

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A SMART NATIONAL SECURITY BUDGET

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 16, 1995

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, today this body took an important first step in returning sense and security to our national defense. In the best interest of this country and the American people, we have sent a Defense appropriation bill to the President that restores safety and national security while contributing to a balanced Federal budget.

For several years our Nation's defenses have suffered under dwindling Pentagon budgets that were bogged down with frivolous social programs. Today's conference report, like so much of the legislation we are passing in the 104th Congress, represents a dramatic turning of the tide. We are revitalizing readiness. We are restoring our commitment to our military personnel and their families. And we are making the investments necessary to maintain America's standing as the world's most formidable military power.

This bill includes moderate pay raises for the military men and women who work around the clock to keep us safe. Soldiers and sailors feeding their families with food stamps is an unacceptable reality, and it must stop. We also call for upgrades and renovations of military housing across the country. This appropriation also makes smart investments in the cutting-edge equipment that will keep our troops as safe as possible and help keep this country out of war.

Remarkably, this Congress has done all of this while spending \$400 million less on defense than the Democrats spent last year. Such a feat could only be accomplished with the sense and conviction of conservative ideals. We have placed a priority on smart spending, spending taxpayer dollars only when and where necessary. Nothing more, nothing less.

Last night, we passed further proof that this Congress is committed to a balanced budget in 7 years. No gimmicks. No excuses. The Defense appropriations conference report represents our contribution to the country's physical security as well as its economic security. The best way to ensure this Nation's survival is to balance the budget, and do it now. If the President of the United States and his Democratic colleagues do not have the guts or the gumption to join us in our effort, they should step aside.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman YOUNG and full Committee Chairman LIVINGSTON for their outstanding work. I am proud to support the conference report to H.R. 2126. It is one more example of our commitment to spend taxpayer dollars wisely and restore fiscal sanity to the Federal Government.

LAKE GASTON PROTECTION ACT OF 1995

HON. DAVID FUNDERBURK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 16, 1995

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Lake Gaston Protection Act of 1995. For those members not familiar with this issue, Lake Gaston has been the focal point of a natural resource dispute between the city of Virginia Beach, VA and the State of North Carolina. At issue is whether Virginia Beach should be able to withdraw water from Lake Gaston, which straddles both States, to provide additional drinking water.

This legislation, which was introduced by Senator HELMS and FAIRCLOTH in the other body, stops the withdrawal of water from the lake until the Federal Government slows down and listens to the concerns of thousands of citizens from both North Carolina and Virginia who believes that Virginia Beach's plan threatens the vitality of this resource.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] approved a permit allowing the daily withdrawal of 60 million gallons from Lake Gaston—FERC officials did not examine the potential negative environmental effects of withdrawing this amount of water from the lake each day. In short, they failed to consider either the environmental problems or the adverse impact on striped bass or other fish species. A sharply reduced quantity of water flowing through the lower Roanoke River basin may very well be harmful to the estuaries of the Albemarle Sound in the spawning of many fish species.

Mr. Speaker, besides the environmental impact, the withdrawal could very well pose dire consequences to the commercial and recreational fishing industry that depends so heavily on an adequate exchange of freshwater and saltwater in the estuary.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should have obtained certification from the State of North Carolina that there would be no degradation of water quality or the environment. Instead, FERC ran roughshod over the concerns of North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would require FERC to obtain certification from North Carolina that this project will have no and I emphasize, no adverse impact on the environment or the local economy.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, I believe a brief history of this dispute may be helpful.

Virginia Electric Power Co., on behalf of Virginia Beach, applied to the FERC for permission to construct a water intake on Pea Hill Cove of Lake Gaston and a 76-mile pipeline to withdraw up to 60 million gallons per day.

Both the city of Virginia Beach and the State of North Carolina have marched back and forth in the Federal courts over this issue. North Carolina raised many concerns of water quality and the adverse effects on the downstream ecosystems. North Carolina officials

assert that FERC did a far too hasty job on its environmental analysis. FERC allowed only 2 months for the review of the reams of environmental data.

Furthermore North Carolina asserts that FERC staff failed to conduct studies requested by several Federal agencies, including the EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries, and independent biologists.

After much litigation, a Federal mediator was appointed by the Federal courts within the past 18 months, to look into the possibility of bringing the State of North Carolina and the city of Virginia Beach to an agreement on the issue.

A final settlement agreement was reached on June 26, and was supported by both Virginia Senators.

Mr. Speaker, the settlement was subject to ratification of an Interstate Compact by both State legislatures and approval by the Congress. According to the officials in North Carolina, this agreement protects the interests of the three North Carolina counties that surround the lake. As of now, neither State has ratified the compact.

The communities that surround the lake in Northampton, Warren, and Halifax Counties in North Carolina are greatly dependent on it to support their economies. According to a November 2, 1993, article in the Lake Gaston Gazette, property owners around the lake paid over \$253 million in 1993 real estate and personal property taxes. Also it is estimated that there has been \$125 million in new home construction each year.

Mr. Speaker, North Carolina and Virginia have a history of cooperation on matters affecting both States. For example the joint North Carolina and Virginia efforts to stem Lake Gaston's having been infested by hydrilla, an aquatic weed similar to kudzu. These five counties and both State governments have worked together to bring this nuisance weed under control.

If Virginia and the city of Virginia Beach object to this legislation, there is a way out; this proposed law will not apply if and when the June 26 settlement is resurrected and there is an interstate compact. So each State can urge its Governor and legislature to ratify the agreement and the compact. This will give everyone a chance to take a second look at North Carolina's Environmental concerns.

TRIBUTE TO THE WEST BRANCH FARMERS COOPERATIVE

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 16, 1995

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to rise today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the West Branch Farmers Cooperative. The cooperative was recognized on October 28, 1995 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in West Branch, MI.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.