

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I thank Congressman GRAVES for being here today and telling that story again about this outstanding man and his family and the care he got. I join with Dr. Davis. I applaud the sponsors of this bill. I urge all Members of this body to support this important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as I prepare to close, this may be the last time that I have an opportunity to be on the floor with former Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member BRADY, and I just want to say to him that it has been a pleasure working with him and observing his leadership on the Ways and Means Committee. Hopefully, the wind will always be at his back and the Sun will shine warmly upon his face.

Having a bill that is going to help continue to provide that kind of research—having this legislation on the floor here today, I was reminiscing a bit with myself of some of the many wonderful opportunities to have dialogue with Dr. Henry Betts, who was a guru in rehabilitation medicine, as was Dr. Smith. Dr. Betts and I often used to ride on the airplane together, coming from Chicago to Washington for whatever, and he was the most passionate man, most creative.

On a personal note, my former office manager and secretary had a stroke, and she was out for more than a year, but she went to the Rehabilitation Institute, came back, worked until she retired, is now living a very meaningful life as a retired person having all of her facilities.

The Rehabilitation Institute did that. Rehabilitation medicine did that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2834. The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HAZARD ELIGIBILITY AND LOCAL PROJECTS ACT

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1917) to modify eligibility requirements for certain hazard mitigation assistance programs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Hazard Eligibility and Local Projects Act”.

SEC. 2. AUTHORITY TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION OF ACQUISITION AND DEMOLITION ASSISTANCE PROJECTS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(2) COVERED PROJECT.—The term “covered project” means a project that—

(A) is an acquisition and demolition project for which an entity began implementation, including planning or construction, before or after requesting assistance for the project under a hazard mitigation assistance program; and

(B) qualifies for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(3) HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—The term “hazard mitigation assistance program” means—

(A) any grant program authorized under section 203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133);

(B) the hazard mitigation grant program authorized under section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c); and

(C) the flood mitigation assistance program authorized under section 1366 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4104c).

(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANCE FOR COVERED PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An entity seeking assistance under a hazard mitigation assistance program may be eligible to receive that assistance for a covered project if—

(A) the entity—

(i) complies with all other eligibility requirements of the hazard mitigation assistance program for acquisition or demolition projects, including extinguishing all incompatible encumbrances; and

(ii) complies with all Federal requirements for the covered project; and

(B) the Administrator determines that the covered project—

(i) qualifies for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(ii) is compliant with applicable floodplain management and protection of wetland regulations and criteria; and

(iii) does not require consultation under any other environmental or historic preservation law or regulation or involve any extraordinary circumstances.

(2) COSTS INCURRED.—An entity seeking assistance under a hazard mitigation assistance program shall be responsible for any project costs incurred by the entity for a covered project if the covered project is not awarded, or is determined to be ineligible for, assistance.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This Act shall apply to covered projects started on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 3 years, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on use of the authority under this Act, including—

(1) how many applicants used the authority; (2) how many applicants using the authority successfully obtained a grant;

(3) how many applicants were not able to successfully obtain a grant;

(4) the reasons applicants were not able to obtain a grant; and

(5) the extent to which applicants using the authority were able to comply with all necessary Federal environmental, historic preservation, and other related laws and regulations.

(e) TERMINATION.—The authority provided under this Act shall cease to be effective on the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MALINOWSKI. 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. 1917, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1917. This bipartisan bill, sponsored by Congresswoman LIZZIE FLETCHER, makes it easier for municipalities to access Federal funds to protect people and property from disasters, like the major floods that have hit my State of New Jersey and other States across the country.

For every one taxpayer dollar invested in mitigation, up to \$13 are saved. The vast majority of FEMA's mitigation investments are made via the Agency's longest running mitigation grant program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, or HMGP, which began in 1989.

Since then, more than \$5 billion have been obligated to HMGP projects, but due to various issues, including lack of capacity and burdensome red tape, more than \$1 billion of these funds have gone unobligated.

Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in unspent hazard mitigation funds translates to a minimum of \$4 billion in unrealized disaster recovery savings in the communities that were unable to advance these mitigation projects.

This bill begins to cut the red tape and make it easier for communities to start their projects early while still taking advantage of the HMGP grants to complete their hazard mitigation projects that involve acquisitions.

In short, H.R. 1917 helps communities access funding to complete mitigation projects that will save lives, property, and taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1917, the Hazard Eligibility and Local Projects Act.

As the gentleman from New Jersey just stated, this is a critical bill. It has already passed the House once. It passed out of the Transportation Committee by voice vote.

I want to explain the scenario. In recent years, this Congress has provided record funding for mitigation projects, whether it be through the Corps of Engineers, the BRIC program through FEMA, or the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program that is based upon a formula of previous years disasters.

What this legislation does is it really is a technical fix. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, it can take FEMA not weeks or months to approve a mitigation project, but years. It can take years. In many cases, Mr. Speaker, these projects are absolutely critical projects; they have great urgency behind them.

We must have a project development and delivery process that reflects the urgency of the projects. This bill helps to fix that.

What it does is it doesn't necessarily wait on Federal approval to allow for a project to be reimbursed to be an eligible project. I want to be clear, Mr. Speaker. This doesn't change the rules of eligibility. Meaning a county, a parish, a borough, a State could not move forward on a project doing something that ultimately is not approved and then get reimbursed. So the criteria for qualifying projects remains intact.

This simply says if a parish, a county, a borough, or a State moves out on a mitigation project before approval from FEMA, they are not prevented or deemed ineligible from ultimately getting reimbursed under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

I thank Mrs. FLETCHER for her work on this. This is the second time the House has voted on this legislation. The first time the bill passed the House, I think it was 409-16. I am going to say it again, Mr. Speaker: 409-16.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation clearly enjoys broad bipartisan support. The Senate did make two small changes that we fully support. It does put a 3-year sunset on the bill. Secondly, it does require a report back to Congress to show the performance of the program and whether or not it should be renewed.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.R. 1917, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN).

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 1917, the Hazard Eligibility and Local Projects Act, introduced by my colleague, Congresswoman LIZZIE FLETCHER from Texas, and which I am a proud cosponsor.

The reason for that is that this bipartisan bill supports our communities with their preparation and response efforts to any disasters. Specifically, it will make them eligible for certain Federal disaster mitigation assistance for projects that began prior to submitting a request for assistance.

The Senate amendment builds on this sound work by including a 3-year sunset clause that will allow Congress to assess the use of this authority and flexibility moving forward.

We need to support our constituents in their efforts to safeguard our communities against any disasters. In my district, Puerto Rico, and in several others across the country, we know all too well the impact certain disasters may have on our health, economy, and of course, everyday life.

This bill will support mitigation and related initiatives prior to the disaster taking place. As such, it reduces the need for post-disaster response funding and ensures the continuity of mitigation work once it has started.

Timely mitigation measures create and promote resiliency and lead to a faster recovery. As a cosponsor of H.R. 1917, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, as amended.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, again, this legislation is designed to address specific problems we have seen, bureaucracy and inefficiency. As the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) just noted, this has impacts on communities that have experienced multiple disasters like in Puerto Rico, where they have had some profound impacts from hurricanes. We don't need to have the Federal Government revictimizing our citizens by creating bureaucratic steps.

As the gentleman from New Jersey stated in his opening, we have seen over and over again, we are making proactive investments in mitigation which results in significant savings. Studies show the number could be anywhere from \$3 to I have seen studies approaching \$20 in savings. This allows for those projects to move forward.

Again, this bill cuts through the bureaucracy and red tape. I urge adoption of the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I am proud to stand with the 409. It is nice when we can pass important legislation with such a large majority, and I sometimes wonder about the 16. I don't know quite what is going on over there, but maybe the gentleman can tell me afterwards.

In closing, the Stafford Act entitles disaster-impacted States to HMGP grants after the disaster so that they can learn from the damage and protect their communities in the future.

The ability to complete post-disaster mitigation projects should be accessible to communities in a much more timely manner. H.R. 1917 does that. It will empower States to cut through the red tape and complete acquisition projects much more quickly and with fewer burdens.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1917.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE RURAL WATER SYSTEM

Mrs. PELTOLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3168) to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to modify the enforceability date for certain provisions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3168

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

SECTION 1. WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE RURAL WATER SYSTEM.

(a) EXTENSION OF ENFORCEABILITY DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 309(d)(2) of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-291; 124 Stat. 3088; 133 Stat. 2669) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “April 30, 2023” and inserting “December 30, 2027”; and

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking “May 1, 2023” and inserting “December 31, 2027”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3(b)(2) of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Rural Water System Loan Authorization Act (Public Law 110-390; 122 Stat. 4191; 124 Stat. 3092) is amended by striking “beginning on” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “beginning on December 31, 2027.”.

(b) COST INDEXING.—Section 312(c) of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-291; 124 Stat. 3095) is amended by striking “All amounts made available under” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting the following:

“(1) WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT SUBACCOUNT.—All amounts made available under subsection (a) shall be adjusted as necessary to reflect the changes since October 1, 2007, in the construction cost indices applicable to the types of construction involved in the construction of the WMAT rural water system and the maintenance of the WMAT rural water system.

“(2) WMAT SETTLEMENT FUND.—All amounts made available under subsection (b)(2) shall be adjusted annually to reflect the changes since October 1, 2007, in the construction cost indices applicable to the types of construction involved in the construction of the WMAT rural water system and the maintenance of the WMAT rural water system.

“(3) WMAT MAINTENANCE FUND.—All amounts made available under subsection