FAA RESEARCH, ENGINEERING, AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1271) to authorize the Federal Aviation Administration's research, engineering, and development programs for fiscal years 1998 through 2000, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Authorization Act of 1997''.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 48102(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (2)(J);

(2) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (3)(J) and inserting in lieu thereof a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) for fiscal year 1998, $226,800,000, including—

''(A) $16,379,000 for system development and infrastructure projects and activities;

''(B) $27,089,000 for capacity and air traffic management technology projects and activities;

''(C) $23,362,000 for communications, navigation, and surveillance projects and activities;

''(D) $16,600,000 for weather projects and activities;

''(E) $7,854,000 for airport technology projects and activities;

''(F) $49,202,000 for aircraft safety technology projects and activities;

''(G) $53,759,000 for system security technology projects and activities;

''(H) $26,550,000 for human factors and aviation medicine projects and activities;

''(I) $2,891,000 for environment and energy projects and activities; and

''(J) $3,114,000 for innovative/cooperative research projects and activities; and

''(5) for fiscal year 1999, $229,673,000.''.

SEC. 3. RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM INVOLVING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.

(a) PROGRAM.—Section 48102 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM INVOLVING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall establish a program to utilize undergraduate and technical colleges, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions, in research on subjects of relevance to the Federal Aviation Administration. Grants may be awarded under this subsection for—

''(A) research projects to be carried out at primarily undergraduate institutions and technical colleges;

''(B) research projects that combine research at primarily undergraduate institutions and technical colleges with other research supported by the Federal Aviation Administration; or

''(C) research on future training requirements on projected changes in regulatory requirements for aircraft maintenance and power plant licensees.

''(2) NOTICE OF CRITERIA.—Within 6 months after the date of the enactment of the FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Authorization Act of 1997, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall establish and publish in the Federal Register criteria for the submittal of proposals for a grant under this subsection, and for the awarding of such grants.

''(3) PRINCIPAL CRITERIA.—The principal criteria for the awarding of grants under this subsection shall be—

''(A) the relevance of the proposed research to technical research needs identified by the Federal Aviation Administration;

''(B) the scientific and technical merit of the proposed research; and

''(C) the potential for participation by undergraduate students in the proposed research.

''(4) COMPETITIVE, MERIT-BASED EVALUATION.—Grants shall be awarded under this subsection on the basis of evaluation of proposals through a competitive, merit-based process.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 48102(a) of title 49, United States Code, as amended by this Act, is further amended by inserting '', of which $750,000 shall be for carrying out the grant program established under subsection (h)'' after ''projects and activities'' in paragraph (4)(J).

SEC. 4. NOTICES.

(a) REPROGRAMMING.—If any funds authorized by the amendments made by this Act are subject to a reprogramming action that requires notice to be provided to the Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, notice of such action shall concurrently be provided to the Committees on Science and Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(b) NOTICE OF REORGANIZATION.—The Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration shall provide notice to the Committees on Science, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Appropriations of the Senate, not later than 30 days before any major reorganization (as determined by the Administrator) of any program of the Federal Aviation Administration for which funds are authorized by this Act.

SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM.

With the year 2000 fast approaching, it is the sense of Congress that the Federal Aviation Administration should—

(1) give high priority to correcting all 2-digit date-related problems in its computer systems to ensure that those systems continue to operate effectively in the year 2000 and beyond;

(2) assess immediately the extent of the risk to the operations of the Federal Aviation Administration posed by the problems referred to in paragraph (1), and plan and budget for achieving Year 2000 compliance for all of its mission-critical systems; and

(3) develop contingency plans for those systems that the Federal Aviation Administration is unable to correct in time.

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to authorize the Federal Aviation Administration's research, engineering, and development programs for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes.''.

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

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

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

(Mr. SENSENBRENNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1271 authorizes the FAA to carry out its Research, Engineering and Development program for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. The objective of the RE&D program is to develop and validate the technology and knowledge required for the FAA to ensure the safety, efficiency and security of our national air transportation system.

Technologies developed through the RE&D program are helping to transform our Nation's aging aviation system into a modern air traffic management system capable of meeting the increased aviation demands of the coming century. Examples of recent advances developed utilizing RE&D funds include quieter aircraft technology, more reliable aircraft control equipment, advanced explosive detection systems, and longer lasting runways.

Overall, H.R. 1271 authorizes $226.8 million in fiscal year 1998 and $229.6 million in fiscal year 1999 for the FAA to carry out the RE&D program. Critical projects and activities of the program include research and development in the areas of air traffic management, navigation, weather, aircraft safety, systems security and human factors.

Finally, H.R. 1271 contains language to require the FAA to provide Congress with notice of any major reprogramming or reorganization effort within the RE&D program and directs the FAA to move immediately to access the pending effect of the year 2000 computer program on the agency's information system. The legislation does not, however, include an authorization of funds for implementing the Flight 2000 demonstration program requested by the administration in the fiscal 1999 budget request. The Committee on Science plans to hold authorization hearings beginning next month on this program.

I would like to commend the gentlewoman from Maryland, (Mrs. MORELLA), the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Technology, the gentleman from California (Mr. BROWN), the ranking member of the committee, and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON), the ranking member of the subcommittee, and other members of the Committee on Science for their hard work in crafting this legislation.

H.R. 1271 is a true bipartisan bill which originally passed the House by the overwhelming vote of 414 to 7. Late last year the Senate amended and passed H.R. 1271. The Senate amendment made two significant changes to the bill. First. It struck the fiscal year 2000 authorization and, second, it increased the authorization for RE&D by $5.6 million in fiscal year 1999.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1271, as amended by the Senate, is a good bill and I strongly urge my colleagues to demonstrate our Nation's commitment to civil aviation research and development by voting aye today and sending this bill to the President.

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

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

and I rise in support of H.R. 1271, the FAA Research, Engineering and Development Act of 1997.

H.R. 1271 is the product of a bipartisan process to strengthen the research and development activities of the FAA. The FAA's RE&D programs are key to increasing the capacity and efficiency of the national aerospace system while ensuring its safety and security.

H.R. 1271 reverses the downward trend in FAA's research, engineering and development account, which has declined by 20 percent in the last 2 years. This funding increase will improve research in areas such as noise abatement and weather prediction, areas identified by outside advisory panels that need increased support.

H.R. 1271 also includes language urging the FAA to address the year 2000 computer problem. Unless the necessary steps are taken, FAA's air traffic control operations could be disrupted in 2000. However, this is not simply a problem limited to the United States airspace. The air traffic control system of every nation must be corrected, and I urge the FAA to take the lead to make other countries aware of this problem and the steps needed to correct it.

In addition, this bill includes my proposed establishing a competitive research grants program for primarily undergraduate institutions. This program will support research relevant to FAA's technology needs and, more importantly, will help develop the technical expertise to address FAA's future technology requirements. This provision had widespread support of the House and the other body.

Finally, I wanted to acknowledge that H.R. 1271 does not authorize FAA's new Flight 2000 program. However, it is my understanding that we will review this program in the next month and can then authorize funding as part of the FAA's overall reauthorizing bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1271.

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the subcommittee chairwoman.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Science for yielding me this time, and, Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Committee on Science's Subcommittee on Technology I am really very pleased to bring before this body full support for H.R. 1271, the FAA Research, Engineering and Development Act of 1997.

The legislation authorizes $226.8 million in fiscal year 1998 and $229.7 million in fiscal year 1999 for the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct research, engineering and development activities that are helping to increase the efficiency and safety of aviation. H.R. 1271 authorizes funding for the FAA to conduct RE&D projects in activities including research on aircraft structures and materials, systems security, the use of satellite communication and navigation, airport safety, human factors, and FAA internal improvements.

In addition, the fiscal year 1999 authorization level ensures that sufficient funding is available for the research and development of new technologies to reduce aircraft noise, to conduct FAA air traffic control modernization efforts, and to improve weather information. Improving weather information is especially important since it is both the single largest contributor to delays and a major factor in aircraft accidents.

The bill also establishes a program that utilizes undergraduate and technical colleges to research methods that will assist the FAA in carrying out its important missions.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1271 includes a sense of Congress concerning the need for the Federal Aviation Administration to assess immediately the effect of the year 2000 computer problem on its computer systems. This provision is significant and this bill past the House earlier this year by a vote of 414 to 7.

I want to commend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the chairman of the committee; and I want to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE BROWN), the ranking member, and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BART GORDON), my Subcommittee on Technology member, for the work they have done. This is indeed a bipartisan product.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1271 and, by sending this legislation to the President for his signature into law, Congress will assist the FAA to develop a national aviation system that is universally recognized as the safest, most technologically advanced system in the world.

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) for yielding me this time.

This is truly a bipartisan bill and I am rising to support H.R. 1271. Noting the increased amount of aviation travel among our citizens in this country, it is extremely important that we have a bill that focuses on many aspects of safety but also focuses on the vision and the future of the aviation industry.

In particular, I would like to thank and congratulate the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the chairman of the committee, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from California (Mr. BROWN), the ranking member, and my friend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BART GORDON), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Technology.

With the vision and insight to emphasize research and opportunities for undergraduate institutions in particular, the gentleman from Tennessee's effort provides for a merit-based competitive process that will allow our undergraduate institutions to involve themselves in research in the FAA.

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Interestingly enough, most research opportunities are viewed at our graduate schools, opportunities for our graduate students. But how important it is to recognize, for example, that institutions like Texas Southern University in my district, that has a Department of Transportation, can ably lend themselves to engage in merit-based competitive grant opportunities to do search research for the FAA.

In particular, I am very pleased that language that I offered in committee and that was supported by committee is included in this bill which encourages research to undergraduate students at our Nation's historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic serving institutions. As many of my colleagues may know, the majority of our HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions are primarily undergraduate institutions.

Included in the section which funds research grant programs involving undergraduate students is a provision that includes historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic serving institutions in the language of the bill. This section targets at primarily undergraduate institutions that involve undergraduate students in their research on subjects of relevance to the Federal Aviation Administration. It begins to formulate professionals at an early age.

In 1996, the Federal Aviation Administration awarded a total of $15 million to institutions of higher education for research and development activities. Of that total $15 million in 1996, only $120,000 was awarded to historically black colleges and universities and $130,000 was awarded to Hispanic serving institutions. That is less than 1 percent.

For fiscal year 1997, of the $10 million awarded to institutions of higher education, the overall amounts awarded to minority institutions doubled but still was not impressive. Of the $10 million, $260,000 was awarded to HBCUs and $200,000 was awarded to Hispanic serving institutions. This is a sad and telling story on the state of research development within our minority universities and colleges.

Without open opportunities and without encouragement for everyone to be treated equally in this Nation, it is extremely important to create these opportunities of research.

The HBCU and Hispanic serving institutions language in this bill serves to unquestionably reflect that undergraduate students at minority institutions should aggressively compete for grant awards within the FAA. This language seeks to promote minority university awareness of research opportunities.

According to the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, our minority universities are often an untapped resource for research, technological and analytical competence. Although many HBCUs are underfunded in laboratory equipment, HBCUs have an overwhelming success rate in producing the Nation's top black mathematicians, scientists, and physicians.

Mr. Speaker, when we are called by name, we tend to act; we are more likely to respond. This bill does just that. It calls minority universities by name in an effort to highlight and bring to the attention of the FAA the fact that HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions are alive and well and should be included in the research efforts of the FAA. It aids our minority institutions and others in understanding that minority universities and undergraduate students should effectively compete for research opportunities with the Federal Government.

This is a call for my colleagues to listen and to act. This is a call for us to participate in the technology of this Nation and creating safety for this Nation as well.

Mr. Speaker, while some of my colleagues may correctly state and understand that the classification of undergraduate students should include historically black colleges and universities as well as Hispanic serving institutions, it is important, however, to note that there are some in our country who do not appreciate this bill, this particular view. Consequently, our minority universities are often overlooked or forgotten.

Clearly, with this language, we have opened the doors of opportunity. H.R. 1271 allows undergraduate students at HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions to definitely know that they too can participate in research that benefits the FAA and compete for research and development dollars that will help build a better America.

Again, I thank the committee; And the call is now out for our universities all over the Nation that include minorities to participate in this new technological advance.

I must add that I am pleased to note that under this subsection, grants are awarded based on the evaluation of proposals through a competitive, merit based process. My good colleague, BART GORDON of Tennessee, was successful in including this overall undergraduate section in the bill.

There is no doubt that there is an overwhelming need for research dollars to be awarded to historically black colleges and universities, as well as Hispanic serving institutions. At the FAA, the numbers speak for themselves.

This is why I am pleased with H.R. 1271 and the inclusion of HBCUs in the language of the bill. It is a good first step in reaching out to minority institutions that can and must compete in the research and development arena.

Hispanic serving institutions are colleges and universities that educate mostly Hispanic and Latino students. I am proud to announce that my new district, the 18th Congressional District, includes a good portion of the Heights in Houston, Texas. In the Heights are people of all racial and ethic backgrounds including the Hispanic culture. Many of the residents of the Heights attend both HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions as well as majority colleges and universities. I am proud to be a representative of each.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and appreciate the leadership that he has shown, along with the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BROWN), the respective committee and subcommittee chairmen over on the minority side.

I rise in support of the concurring amendments to H.R. 1271, the FAA Research, Engineering and Development Authorization Act of 1997. The House overwhelmingly passed this bill last April by a vote of 414 to 7 to authorize funding for the FAA's research, engineering, and development programs for fiscal years 1998, 1999, and the year 2000. The Senate also passed this bill with amendments, which include the elimination of funding authorization for fiscal year 2000 and an increase in funding levels over the original House bill.

I ask all of my colleagues to affirmatively lend their support to this legislation. It is crucial to ensuring that the FAA is able to continue research and development projects that will improve the safety, security, capacity, and productivity of our Nation's air traffic control system. The FAA's Research and Development program also conducts aviation medical research, environmental research to mitigate aircraft noise and engine emission and airway facilities maintenance. Indeed, this bill is essential to the well-being of air passengers as well as the many Americans who are affected daily by air traffic and the attendant noise and pollution.

The amendments to H.R. 1271 authorize $226.6 million for fiscal year 1998 and $229.673 million for fiscal year 1999, funding levels that are slightly higher than those originally approved by this body. These increases will allow the FAA to focus research, engineering and development on safeguarding sensitive computer and information system data that control air traffic management. It will permit the FAA to place a higher priority on weather research projects, reflecting the recommendation of both the FAA Research, Engineering and Development Advisory Committee and the National Academy of Science. Weather is the single largest contributor to delays and a major factor in aircraft accidents and incidents.

Additionally, these monies will allow FAA safety inspectors to take proactive, rather than reactive, measures to reduce the rate of aviation-related accidents.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is critical to our Nation's ability to maintain and improve safe air travel, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1271 with the amendments.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am including in the RECORD copies of correspondence between Chairman SENSENBRENNER and myself from April, 1997.

By including this in the RECORD, I want to reiterate the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's exclusive jurisdiction of the traditional activities in the facilities and equipment account.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
Washington, DC, April 23, 1997.

Hon. BUD SHUSTER,
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR BUD: On April 16, 1997, the House Committee on Science marked up and reported out H.R. 1271, FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Authorization Act of 1997.

Traditionally, provisions in this bill have been incorporated into the FAA Authorization Acts when considered on the House Floor, indicating your substantive interest in the research components of the FAA.

Because of our Committee's desire to expeditiously consider H.R. 1271, it is my understanding that you will not object to its consideration by the House.

I acknowledge that H.R. 1271 in no way impacts the traditional jurisdictional lines under which the Committee on Science and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have operated for years. Under the Rules of the House, the Science Committee only has jurisdiction over civil aviation research and development funded through the Research, Engineering, and Development account. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has jurisdiction over FAA's other functions. Historically, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has had exclusive jurisdiction over the Facilities and Equipment account. H.R. 1271 is not intended to change that.

I appreciate your willingness to work with us to expedite the consideration of H.R. 1271. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these issues.

Sincerely,
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,
Chairman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 23, 1997.

Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Washington, DC.

DEAR JIM: Thank you for your letter of April 23, 1997 concerning H.R. 1271, the FAA Research, Engineering, and Development Act of 1997 which your Committee has reported out. This legislation authorizes funding for FAA's R&D programs for fiscal years 1998–2000.

As you correctly point out, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has traditionally taken a great deal of interest in the research components of FAA. The letter is to confirm that because of your willingness to accommodate our concerns about the bill and because of your desire to take the bill to the Floor expeditiously, I have no objections to its consideration. Also, I appreciate your acknowledgment that the bill in

no way impacts the traditional jurisdictional lines under which our Committees have operated, especially with regard to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's exclusive jurisdiction over the facilities and Equipment Account.

Finally, I would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be placed in the Record during consideration of the bill on the Floor. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance on this matter.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

BUD SHUSTER,
Chairman.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 1271.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ISSUING CERTIFICATE OF DOCUMENTATION FOR VESSEL PRINCE NOVA

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate bill (S. 1349) to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation with appropriate endorsement for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel Prince Nova, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

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

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) to explain his unanimous consent request.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel Prince Nova. The owner operates an auto and ferry service across Long Island Sound between Long Island Sound, New York, and New London, Connecticut.

The company plans to purchase the ferry Prince Nova to improve and expand its ferry service. With an upgraded ferry service, the owner will be better able to meet the growing transportation demands of the Long Islands region. Allowing the Prince Nova to operate in the Long Island Sound will benefit transportation needs in the region as well as foster economic growth and job.

This bill has already been approved by the House as part of H.R. 2204, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1997; and the House approved H.R. 2204 on October 21, 1997, by voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the efforts of our colleague, Congresswoman Nancy JOHNSON, for her leadership in bringing this important matter to our attention; and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I support S. 1349, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation to the vessel Prince Nova for employment in the coastwise trade of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this is identical to the waiver of the Prince Nova that was included in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996, when it passed the House on October 21, 1997. Unfortunately, the Senate has not acted on that authorization act.

The Prince Nova is going to be purchased by the Cross Sound Ferry Service, a family-owned business providing ferry service across the Long Island Sound between Orient Point, Long Island, New York, and New London, Connecticut.

This waiver is needed since the Prince Nova was built in Canada. However, in order to upgrade the vessel and meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements, the Cross Sound Ferry Service is going to have to spend over $4.2 million in a U.S. shipyard.

Mr. Speaker, ferry services are an integral portion to many of our urban transportation systems. Enactment of S. 1349 will allow the ferry service between New London, Connecticut, and Long Island, New York, to grow and flourish into the next millennium.

This bill is supported by the governor of Connecticut, Governor John Roland, and the Connecticut delegation.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this legislation which is so important to the transportation system in my home State of Connecticut. Simply stated, this bill would permit the documentation of a Canadian-built ferry under the U.S. flag as a replacement vessel for essential ferry service in Connecticut. Because of the importance of this service, Governor John Rowland of Connecticut has urged our favorable consideration of this measure.

Cross Sound Ferry Services, Inc., a privately-owned, non-subsidized ferry service in New London, would like to improve existing passenger ferry service across Long Island Sound by acquiring the Canadian ferry PRINCE NOVA. The prohibitive cost of the new construction and the lack of suitable U.S.-built ferries on the market necessitate this purchase. Cross Sound plans to spend well in excess of three times the purchase price for the PRINCE NOVA to upgrade the vessel in a U.S. shipyard. This upgrade is needed both to meet strict Coast Guard safety standards and to modernize the vessel. Cross Sound needs this legislative waiver to document the ferry under the U.S. flag.

Granting a coastwise waiver for this vessel will create the following economic, job creation, and transportation benefits for Connecticut, other New England states, and Long Island:

This waiver will result in 24 new merchant mariner jobs and 11 additional positions related to the vessel's operations.

The bill's requirement to spend not less than $4.2 million will create 17 much-needed new shipyard jobs at the Thames shipyard in New London, as well as increased purchasing of goods and services.

Unlike other ferry operations providing comparable service, Cross Sound will provide this service without the need for public funds or subsidies.

With an upgraded ferry service through the acquisition of this replacement vessel, Cross Sound will be better able to adequately meet the growing transportation demands of the New England region as documented in numerous transportation studies.

In addition to realizing these benefits, enactment of this legislation is needed as soon as possible to avoid very unusual transactional costs associated with any delay related to the purchase, including (1) the outlay of periodic option deposits to retain the right to purchase the vessel, (2) winter lay up charges if the vessel is not moved to the U.S., and (3) the loss of revenue if shipyard work for compliance with Coast Guard safety standards and other vessel upgrades is delayed.

A similar waiver was included in H.R. 2204, the Coast Guard Authorization Act, passed by the House in the First Session of this Congress. Consequently, the substance of this bill is without controversy and objection. Therefore, I am pleased that we are to take up S. 1349 and for the reasons I have stated urge its adoption at this time.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 1349

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

SECTION 1. DOCUMENTATION OF THE VESSEL PRINCE NOVA.

(a) DOCUMENTATION AUTHORIZED.—Notwithstanding section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (46 U.S.C. App. 883), section 8 of the Act of June 19, 1886 (24 Stat. 81, chapter 421; 46 U.S.C. App. 289), and section 12106 of title 46, United States Code, the Secretary of Transportation may issue a certificate of documentation with appropriate endorsement for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel PRINCE NOVA (Canadian registration number 320804).

(b) EXPIRATION OF CERTIFICATE.—A certificate of documentation issued for the vessel under subsection (a) shall expire unless—

(1) the vessel undergoes conversion, reconstruction, repair, rebuilding, or retrofitting in a shipyard located in the United States;

(2) the cost of that conversion, reconstruction, repair, rebuilding, or retrofitting is not less than the greater of—

(A) 3 times the purchase value of the vessel before the conversion, reconstruction, repair, rebuilding, or retrofitting; or

(B) $4,200,000; and

(3) not less than an average of $1,000,000 is spent annually in a shipyard located in the United States for conversion, reconstruction, repair, rebuilding, or retrofitting of the vessel until the total amount of the cost required under paragraph (2) is spent.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.