over the intervening decade. The provision of limited in-

demnification has long been a cornerstone of our nation's approach to preserving a healthy and competitive launch industry.

However, under the existing statute, these provisions will expire at the end of the current calendar year unless renewed. H.R. 2607 would extend those provisions for another five years. At our hearings this year, there has been a broad consensus on the need to renew the indemnification authority. I hope that we will do so today.

In addition to the indemnification extension, the bill contains a number of other provisions that I am less enthusiastic about. For example, one finding of the bill would limit the Department of Transportation's ability to engage in non-regulatory activities that have done much to advance the state of the U.S. launch industry.

In addition, there are funding levels in the bill for the Department of Transportation's Office of Commercial Space Transportation that may not be commensurate with the regulatory responsibilities that Congress has levied upon that Office. However, since I am confident that those concerns can be addressed in Conference, I did not see any reason to prevent the bill from being considered on the suspension calendar. In my opinion, it is important that we move this bill forward and ensure that the launch indemnification authority is renewed in a timely manner.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2607.

The U.S. commercial space launch industry currently leads the worlds, and we can all be proud of that.

At the same time, U.S. companies face tough competition from overseas launch providers.

And each of those non-U.S. companies have the support of their countries in sharing the risks associated with launching payloads into space.

One of the important ways that we have been able to keep the commercial playing field level is through the indemnification provisions contained in the Commercial Space Launch Act, as amended.

Unfortunately, those provisions are set to expire at the end of this year if they aren't renewed.

H.R. 2607 will extend the indemnification provisions for another five years.

I think that these provisions are critical to the continued health of the U.S. commercial space launch industry, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2607.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2607, the Commercial Space Transportation Competitiveness Act of 1999. This act will further support the development of America's commercial space transportation industry by bolstering our ability to compete in the international arena.

The commercial launch industry has grown tremendously during the last decade. Our nation's companies hold close to 50 percent of the world market share, and most important, our launch vehicles have a strong reliability record. With the incredible leaps that we have experienced in the technology field, the use of commercial satellites has increasingly become more and more important. In addition both NASA and the Department of Defense are in-

creasingly making use of commercial launch services. Most notable experts predict continued growth in the industry.

As a Member of the House Science Committee, I attended the hearings that examined this bill and the barriers to commercial space launches. During those hearings, the space transportation industry expressed the opinion that we could do more. This bill begins to address these concerns and shows the industry that Congress has not lost focus on the bigger picture.

The measure most often mentioned by the industry was the extension of the commercial space launch indemnification provision. Begun in 1988 by an amendment to the Commercial Space Launch Act, this measure significantly lowered the barriers to growth in the commercial space transportation industry. These amendments in the wake of the Challenger disaster put forth a risk-sharing regime. This indemnification between the Federal government and the commercial industry was designed to help transition and foster growth within the commercial industry.

H.R. 2607 will provide for the extension of the Commercial Space Transportation Indemnification Extension. In addition, this act is asking the Transportation Department to examine and make a determination regarding a better risk-sharing regime.

This bill is an important step but we need to continue to answer the questions of how the federal government can continue to facilitate growth in the commercial industry five to ten years from now. As technology continues to advance many of our constituents and the industries in our districts will want affordable access to space and in order to further open the space frontier America needs to have a strong commercial space transportation industry.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2607, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### STANISLAUS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 356) to provide for the conveyance of certain property from the United States to Stanislaus County, California, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 356

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

#### SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY.

As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of

the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (in this Act referred to as "NASA") shall convey to Stanislaus County, California, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the property described in section 2.

#### SEC. 2. PROPERTY DESCRIBED.

The property to be conveyed pursuant to section 1 is—

(1) the approximately 1528 acres of land in Stanislaus County, California, known as the NASA Ames Research Center, Crows Landing Facility (formerly known as the Naval Auxiliary Landing Field, Crows Landing);

(2) all improvements on the land described in paragraph (1); and

(3) any other Federal property that is—

(A) under the jurisdiction of NASA;

(B) located on the land described in paragraph (1); and

(C) designated by NASA to be transferred to Stanislaus County, California.

#### SEC. 3. TERMS.

(a) CONSIDERATION.—The conveyance required by section 1 shall be without consideration other than that required by this section.

(b) ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION.—(1) The conveyance required by section 1 shall not relieve any Federal agency of any responsibility under law, policy, or Federal inter-agency agreement for any environmental remediation of soil, groundwater, or surface water.

(2) Any remediation of contamination, other than that described in paragraph (1), within or related to structures or fixtures on the property described in section 2 shall be subject to negotiation to the extent permitted by law.

(c) RETAINED RIGHT OF USE.—NASA shall retain the right to use for aviation activities, without consideration and on other terms and conditions mutually acceptable to NASA and Stanislaus County, California, the property described in section 2.

(d) RELINQUISHMENT OF LEGISLATIVE JURISDICTION.—NASA shall relinquish, to the State of California, legislative jurisdiction over the property conveyed pursuant to section 1—

(1) by filing a notice of relinquishment with the Governor of California, which shall take effect upon acceptance thereof; or

(2) in any other manner prescribed by the laws of California.

(e) ADDITIONAL TERMS.—The Administrator of NASA may negotiate additional terms to protect the interests of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 356, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 356 requires NASA to convey property at the Ames Re-

search Center to Stanislaus, California. NASA retains the right to use the property for aviation activities on mutually acceptable terms. The conveyance does not relieve any Federal agency of its responsibility for any environmental remediation of soil, groundwater, or surface water.

NASA relinquishes legislative jurisdiction over the property to the State of California. Any additional terms may be negotiated by the NASA Administrator to protect the interests of the United States.

The bill is sponsored by the gentleman from California (Mr. CONDIT). Last Congress, the Committee on Science supported this bill; and the House passed it. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in support of H.R. 356. This bill was introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. CONDIT). It has been favorably reported by the Subcommittee on Space.

Basically, the bill would convey a piece of excess property currently owned by NASA to Stanislaus County, California. The property was previously owned by the Navy and then transferred to NASA. NASA currently has no use for the property. This bill does, however, make provision for NASA to retain the right to use the property for aviation activities under terms and conditions mutually acceptable to NASA and to the county. In addition, it should be noted that the conveyance does not relieve the Federal Government of any responsibility for any environmental remediation.

This is a straightforward piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 356, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RAIL PASSENGER DISASTER FAMILY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1999

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2681) to establish a program, coordinated by the National Transportation Safety Board, of assistance to

families of passengers involved in rail passenger accidents.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2681

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1999".

#### SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE BY NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD TO FAMILIES OF PASSENGERS INVOLVED IN RAIL PASSENGER ACCIDENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 11 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

##### "§ 1137. Assistance to families of passengers involved in rail passenger accidents

"(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after being notified of a rail passenger accident within the United States involving a rail passenger carrier and resulting in a major loss of life, the Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board shall—

"(1) designate and publicize the name and phone number of a director of family support services who shall be an employee of the Board and shall be responsible for acting as a point of contact within the Federal Government for the families of passengers involved in the accident and a liaison between the rail passenger carrier and the families; and

"(2) designate an independent nonprofit organization, with experience in disasters and posttrauma communication with families, which shall have primary responsibility for coordinating the emotional care and support of the families of passengers involved in the accident.

"(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD.—The Board shall have primary Federal responsibility for—

"(1) facilitating the recovery and identification of fatally injured passengers involved in an accident described in subsection (a); and

"(2) communicating with the families of passengers involved in the accident as to the roles of—

"(A) the organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2);

"(B) government agencies; and

"(C) the rail passenger carrier involved, with respect to the accident and the post-accident activities.

"(c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF DESIGNATED ORGANIZATION.—The organization designated for an accident under subsection (a)(2) shall have the following responsibilities with respect to the families of passengers involved in the accident:

"(1) To provide mental health and counseling services, in coordination with the disaster response team of the rail passenger carrier involved.

"(2) To take such actions as may be necessary to provide an environment in which the families may grieve in private.

"(3) To meet with the families who have traveled to the location of the accident, to contact the families unable to travel to such location, and to contact all affected families periodically thereafter until such time as the organization, in consultation with the director of family support services designated for the accident under subsection (a)(1), determines that further assistance is no longer needed.

"(4) To arrange a suitable memorial service, in consultation with the families.