

There was no objection.

**APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON
H.R. 3616, NATIONAL DEFENSE
AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FIS-
CAL YEAR 1999**

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XX, and by direction of the Committee on National Security, I move to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3616) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE).

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. SKELTON

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. SKELTON moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 3616 be instructed to insist upon the authorization levels provided in title II of the House bill for Theater Missile Defense programs and for space-based lasers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

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

Mr. Speaker, this motion is about the priority we accord our troops rather than the special interests. The House passed bill gives priority to protecting the troops from theater ballistic missile attacks while the Senate version, on the other hand, would gut theater missile defense to pay for resumption of futuristic Star Wars experiments. The House bill, Mr. Speaker, got it right. Our bill got it right.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate bill would increase the administration's request for space-based lasers by \$94 million, a 100 percent increase. The Senate bill would also reduce the administration's request for theater missile defense by a net of \$203.9 million, resulting in a 40 percent reduction of the highest priority theater missile defense program.

Correctly, the House bill would do neither. For that we owe a debt of gratitude to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), chairman of the full Committee on National Security, and to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Research and Development, for their leadership

in this important area. I thank them, and I know the rest of the committee joins me in doing so.

The proposed Senate increase would begin to put weapons in space by starting a multibillion dollar 8-year program to demonstrate a space-based chemical laser capability for the national missile defense system. It is premature because, as a Nation, we have not made the policy decision to put weapons in space, nor have we decided that a chemical laser is preferred over solid state or other lasers.

And, perhaps most important, we have already rejected the near \$30 billion price tag such a space-based laser national missile defense system would entail. Worse, the chemical laser to be demonstrated is not slated to be part of any actual space-based laser national missile defense system we might one day choose to develop.

Moreover, the theater missile defense decreases proposed by the Senate would unnecessarily slow development of our lead theater missile defense program, the Army's Theater High Altitude Air Defense System. THAAD, what it is known as, is our highest priority missile defense effort and is being developed to counter the theater missile threat currently facing our troops overseas and our friends and our allies.

Let me point out, Mr. Speaker, that during the Gulf War the highest fatalities we had were as a result of a theater missile, and we must do something to protect the troops in that regard.

The program has suffered some setbacks, but we must recover from those setbacks as quickly as possible. There are no reasonable alternatives. The proposed \$323.9 million cut to the THAAD system would gut our ability to restructure the program and put it on a more sound technical footing and it would add further delay. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is just unacceptable.

The House position is correct. Taken together, the recommendations in the Senate bill would have us walk away from our first missile defense responsibility, countering the theater ballistic missile threat already facing our troops and friends and allies today, in favor of a futuristic space-based laser experimentation to benefit special interests. It makes no sense.

For several years now we have had consensus on the priority to be accorded theater missile defenses between the legislative and executive branches, Republicans and Democrats and liberals and conservatives. Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed.

The House-passed bill got it right, got it correct, and correctly prioritizes protecting the troops from theater ballistic missile attack over futuristic space-based laser experiments.

I sincerely urge my colleagues to keep our troops in mind. We know what the past has held for them on the front lines in combat, and it is up to us to do our very best to protect them, to protect the troops. Stick by the House position.

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

Mr. Speaker, while I do not agree with all of my colleague's statements, I am in complete agreement with him that this Nation needs to do everything in its power to protect American troops deployed around the world. In fact, when it comes to theater missile defenses, I was one of a number of Members who felt compelled to take the highly unusual step back in 1996 of suing the Clinton Administration for consciously ignoring the law that established timetables and provided increased funding in order to ensure the fielding of theater missile defense systems to protect our troops.

Likewise, many Members who serve on the Committee on National Security have helped to lead the fight over the past several years to prevent the administration from implementing arms control agreements with the Russians that would slow down or "dumb down" and otherwise limit the capabilities of this country's theater missile defense capabilities.

The single largest loss of life during the Gulf War was the result of a ballistic missile attack, and here we are, 7 years later, without a deployed theater missile defense. I would hope we could move past finger pointing, lawsuits and unsound arms control agreements and get on with the business of fielding systems to defend our troops against ballistic missiles. In this regard, I look forward to continuing to work with my colleague from Missouri to compel this and future administrations to deploy theater missile defenses.

While the Cold War has been officially over for almost a decade, serious threats to this Nation have not disappeared. As the recent report of the bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission indicated, the long-range ballistic missile threat to this country is not 15 years down the road. In fact, the threat is here today, it will only get worse, and we may not have any warning of the threat until it is too late. The time, effort and resources many nations and rogue actors are investing to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction is truly frightening.

I believe the Rumsfeld Commission report is one more nail in the coffin of the argument made by some that our Nation does not, should not or will not need to build a system to defend the American people against ballistic missile attack. The threat is real and it is imminent. So the question is not whether to build such a system, only when and how.

In that regard, I agree with the concerns of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). I do not claim to know what the proper technological answer or combination of answers to the question of how best to defend the American people against ballistic missiles. If part of the answer is to deploy space-based weapons, whether kinetic or directed energy, then the Nation should not hesitate. Space-based weapons may

well prove to be an essential component of a long-term answer to defending Americans against ballistic missile attack.

Frankly, in the near term I am more concerned with getting the administration to commit to move forward with the deployment of some missile defense system, any missile defense system, for the American public. American technological skills and ingenuity will ultimately show us how, but it will not happen until our Nation's political leadership demonstrates the will and commitment to address the threat with more than words.

In conclusion, let me once again commend the gentleman from Missouri for his leadership. When it comes to standing up for our men and women in uniform, he stands second to none. His motion to instruct is consistent with the House-passed bill, and as such, I fully support it.

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from South Carolina not just for his kind comments but also for his reasoned thinking regarding this issue, and thank him for his support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT).

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

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the motion to instruct is about as straightforward as it can get. We are saying, simply, let us not cut funding for missile defense systems that could soon be able to provide protection for our troops and our deployments in tactical theater situations. Let us not take it out of these systems that show near-term promise and put it in something that is totally futuristic, space-based lasers, a technology that is literally decades away from being realized and tens of billions of dollars away from fruition.

□ 1630

Ever since we lost 28 servicemen and women to one of Saddam's SCUDs 7 years ago, we have been pushing the development of theater missile defense, so-called TMD, theater missile defense systems, to protect our troops and our deployments from short- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

Support for the TMD programs in the House has been consistent and has been bipartisan. The primary systems that we are developing cover the whole spectrum. There is a Navy Lower Tier, primarily to protect ships, and a Navy Upper Tier to protect the literal and 3 Army programs: the THAAD, the Theater High Altitude Air Defense System; the PAC-3; and the so-called MEAD-4 division level Army defense.

The House provided this year a very modest increase, \$120 million, to the

President's request of \$1.7 billion for TMD, theater missile defense, research. The President's request for Space Based Lasers was \$94 million. On a bipartisan basis, after studying it carefully, the House took \$20 million out of the so-called Space Based Laser and shifted it to the theater missile defense. We added it on to TMD.

The other body takes these priorities and stands them on their head. It cuts THAAD, or cuts theater missile defense, by \$237 million, 14 percent below President Clinton's request; and then it doubles the funding for the so-called Space Based Laser. This is not only unwise, it is reckless.

We need to focus our efforts on fielding TMD systems. We spent tens of billions of dollars during the Reagan and Bush years in pursuit of Space Based Lasers, lasers of different kinds, ground based as well as space based. At one time we had 5 different laser systems which we were funding; two or three chemical laser systems, an excimer laser system, a free-electron laser system. They have all gone by the board.

What we need is focus, as well as funding, and our troops need theater missile defense. The technology is very nearly within our grasp. It is near term, and we should not be cutting funding now when we have just about got this technology in grasp in order to put it into futuristic technologies that may not ever work. And even if they are deployable in space, they may be so enormous in outerspace that they are highly vulnerable to counterattack.

Now, the primary reason that the other body came in below the President's, \$237 million below the President's request, is to cut THAAD, the so-called Theater High Altitude Defense system, sharply.

As most folks know, the THAAD has not made a good showing for itself. In testing, it is zero for five so far. So I am not here to defend the THAAD in its present status. I am here to say we need a system that fits that specification, we need a ground based system, we need something that has its reach and its range. And this approach to take this much out of that system is short-sighted and it misses an obvious point.

Ballistic missile defense is rocket science. In fact, it is harder than rocket science, and the Pentagon and the Congress must be patient and we have got to expect setbacks.

The Patriot, for example, started the concept development in 1968. It did not really come to final fruition and complete testing until the late 1980s. That is how long it took to bring the Patriot, and we far outstrip the need for a system like that. We have got to go further.

THAAD proves that we cannot rush technology. We cannot legislate initial operational capability dates. We have got to be patient. We should not take development shortcuts, and we should test these programs rigorously, which

we are doing with the THAAD. If we abandon every missile defense system, theater missile defense system in particular, that runs into technical problems and then take up another system instead, we will never field anything.

Our committee worked in a very bipartisan way to fix the THAAD program. We did not simply give the money to the President as he requested, thanks in good part to my colleague the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON). He helped fashion this language that will put the feet of the contractor to the fire, install a new co-prime contractor, as it were, to look over the contractor's shoulder.

We kept the top line for THAAD, but we placed the bulk of the funding in the so-called demonstration and validation account to help identify the flaws in the THAAD, to help make fixes to the THAAD and to provide additional tests to evaluate those fixes.

We injected competition into the program, too, to make sure that the contractors got the best people working on the program; and if a contractor cannot do it, another contractor may have to be selected.

We should insist on the House position on TMD because we have to stay the course on this system if we are going to protect our troops and our interests and our installations and our deployments abroad. It is my understanding that the Ballistic Missile Defense Office agrees with the position that we are taking here.

Let me say something about the Space Based Laser. We are not zeroing it out. We will leave \$74 million. In any other budget, that is big money, a reasonable level of money certainly to do exploratory research.

Some in the other body say the Rumsfeld Commission shows the need to put more money into Space Based Lasers. Listen, the best it can really promise us with respect to the Space Based Laser is a demonstration test in the year 2008, and to fund it we have got to put up \$3 billion to get from here to the year 2008. And that is not a system. That is just a demonstration test in space. We need something in place before the year 2008.

If we want to believe that, if we want a prudent course, vote for this resolution in order to instruct our conferees to do what we are proposing to do, restore the THAAD and take the money out of the Space Based Laser.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) for speaking for the protection of the troops.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SISISKY).

Mr. SISISKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to instruct conferees. I agree with our ranking member the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON); the House bill got it right on ballistic missile defense.

Last week, the committee received the report of the commission to assess the ballistic missile threat to the United States. This was a bipartisan commission, with unimpeachable credentials. It was appointed by both the legislative and executive branch to assess the nature and magnitude of the existing and emerging ballistic missile threat to the United States.

In addition, commission members testified before the committee. The report and testimony of the commission members made two things clear. First, the ballistic missile threat to the United States may be coming faster than previously estimated. And second and more importantly, the threat to our friends and allies and our troops overseas already exists and in some parts of the world is already deployed. Frankly, the commission report frightens me and makes me question to some degree what our intelligence community has been saying all this time.

That said, it makes no sense to me to cut theater missile defense, TMD, which is intended to protect our friend, allies, and troops from today's threat in favor of futuristic science fair projects in space that are neither conceived or designed to respond to the near-term threats identified by the commission.

I urge my colleagues to put protecting the troops ahead of the science fair projects that may not even be finished for 10 or 20 years. I urge my colleagues to support the motion to instruct conferees and support the House position.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of this motion to instruct conferees. The Balanced Budget Agreement demands that we live within our means and that we make choices. In the defense authorization bill, we must prioritize among competing programs.

As the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking member, mentioned, our troops in uniform must receive our highest priority. This motion offers a clear choice: Do we support the House position and help protect American troops from today's ballistic missile threats, or do we go with the Senate and revive the fanciful, futuristic, and fruitless Star Wars program?

The Senate defense bill provides over \$200 million less for theater missile defense than the House bill, yet gives \$94 million more for the Space Based Laser. Theater missile defense entails systems like the Patriot that seek to shoot down short- to medium-range missiles.

While the technological challenges are great, these defenses are realistic. They protect our troops and they have bipartisan support. The Space Based Laser, on the other hand, exists only on paper and in the minds of those nostalgic for Star Wars ideology.

As envisioned, this weapon would fire a chemically-powered laser from space

at ascending missiles. But a chemical laser may be too heavy to launch on any rocket and we would only get a few shots from the laser before it is depleted and we cannot reload it. The Space Based laser is a very risky and costly venture and it does not deserve high priority.

Earlier this year, a panel of missile defense experts commissioned by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization reported, and I quote, a "rush to failure in current missile defense programs." They concluded that one problem was a "perceived urgency of the need" for these systems, especially the dubious National Missile Defense Program.

The report cited steep technological challenges, recommended realistic program schedules with adequate tests and evaluation periods, and warned against rushing development under political pressures.

The Senate bill ignores these warnings by dictating the launch of a Space Based Laser Readiness Demonstrator as early as 2006. In a time of limited resources, we cannot afford that. It is a dangerous policy, and it will not help our troops.

I urge Members to support this motion to instruct, affirm the House position, and vote to protect our servicemen and women in the field.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SKAGGS).

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding time, and while I support this motion to instruct, I wanted to speak briefly about another provision that will be going to conference.

As the gentleman knows, the House bill concludes a provision that would provide for the termination of a Department of Energy worker and community transition program that was set up to ease the downsizing of the nuclear weapons complex in the wake of the Cold War.

That program has been very successful in enabling these communities and cities to get through the transition to smaller workforces at places like Rocky Flats in my district and elsewhere around the country. But that work is not done, and I am convinced that terminating this program prematurely would be a mistake.

Last year's defense bill did direct DOE to study this problem and report back to us this fall; and I would hope that when that report is received we will be in a better position to make a judgment about continuing the program.

So I hope both my friend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) and the distinguished chairman of the committee will consider taking another look at this and recede to the Senate provision in this respect.

I would be pleased to yield to the gentleman for any comment he might make on that point.

Mr. SKELTON. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I would tell the gen-

tleman from Colorado (Mr. SKAGGS) I appreciate his bringing this to our attention. We know this is a very important subject to him that he has worked hard and well on, and I can assure him that I will consider the points that he made in favor of dropping this provision from the bill.

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

First, let me thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), the chairman, for his support of this motion to instruct. I think it is very important that this carry in conference, for the simple reason that we have to take care of the troops. It is a high priority should there be another battlefield. We hope and pray that does not come to pass. But those things happen.

No one predicted Desert Storm, but it did come to pass, and the largest number of casualties did come as a result of a missile that came down amidst American soldiers. So, looking out for the soldiers and looking out for the troops, looking out for the men and women in uniform, I think this is the proper procedure to instruct the conferees to stand by the House provision that is well thought out and well worked on.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SKELTON. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the chairman, for this motion to instruct.

Having served on the Subcommittee on National Security for 20 years, one of the things that I remember most vividly was being in the Gulf with General Schwarzkopf and having him tell me how worried he was about the fact that if the enemy had had accurate SCUDs, we had 500,000 troops out there deployed that would have been vulnerable.

□ 1645

We had a terribly difficult time finding those launchers. In fact, the Iraqis used very sophisticated denial and deception. I believe as far as defense priorities go, there is no higher priority than getting to theater missile defense.

I am very much aware of what the Senate did, taking money out of these crucial programs and then using it for something that is highly speculative, a paper program at best. I urge the House to adopt this, and I urge our conferees to go in there and do the very best they can. As an appropriator we will stay with them on this because this would be a terrible mistake. I appreciate the gentleman's leadership on the issue.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, that is a well-stated comment from the gentleman from Washington. It is right. We did right. I thank the gentleman for his influence and his supportive words.

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

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the motion to instruct.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed until later today.

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the further consideration of H.R. 4193, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 504 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4193.

□ 1647

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4193) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, with Mr. PETRI (Chairman pro tempore) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Tuesday, July 21, 1998, title II was open to amendment at any point.

Are there further amendments to this portion of the bill?

AMENDMENTS OFFERED BY MR. REGULA

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to offer amendments en bloc, which are at the desk, notwithstanding that they address portions of the bill not yet read, and without prejudice to further amendments to that portion of the bill that is pending.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendments offered by Mr. REGULA:
Page 69, line 15, strike "\$320,558,000" and insert "\$365,550,000".

Page 70, line 17, strike "\$630,250,000" and insert "\$675,250,000".

Page 70, line 19, strike "the excess" and all that follows through "4502)" on line 21 and insert "\$64,000,000, which shall be transferred to this account from amounts held in escrow under section 3002(d) of Public Law 95-509 (15 U.S.C. 4501(d))".

Page 70, line 22, strike "\$150,000,000" and insert "\$161,000,000".

Page 70, line 24, strike "and shall not" and all that follows through "4502)" on page 71, line 1.

Page 71, line 4, strike "\$120,000,000" and insert "\$129,000,000".

Page 71, line 5, strike "\$30,000,000" and insert "\$32,000,000".

Page 123, after line 14, insert the following new section:

SEC. 339. Section 3003 of the Petroleum Overcharge Distribution and Restitution Act of 1986 (15 U.S.C. 4502) is amended by adding after subsection (d) the following new subsection:

"(e) Subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section are repealed, and any rights that may have arisen are extinguished, on the date of the enactment of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999. After that date, the amount available for direct restitution to current and future refined petroleum product claimants under this Act is reduced by the amounts specified in title II of that Act as being derived from amounts held in escrow under section 3002(d). The Secretary shall assure that the amount remaining in escrow to satisfy refined petroleum product claims for direct restitution is allocated equitably among the claimants."

Mr. REGULA (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendments be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the consideration en bloc of the gentleman's amendments?

There was no objection.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I offer these amendments on behalf of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SKAGGS), a valued member of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee; the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX); the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and myself.

The gentleman from Colorado, the gentleman from Pennsylvania and the gentlewoman from Texas have worked tirelessly to find an acceptable offset for increases in energy conservation and have in coordination with the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget identified excess receipts that can be used for that purpose. The amendment also partially restores cuts to the fossil energy research and development program. I appreciate the efforts of the gentleman from Colorado, the gentleman from Pennsylvania and the gentlewoman from Texas.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in very strong support of this amendment. It has been

carefully crafted by the gentleman from Ohio, by the gentleman from Colorado, by the gentleman from Pennsylvania and by the gentlewoman from Texas. I would like to say that she has been a real leader and concerned about the fossil energy program. This will benefit that program.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas for whatever comments she would like to make.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, let me just simply say that the fossil energy research and development program provides invaluable service by protecting the environment and by increasing the efficiency of power generation.

As my colleagues well know, we now face a crisis in Texas, overwhelmed by extreme and enormous heat, impacting my constituents and at the same time in the shadow of those terrible tragedies are major energy companies, oil and gas, who have the capacity to engage with the utilization of this particular resource these dollars and make energy more efficient and help those elderly, help those people suffering from the burdensome heat, help local government to establish a better energy source, more efficient source, and as well to help our domestic energy security problem and also our consumption.

Mr. Chairman, I would greatly like to thank the gentleman from Ohio for the work he has done. My constituents in Texas will be most appreciative.

I truly hope that my joint amendment with my colleagues to H.R. 4193, the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill of 1999, will be adopted today.

Our amendment raises the appropriations level for the Fossil Energy Research and Development program of the Department of Energy by \$45 million. We must continue to fully fund the Fossil Energy Research and Development program because it provides the invaluable service of protecting the environment by increasing the efficiency of power generation. More importantly, the program ensures that fossil energy technologies continue to progress in a manner that promotes emissions reduction and control and energy efficiency. The program also safeguards our domestic energy security, and given the fact that our Nation will continue to use fossil fuels well into the future, we must strive to fund this program in a manner that sustains its financial viability.

The Fossil Energy Research and Development program is an invaluable government component due to the necessity of fossil fuels to our economy and economies of virtually every country around the globe. Today 85 percent of our domestic energy consumption is supplied by fossil fuels; by 2015, the contribution of fossil fuels will grow to 88 percent.

Every credible energy expert believes that the foreseeable national and global energy future, like the present, will be shaped predominantly by fossil energy.

The benefits of fossil energy use—affordable prices, a stronger economy, greater employment, and a contribution toward improved