

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5883 makes a very narrow fix to help bring the Packers and Stockyards Act to the 21st century.

The bill is the result of a thorough review of the act to identify areas for modernization. The committee worked with the industry to provide clarity in the law regarding certain practices related to online transactions in the livestock markets. H.R. 5883 passed the Agriculture Committee by voice vote and has the support of seven major agriculture organizations.

Again, this is a very straightforward bill, providing for minor, technical changes to the Packers and Stockyards Act.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I want to again urge all of my colleagues in this Chamber to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5883, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAILS STEWARDSHIP ACT

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass bill (H.R. 845) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in National Forest System trail maintenance, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 845

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.
- Sec. 4. National forest system trails volunteer and partnership strategy.
- Sec. 5. Priority trail maintenance program.
- Sec. 6. Cooperative agreements.
- Sec. 7. Stewardship credits for outfitters and guides.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) The National Forest System features a world-class trail system with over 157,000 miles of trails that provide world-class opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, hunting, mountain bicycling, motorized vehicles, and other outdoor activities.

(2) According to the Government Accountability Office, the Forest Service is only able to maintain about one-quarter of National Forest System trails to the agency standard, and the agency faces a trail maintenance backlog of \$314,000,000, and an additional backlog of \$210,000,000 in annual maintenance, capital improvements, and operations.

(3) The lack of maintenance on National Forest System trails threatens access to public lands, and may cause increased environmental damage, threaten public safety, and increase future maintenance costs.

(4) Federal budget limitations require solutions to National Forest System trail maintenance issues that make more efficient use of existing resources.

(5) Volunteers, partners, and outfitters and guides play an important role in maintaining National Forest System trails, and a comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure that volunteers and partners are used as effectively as possible.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT.—The term "Administrative Unit" means a national forest or national grassland.

(2) OUTFITTER OR GUIDE.—The term "outfitter or guide" means an individual, organization, or business who provides outfitting or guiding services, as defined in section 251.51 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) PARTNER.—The term "partner" means a non-Federal entity that engages in a partnership.

(4) PARTNERSHIP.—The term "partnership" means arrangements between the Department of Agriculture or the Forest Service and a non-Federal entity that are voluntary, mutually beneficial, and entered into for the purpose of mutually agreed upon objectives.

(5) PRIORITY AREA.—The term "priority area" means a well-defined region on National Forest System land selected by the Secretary under section 5(a).

(6) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(7) STRATEGY.—The term "strategy" means the National Forest System Trails Volunteer and Partnership Strategy authorized by section 4(a).

(8) TRAIL MAINTENANCE.—The term "trail maintenance" means any activity to maintain the usability and sustainability of trails within the National Forest System, including—

- (A) ensuring trails are passable by the users for which they are managed;
- (B) preventing environmental damage resulting from trail deterioration;
- (C) protecting public safety; and
- (D) averting future deferred maintenance costs.

(9) VOLUNTEER.—The term "volunteer" means an individual whose services are accepted by the Secretary without compensation under the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 558a et seq.).

SEC. 4. NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM TRAILS VOLUNTEER AND PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in trail maintenance.

(b) REQUIRED ELEMENTS.—The strategy required by subsection (a) shall—

- (1) augment and support the capabilities of Federal employees to carry out or contribute to trail maintenance;
- (2) provide meaningful opportunities for volunteers and partners to carry out trail

maintenance in each region of the Forest Service;

(3) address the barriers to increased volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance identified by volunteers, partners, and others;

(4) prioritize increased volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance in those regions with the most severe trail maintenance needs, and where trail maintenance backlogs are jeopardizing access to National Forest lands; and

(5) aim to increase trail maintenance by volunteers and partners by 100 percent by the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—As a component of the strategy, the Secretary shall study opportunities to improve trail maintenance by addressing opportunities to use fire crews in trail maintenance activities in a manner that does not jeopardize firefighting capabilities, public safety, or resource protection. Upon a determination that trail maintenance would be advanced by use of fire crews in trail maintenance, the Secretary shall incorporate these proposals into the strategy, subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary.

(d) VOLUNTEER LIABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3 of the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 558c) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(e) For the purposes of subsections (b), (c), and (d), the term 'volunteer' includes a person providing volunteer services to the Secretary who—

"(1) is recruited, trained, and supported by a cooperator under a mutual benefit agreement with the Secretary; and

"(2) performs such volunteer services under the supervision of the cooperator as directed by the Secretary in the mutual benefit agreement, including direction that specifies—

"(A) the volunteer services to be performed by the volunteers and the supervision to be provided by the cooperator;

"(B) the applicable project safety standards and protocols to be adhered to by the volunteers and enforced by the cooperator; and

"(C) the on-site visits to be made by the Secretary, when feasible, to verify that volunteers are performing the volunteer services and the cooperator is providing the supervision agreed upon."

(2) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall adopt regulations implementing this section. These regulations shall ensure that the financial risk from claims or liability associated with volunteers undertaking trail maintenance is shared by all administrative units.

(e) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall develop the strategy in consultation with volunteer and partner trail maintenance organizations, a broad array of outdoor recreation stakeholders, and other relevant stakeholders.

(f) VOLUNTEER AND PARTNERSHIP COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall require each administrative unit to develop a volunteer and partner coordination implementation plan for the strategy which clearly defines roles and responsibilities for the administrative unit and district staff, and includes strategies to ensure sufficient coordination, assistance, and support for volunteers and partners to improve trail maintenance.

(g) REPORT.—

(1) CONTENTS.—The Secretary shall prepare a report on—

(A) the effectiveness of the strategy in addressing the trail maintenance backlog;

(B) the increase in volunteerism and partnership efforts on trail maintenance as a result of the strategy;

(C) the miles of National Forest System trails maintained by volunteers and partners, and the approximate value of the volunteer and partnership efforts;

(D) the status of the stewardship credits for outfitters and guides pilot program described in section 7 that includes the number of participating sites, total amount of the credits offered, estimated value of trail maintenance performed, and suggestions for revising the program; and

(E) recommendations for further increasing volunteerism and partnerships in trail maintenance.

(2) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit the report required by paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 5. PRIORITY TRAIL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM.

(a) SELECTION.—In accordance with subsections (b) and (c), not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall select no fewer than 9 and no more than 15 priority areas for increased trail maintenance accomplishments.

(b) CRITERIA.—Priority areas shall include a well-defined region on National Forest System land where the lack of trail maintenance has—

- (1) reduced access to public land;
- (2) led to an increase, or risk of increase, in harm to natural resources;
- (3) jeopardized public safety;
- (4) resulted in trails being impassible by the intended managed users; or
- (5) increased future deferred trail maintenance costs.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—In selecting priority areas, the Secretary shall—

- (1) consider any public input on priority areas received within 3 months of the date of enactment of this Act;
- (2) consider the range of trail users (including motorized and non-motorized trail users); and
- (3) include at least one priority area in each region of the United States Forest Service.

(d) INCREASED TRAIL MAINTENANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Within 6 months of the selection of priority areas under subsection (a), and in accordance with paragraph (2), the Secretary shall develop an approach to substantially increase trail maintenance accomplishments within each priority area.

(2) CONTENTS.—In developing the approach under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) consider any public input on trail maintenance priorities and needs within any priority area;

(B) consider the costs and benefits of increased trail maintenance within each priority area; and

(C) incorporate partners and volunteers in the trail maintenance.

(3) REQUIRED TRAIL MAINTENANCE.—Utilizing the approach developed under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall substantially increase trail maintenance within each priority area.

(e) COORDINATION.—The regional volunteer and partnership coordinators may be responsible for assisting partner organizations in developing and implementing volunteer and partnership projects to increase trail maintenance within priority areas.

(f) REVISION.—The Secretary shall periodically review the priority areas to determine whether revisions are necessary and may revise the priority areas, including the selection of new priority areas or removal of existing priority areas, at his sole discretion.

SEC. 6. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with any State, tribal, local governmental, and private entity to carry out this Act.

(b) CONTENTS.—Cooperative agreements authorized under this section may—

- (1) improve trail maintenance in a priority area;
- (2) implement the strategy; or
- (3) advance trail maintenance in a manner deemed appropriate by the Secretary.

SEC. 7. STEWARDSHIP CREDITS FOR OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Within 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with this section, the Secretary shall establish a pilot program on not less than 20 administrative units to offset all or part of the land use fee for an outfitting and guiding permit by the cost of the work performed by the permit holder to construct, improve, or maintain National Forest System trails, trailheads, or developed sites that support public use under terms established by the Secretary.

(b) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In establishing the pilot program authorized by subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

- (1) select administrative units where the pilot program will improve trail maintenance; and
- (2) establish appropriate terms and conditions, including meeting National Quality Standards for Trails and the Trail Management Objectives identified for the trail.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROUZER. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 845, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act.

In 2013, the Government Accountability Office released a report that recognized the importance of volunteers for trail maintenance and recommended taking steps to improve management of volunteers. The Forest Service is facing a whopping \$500 million backlog in trail maintenance costs—\$500 million.

H.R. 845 would require the Forest Service to produce a national strategy to maximum use of volunteers and partners for trail maintenance. Using eager volunteers across the Nation in the remediation of our deteriorating national Forest Service trails is a cost-effective solution. More than 50 diverse

recreation and conservation groups requested Congress act to enable volunteers to do more, from the Wilderness Society to the American Motorcyclist Association.

I would like to thank my colleague, Representative LUMMIS, for sponsoring this bill, and my fellow committee members, Mr. WALZ, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. THOMPSON, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, for their support of H.R. 845.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation so we can utilize on-the-ground volunteer efforts to improve Forest Service trails and decrease the costly trail maintenance backlog. Refocusing on volunteers and partners to help the Forest Service is a commonsense way of making progress on the backlog and opening up these trails to public access.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 14, 2016.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
*Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 845, National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act, which was recently ordered to be reported by the Committee on Agriculture. As you are aware, the bill also was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, as the bill contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee.

In the interest of permitting you to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this very important bill, this Committee agrees to discharge from further consideration of H.R. 845. I do so with the understanding that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I also request that you urge the Speaker to name members of the Natural Resources Committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 845 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you and your staff have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees, and congratulations on this significant achievement.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 13, 2016.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
*Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate your support in bringing H.R. 845, National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act, before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Natural Resources will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Agriculture concurs in the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of the bill at this time, the Committee on Natural Resources does not

waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Natural Resources represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work the Committee on Natural Resources as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 845, the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act, is a bipartisan bill introduced by Representative WALZ, a member of the Agriculture Committee, and Representative LUMMIS, a former member of the Agriculture Committee.

A 2013 GAO Trails Maintenance Report found that the Forest Service has a backlog of more than \$314 million in trail maintenance, which would be addressed by this legislation.

The bill requires that the Forest Service develop a national strategy to double the amount of maintenance work done by volunteers in the next 5 years, ensuring our constituents can continue to use and enjoy these public spaces.

The Agriculture Committee approved H.R. 845 by voice vote, and the bill is supported by a wide range of government, recreation, agriculture, conservation, sportsmen, and equestrian organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS).

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER). I also want to thank my former committee chairman on the House Agriculture Committee, now the ranking member, Mr. PETERSON, for his support of this bill, as well as Chairman CONAWAY of the House Agriculture Committee.

Mr. Speaker, in the national forests, especially in areas where there have been bark beetle damage, the trees are starting to fall across the trails. I have talked to outfitters who are taking pack trips into the national forests. They are only in there for 2 or 3 days, and when they try to get out they have to chop their way out because so many trees have fallen across the trails, even while they are in the forest. So this maintenance backlog is getting bigger.

Mr. Speaker, it makes such sense, practically speaking, when we have a huge budget deficit, to maximize the use of volunteers in the national forests to help maintain these trails. Now, they will be able to avail themselves of workers comp, and that is part of the reason that it has taken this bill such

a long time to get to the floor. But it came out of the Agriculture Committee unanimously. It is one of the most bipartisan bills in this entire Congress. It has 86 cosponsors in the House and 23 in the Senate.

I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), who is a cosponsor of this bill, for his work. I am hoping he will tell the tale that he encountered this summer when he was hiking in the West. More than 50 diverse recreation conservation groups wanted a way to increase volunteer efforts in our national forests, including the National Association of Counties.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of additional provisions I want to highlight in this bill. It directs a study be done on utilizing fire crews for maintenance work during off seasons for wildfire, which is a great way for them to maximize, and for us to maximize, their skills in the forests. And it also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to identify 9 to 15 priority areas throughout the country to incorporate volunteers and to increase trail maintenance.

This bill has broad support. It will produce opportunities for young people to volunteer in our forests. It will allow outfitters and guides to offset some of their permit fees through work on trail maintenance performed by the permit holders to construct, improve, or maintain National Forest System trails, trailheads, or developed sites under supervision of our National Park Service.

This is kind of a motherhood and apple pie bill, Mr. Speaker, and it has been my pleasure to work with Mr. WALZ and the other proponents of this bill to bring it to the floor this afternoon.

□ 1445

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), a cosponsor of the bill.

Mr. WALZ. I thank the gentleman.

I echo the statements made by the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

First of all, the passion and the work that she and her staff have put into this is thanked by many millions of Americans who use these trails. The gentlewoman has chosen to make this her last session of Congress; so I would like to go on record and say that the people of the great State of Wyoming have been well served by the gentlewoman's passionate, ethical leadership and by her willingness to put the Nation's business first and get things done. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill. The Nation's outdoor industry is a \$645-billion-a-year industry which hires 6.1 million Americans. The great blessings that we have in this Nation of the most beautiful outdoor areas in the world are a legacy that we want to pass on.

One of the issues is accessing those areas. Trail maintenance is absolutely

critical. Listen to the groups of people who are behind this. These are pretty impressive and diverse groups of cosponsors, just to name a few: the National Association of Counties, the Wilderness Society, the Western Governors' Association, the Back Country Horsemen of America, Trout Unlimited, the American Motorcyclist Association, the National Wildlife Federation, and it goes on and on and on. The gentlewoman was referencing something that happened. This is a real-world fix to a real-world problem without its costing taxpayers money.

I had the opportunity this summer to be out at Glacier National Park with my family and to be up on Going-to-the-Sun Road at Logan Pass and, I think, hiking one of the most beautiful stretches on the planet—the Highline Trail. We were out about 16 miles; it was midday; and I had my children, my nephew, and my brother-in-law. We were all there and were enjoying this when we saw two Park Service folks, two young men, over there, working really hard. They had packhorses to pack their stuff in, and they were shoring up a trail from the glaciers that was there. I just walked over to them, and they had no idea there were hikers on the trail.

I said: I want to thank you both for the work you are doing.

They said: If you really want to thank us, have your Congressman call and support Mrs. LUMMIS' bill on trail maintenance.

I could not have been more shocked to expect that there, but they understood the importance of it. They understood that they need the help and that the volunteers are there under the guidance and the expertise of the Forest Service. When we cut through some of the red tape, we get people who care about the trails out there, and we fix the problem.

I thank the gentlewoman and encourage the bill's support.

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS).

Mrs. LUMMIS. I thank Mr. ROUZER for allowing me to do something I should have done, but Mr. WALZ did it for me. That is to thank my staff, especially Jimmy Ward, for all of his hard work on this bill. He made sure that we continued to be moving this bill forward in his helping us to identify cosponsors and working with the scoring process, which is what brings us here today; so I want to say a particular thank you to my staff.

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

Mr. ROUZER. 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 North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 845, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRANSIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5943) to amend the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 to clarify certain allowable uses of funds for public transportation security assistance grants and establish periods of performance for such grants, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5943

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 “Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act”.

SEC. 2. ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Subparagraph (A) of section 1406(b)(2) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135(b)(2); Public Law 110-53) is amended by inserting “and associated backfill” after “security training”.

SEC. 3. PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (m) as subsection (n); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (1) the following new subsection:

“(m) PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subsection (b) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 36 months.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—Funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subparagraph (M) or (N) of subsection (b)(1) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 55 months.”.

SEC. 4. GAO REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the transit security grant program under section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53).

(b) SCOPE.—The review required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the type of projects funded under the transit security grant program.

(2) An assessment of the manner in which such projects address threats to transportation infrastructure.

(3) An assessment of the impact, if any, of this Act (including the amendments made by this Act) on types of projects funded under the transit security grant program.

(4) An assessment of the management and administration of transit security grant program funds by grantees.

(5) Recommendations to improve the manner in which transit security grant program

funds address vulnerabilities in transportation infrastructure.

(6) Recommendations to improve the management and administration of the transit security grant program.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and again not later than five years after such date of enactment, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review required under this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

We know that terrorists have an interest in and a track record of targeting mass transit. We saw it in London, Madrid, and Brussels, and recently, again, when a terrorist left a backpack of IEDs at a train station in Elizabeth, New Jersey. We must ensure that our first responders and transit agencies have the tools they need to secure our transit systems.

That is why I introduced H.R. 5943, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act. This bill addresses concerns that were raised during a June 21 field hearing that the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held in Ranking Member PAYNE’s district on preparedness for incidents that impact surface transportation. As chairman of the subcommittee, I introduced this legislation to ensure action follows our subcommittee’s oversight.

Witnesses at this field hearing testified about the importance of the Transit Security Grant Program but found that the period of performance was a challenging time frame to meet, especially for completing vital, large-scale capital security projects. H.R. 5943 addresses this challenge by codifying the period of performance for Transit Security Grant Program awards at 36 months for the majority of eligible projects and by extending the period of performance for large-scale capital security projects to 55 months. Additionally, Transit Security Grant Program awards can be used to provide personnel with security training.

Unfortunately, the recipients of these awards are not allowed to use Transit Security Grant Program funds to pay for backfilling personnel who attend such training. In some cases, that

extra cost at the transit agency has resulted in an inability to send staff for security training. My bill will permit Transit Security Grant Program funds to be used for this purpose, which is consistent with other Homeland Security grant programs.

With more than 10 billion riders using surface transportation annually, it is vital that the Transit Security Grant Program provide flexible solutions for grant recipients. I am proud to sponsor this bipartisan legislation, which passed out of the Committee on Homeland Security earlier this month. I urge all Members to join me in supporting H.R. 5943.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 5943, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act.

Following the March 2016 attacks on mass transit facilities in Brussels, the Committee on Homeland Security’s Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee held a hearing in my district at New Jersey City University to learn more about efforts to secure mass transit domestically. The subcommittee heard from Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and MTA about what they are doing to keep passengers safe and how the Federal Government can help.

Witnesses lamented the drastic reduction in Transit Security Grant funding from upwards of \$385 million in 2008 to only \$100 million in 2016. Unfortunately, in the current fiscal environment, prospects for restoring this critical funding are not great. Witnesses also testified that the 36-month period of performance limits the ability of transit owners to invest in important security-hardening projects that cannot be completed within that window of time. Fortunately, we can address that problem.

H.R. 5943 is a bipartisan bill that would extend the period of performance for transit grant activities that are related to infrastructure hardening to 55 months and would give grantees the flexibility to use the grant money for expenses that are related to covering the costs of staffing backfill for when responders are sent to security training.

The threats to our transit infrastructure are real, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago, we had a close call outside a train station in Elizabeth, New Jersey, when a backpack containing a bomb was discovered by two citizens. Fortunately, they notified law enforcement; and although there was an explosion, no one was injured. Police found four other devices in the vicinity. H.R. 5943 will help transit owners and operators better address the threats to our critical transportation systems. As such, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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