

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS
THAT THE UNITED STATES
SHOULD END COMMERCIAL
WHALING

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 350) expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States, through the International Whaling Commission, should use all appropriate measures to end commercial whaling in all of its forms, including scientific and other special permit whaling, coastal whaling, and community-based whaling, and seek to strengthen the conservation and management measures to facilitate the conservation of whale species, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 350

Whereas 79 nations have adopted the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (the Convention), which established the International Whaling Commission (the Commission) to provide for the conservation of whale stocks;

Whereas the Commission has adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling in order to conserve and promote the recovery of whale stocks, many of which had been hunted to near extinction by the whaling industry;

Whereas the United States was instrumental in the adoption of the moratorium, and has led international efforts to address the threat of commercial whaling for more than 3 decades;

Whereas despite the moratorium, 3 Commission member nations continue to kill whales for financial gain, disregarding the protests of other Commission members, and since the moratorium entered into force have killed more than 25,000 whales including over 11,000 whales killed under the guise of scientific research;

Whereas whaling conducted for scientific purposes has been found to be unnecessary by the majority of the world's cetacean scientists because nonlethal research alternatives exist;

Whereas the member nations of the Commission have adopted numerous resolutions opposing and calling for an end to scientific whaling, most recently in 2007 at the annual Commission meeting in Anchorage, Alaska;

Whereas commercial whaling in any form, including scientific and other special permit whaling, coastal whaling, and community-based whaling, undermines the conservation mandate of the Convention and impairs the Commission's ability to function effectively;

Whereas proposed coastal whaling is commercial, unless conducted under the aboriginal exemption to the moratorium; and

Whereas the majority of Americans oppose the killing of whales for commercial purposes and expect the United States to use all available means to end such killing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the United States, through the International Whaling Commission, should—

(1) should use all appropriate measures to end commercial whaling in all of its forms, including scientific and other special permit

whaling, coastal whaling, and community-based whaling;

(2) oppose any initiative that would result in any new, Commission-sanctioned coastal or community-based whale hunting, even if it is portrayed as noncommercial, including any commercial whaling by any coastal communities that does not qualify as aboriginal subsistence whaling; and

(3) seek to strengthen conservation and management measures to facilitate the conservation of whale species.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first let me congratulate my colleague, the Chair of the Committee on Natural Resources, Mr. RAHALL, for putting forward this very important resolution.

The resolution sends a very clear message to all International Whaling Commission members as they prepare for their annual meeting in Santiago, Chile, later this month: Protect our whales. Keep the ban on commercial whaling. The resolution also makes it clear that the American people care deeply and passionately about the protection of these magnificent creatures, and that the United States must continue to lead this international effort to protect and save them.

Mr. Speaker, the International Whaling Commission was created in 1946 by the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling to address the devastating impact that commercial whaling was having on the entire whale population. For years, the commission failed to manage the commercial hunting of whales, leaving many species facing imminent extinction. However, this changed in 1982 when the commission finally agreed to a moratorium on commercial whaling.

However, since then, a number of countries have worked feverishly to undermine it. Norway resumed commercial whaling in 1993. Japan and Iceland have exploited provisions in the convention that allow permits for "scientific whaling," a provision that enables them to slaughter whales under the guise of science and then sell the meat for commercial profits.

According to the International Fund for Animal Welfare located on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, more than 30,000 whales have been slaughtered for com-

mercial purposes, with 11,000 whales killed allegedly in the name of science. And here is how they do it. They use harpoons with explosive grenades. Now, if the first explosion is insufficient to kill the whale, then they hoist it by the tail, keeping the blowhole underwater, leaving it helpless and thrashing against the side of the ship until eventually the whale drowns.

This is not science. The commission's own Scientific Committee has repeatedly found that these scientific permits are completely unnecessary, yet this horrific practice still continues.

Japan and other pro-whaling states want to unravel the global consensus against commercial whaling even further.

□ 1415

Their latest proposal is to allow coastal whaling or community whaling. They have worked hard to recruit allies to their side.

The 75-plus member commission is now almost evenly split. This resolution, H. Con. Res. 350, calls on the United States delegation to the commission to fight these efforts and aggressively oppose commercial whaling in all of its forms. It's critical that the State Department take the pro-whaling threat seriously and undertake an aggressive diplomacy to line up the requisite votes to preserve the moratorium.

Mr. RAHALL's resolution sets an important marker. Whales constitute a vital component of the world's maritime and marine ecology. They are the largest and one of the most intelligent mammals on earth. Conserving them requires strong U.S. diplomacy to uphold international agreements.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 350, which raises congressional concerns about the continued practice of whale hunting.

With the 60th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission set to begin in Santiago, Chile, it is fitting and proper to consider this resolution. Over two decades after this Commission adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling, the hunt continues.

The humpback whale, a species designated as endangered under the provisions of the U.S. Endangered Species Act, was included among those whales pursued in the most recent hunting season. The marine life in our oceans, as we all know, including the whale, forms a precious part of these natural resources which we should strive to preserve.

Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution and reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, let me now recognize the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, the gentledady from Guam

(Ms. BORDALLO) for as much time as she may consume.

Ms. BORDALLO. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) for yielding me the time and for his leadership in working toward permanent protection of whale populations around the world. I join him in these efforts.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 350, authored by our committee chair, Mr. RAHALL, which calls for an end to commercial whaling in all its forms and for renewed United States leadership for conservation of whale species. Consideration of this resolution today could not be more timely or needed in advance of next week's meeting of the International Whaling Commission, or the IWC, in Chile.

House Concurrent Resolution 350 calls the United States delegation to the IWC to maintain the commercial moratorium, close existing loopholes that have allowed more than 11,000 whales to be killed under the guise of scientific whaling, and oppose any effort that would undermine the moratorium or resume commercial whaling. The United States has an opportunity and a responsibility to help refocus the IWC toward its important conservation aims.

Established under the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling as an international body to conserve whales for future generations and to regulate the whaling industry, the International Whaling Commission initially focused on the allocation of whaling quotas to member countries. When these quotas were routinely exceeded and whale populations plummeted, the United States successfully proposed a whaling ban, which, in turn, led to the international moratorium on commercial whaling.

The moratorium has saved thousands and thousands of whales and has prevented some species from extinction. Under the convention, however, members lodging a formal objection are not bound by the moratorium. Both Norway and Iceland used this process to escape the moratorium. Similarly, the convention allows for the killing of whales for research purposes under self-awarded special permit quotas, and there are no limitations on the commercial sale of the meat.

Both Japan and Iceland kill whales under the guise of scientific whaling. The IWC scientific committee has consistently challenged the science behind Japan's special permit whaling programs, questioning the need to kill, while also reinforcing the value of non-lethal methods to study whales.

Despite this, Japan continues to increase the quotas and the species of whale it targets. The continued development of the IWC as a whale conservation body is at risk. Today pro-whaling countries are increasingly working to convince IWC members that the body is unworkable. They do so through vigorous country recruitment

and a gradual erosion of the will of conservation-minded IWC members.

The IWC, now divided almost equally in favor for and against commercial whaling, declared itself at a deadlock in 2007. The meeting next week is therefore pivotal and consequential to the success and the future effectiveness of the International Whaling Commission.

Pro-whaling countries will repeatedly ask for a resumption of commercial whaling. Such countries are also pushing for the approval of coastal or community-based whaling, which should not be confused with subsistence whaling for our native peoples and which have been determined to be another label for commercial whaling. The world's whale population cannot afford a compromise on the commercial whaling moratorium, nor should the United States be intimidated by countries who threaten to leave the IWC if their requests are not met.

The world's remaining whale populations, many of which have yet to fully recover from historic overexploitation, face modern threats from ship strikes, entanglement in fishing gear, pollution, overfishing or prey species, and the emerging impacts of climate change. This warrants greater, not lesser, leadership from the United States in whale conservation.

It is for these reasons that I have cosponsored House Concurrent Resolution 350. I commend Chairman RAHALL for introducing this resolution and his invaluable leadership in working to strengthen the IWC.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. Together, we call on the United States delegation to work with its International Whaling Commission partners to end all forms of commercial whaling and to conserve and protect whale species.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources.

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution and deeply respect the previous speakers.

I understand why they are trying to do this. It's unfortunate that some people don't remember the whaling industry started in Massachusetts, and maybe they're trying to forgive their sins.

Having said that, this resolution is being brought up under a procedure that does not allow amendments, and frankly this resolution does nothing to save the whales. More than 37,000 whales have been taken since the International Whaling Commission, IWC, implemented a moratorium on commercial whaling.

Under the existing International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, member nations of the IWC could

continue to take whales under a number of procedures. While I do not necessarily support commercial whaling, the current convention allows it for those nations that took a reservation against a commercial whaling moratorium.

This resolution naively suggests the United States can somehow end commercial whaling by itself at the next meeting of the International Whaling Commission, which starts next week. Very frankly, this resolution is nothing more than a fund-raising gimmick for those environmental groups that oppose whaling.

This resolution does nothing to save the whales. In fact, it might do the opposite. If the IWC cannot come to some agreement on how to move forward, Norway, Iceland and Japan have all signaled in recent years that they want to take either more whales or more species of whales. Under the current rules they can do so. This resolution may do nothing more than encourage those countries that dig in their heels to increase their take of whales.

In addition, the resolution says nothing about the need for the United States delegation to the IWC to protect the Native rights to harvest whales. To the Native people on the North Slope of Alaska, whales mean food. Alaska Natives have harvested whales for centuries, and they continue to do so today.

Although they have taken whales for centuries and depend on the bowhead whale to survive, they must constantly defend their need and their cultural heritage. I want to compliment my Alaskan Natives on our North Slope. They were told there were only 500 whales left when they were put on the endangered species list.

They did not believe that. They hired the best professors, the best scientists in the world, and, in fact, found out there are over 15,000 bowhead whales, just to prove the point that the science was wrong.

To the Native people on the North Slope of Alaska, whales mean food. This is not an issue of politics to them.

They have done everything the IWC has ever asked them, and they still get their quota taken away from them because people think using the whaling issue is good for fund-raising. The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission has done more scientific research on bowhead whales than any government has ever done on any whale species. Every time the quota is up for renewal in the IWC, someone comes up with a new theory on why Alaskans should not be allowed to take the number of whales they need. And again I will say "need."

Their quota is based on their need for whales as food. I can't say that enough, for food. To them, the whale is a necessary part of their culture and a necessary part of their dietary needs. Every time their quota is up, someone comes along and puts another hurdle in front of them that they must meet to get their quota.

The International Whaling Commission is broken. There are two groups of countries that show up each meeting and fight about which one of them has the moral high ground. There are those countries that are anti-whaling and those countries that are pro-whaling.

The two sides have been in an arms race for years to see which side can get more countries to join the IWC so they can have a simple majority and pass a meaningless resolution before the other side gets a majority and passes meaningless resolutions to support their point of view. Neither side is ever likely to get enough countries on their side to make any change in the convention because it takes a three-fourths vote. While they are having this fight about which side has the moral high ground, they use the Native people, who rely on whales for food, as political hostages.

At the 2002 meeting in Japan, the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission's quota was denied because of those policies. It took a special meeting of the IWC to restore the quota to my constituents. This is not a matter to be taken lightly and cannot continue. Alaska's quota cannot be held hostage every 5 years for other countries' political whims. It cannot be held to a higher standard and required to do more and more to satisfy someone's new theory about the bowhead whale that might mean a change for the Alaskan quota.

Members need to be very careful about how they talk about whaling, because the United States is a whaling Nation. Alaska Natives have harvested whales for centuries, and they continue to do so today. This resolution does nothing to highlight the importance of Native peoples' need to harvest whales and may only further inflame the hostilities at the IWC and quite possibly result in an increase in the number of whales killed in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. I hope that the member nations of the IWC will come up with something new to resolve the impasse we are at today, but I am afraid the resolutions like the one today will do nothing to resolve the problem and may actually make things worse. The only people who continue to be hurt are the Native people of Alaska, and I don't think that's right.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas, Judge POE.

□ 1430

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, last November a fleet of Japanese whalers set sail to kill more than a thousand whales, including endangered humpback whales for the first time in the last 40 years.

After international outcry, Japan agreed not to hunt the humpback

whales this year, but that has not stopped them from continuing to hunt and kill more than a thousand minke and fin whales.

You see, although an international moratorium against commercial whaling has been in effect since 1986, Japan and a handful of other countries have used a loophole in the international treaty, and in the name of pseudo-scientific research, they have gone ahead and killed more than 11,000 whales.

After killing them for "scientific research," as they say, they sold the whale meat and blubber on the commercial market.

Anyway, scientists in the field say that these hunts, conducted in the name of science, are really unnecessary because nonlethal research alternatives do exist.

Mr. Speaker, Moby Dick is in trouble, and it is time to close the loophole and make sure that endangered whales in our oceans are protected once and for all. In Herman Melville's book "Moby Dick," Captain Ahab, who I think was from Massachusetts, died trying to kill off the whale population. Hopefully Japan's desire to eliminate the whale population, like in Moby Dick, will fail as well, and Japan and a handful of other countries will cease the whale hunts that are taking place.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas is correct, it was from the island of Nantucket that Captain Ahab sailed. I happen to have the honor of representing Nantucket, as well as Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod. So we have a tradition when it comes to whaling, and we appreciate the magnificence of those whales. In fact, anyone wishing to come and visit my district, I will be happy to escort them, and I refer obviously to my colleagues, on an experience that will clearly leave an indelible mark, and that is a whale-watching trip off of Cape Cod.

In response to the gentleman from Alaska, my good friend and someone for whom I have great respect, I would simply point out that the resolution itself specifically distinguishes between commercial whaling and aboriginal sustentative whaling. I appreciate his point and I understand his concerns.

But interestingly, just this past week there was a hearing in front of the Natural Resources Subcommittee where all the witnesses, including individuals from all of the groups that he alluded to, testified in support of a sustentative quota. So I would suggest that if what Japan wants is not sustentative whaling, they could secure that approval now at the IWC. But that is not their purpose.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and we do have a great deal of admiration for one an-

other, but you have to understand, in 2002 our quota for my Alaska Native people, their heritage and their culture was held up by one of the IWC members, Japan. And we had to have a special session to get the quota reinstated, and they should not be used as a political ping-pong ball. I want to stress that.

If I thought for a moment, and I am not for commercial whaling, but I am saying that if I thought for a moment this would stop it, I would be supportive of the resolution. But until we recognize the fact, because I do have Alaskan Natives, heritage-wise and cultural-wise, that do take whales today for needed food, they are being held hostage because we belong to the IWC.

I will tell you, my friends, what's going to happen, there is nothing that says Iceland, Japan or Greenland, wherever it may be, has to belong to the IWC. They can pull out and kill all of the whales they want to kill, and you and I can't stop that, whether it is on our endangered list or not.

I do think there ought to be a ceasefire between these groups. Quit using my people as hostages, and see if there isn't a solution of some type that will appease both sides. In the meantime, they kill 37,000 whales under the loophole, and IWC doesn't have the arbitrary right to close that loophole unless there is some agreement.

Now this resolution makes everybody feel good and look good and they can go back and say I saved the whales, but it doesn't do anything. I just think that is the wrong thing to do when, very frankly, you are hurting other people, and this is their right. And they have established the fact that there aren't 500 bullhead whales, there are 15,000 bullhead whales, and they take 19 a year of 15,000. I want you to think about that a moment.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the gentleman. And as I said, I appreciate his concerns. But what Japan wants, as I suggested, is commercial whaling and it clearly is not the intent of this resolution to hurt the gentleman's constituents in Alaska. Clearly we have great respect and understand their culture and their tradition. That is not the intent of this resolution. But I'm sure that the gentleman's remarks and observations should be listened to and heeded when the Department of State goes to the IWC in Santiago, Chile.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, as cochair of the Congressional Friends of Animals Caucus, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 350, which states that the United States, through the International Whaling Commission, IWC, should use all appropriate measures to end commercial whaling in all its forms, and seek to strengthen whale conservation.

In 1986, the IWC instituted a moratorium on the commercial killing of whales. In spite of this, some countries continue to hunt whales under the guise of scientific research.

For example, in November 2007, the Japanese whaling fleet set out for the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary with plans to kill over

1,000 whales. Whale meat and blubber are sold commercially, yet Japan continues to insist that this is permissible under the scientific research provision of the IWC.

Not only has Japan increased the number of whales it plans to kill this year, it has also declared it will kill 50 endangered humpback whales. Since 1960, humpbacks have been fully protected from commercial whaling by the IWC.

The Japanese whaling fleet's continued circumvention of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling is truly an outrage. The IWC has repeatedly condemned this hunt, urging an end to this needless and brutal slaughter. The U.S. delegation to the IWC must stand firmly opposed to this shameful practice, and reaffirm its commitment to protecting whales from commercial hunting. I urge support of H. Con. Res. 350.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 350, Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States, through the International Whaling Commission, should use all appropriate measures to end commercial whaling in all of its forms, including scientific and other special permit whaling, coastal whaling, and community-based whaling, and seek to strengthen the conservation and management measures to facilitate the conservation of whale species, and for other purposes, introduced by my distinguished colleague from West Virginia, Representative NICK RAHALL, and of which I am a proud cosponsor. This legislation is an important step in the conservation of the precious whale species.

As of today, 79 nations have adopted the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, which established the International Whaling Commission to provide for the conservation of whale stocks. The United States was instrumental in influencing the Commission to adopt a moratorium on commercial whaling, which is important in order to conserve and promote the recovery of whale stocks, many of which had been hunted to near extinction by the whaling industry.

However, three International Whaling Commission member nations continue to kill whales for financial gain, killing more than 25,000 whales since the moratorium, over 11,000 of which were killed under the guise of scientific research. Because nonlethal research alternatives exist, the majority of the world's cetacean scientists have found whaling conducted for scientific purposes unnecessary. Numerous resolutions have been adopted by the member nations of the International Whaling Commission opposing and calling for an end to scientific whaling, most recently in 2007 at the annual Commission meeting in Anchorage, Alaska.

Whaling undermines the conservation mandate of the International Whaling Commission and impairs the Commission's ability to function effectively. Allowing whaling for commercial purposes, or under the false guise of scientific research, is reprehensible. This whaling must end now. Additionally, the majority of Americans oppose killing whales for commercial purposes. They expect the Members of Congress to do all in their means to end this killing. We must listen to the American people on this issue.

By passing this legislation, we affirm to the American people our commitment to ending whaling in any form, including scientific and

other special permit whaling, coastal whaling, and community-based whaling. It is an important step towards saving the whale species. Surely, this legislation should not be ignored.

H. Con. Res. 350 would encourage Congress to use all appropriate measures to end commercial whaling in all of its forms, oppose any initiative that would result in new whale hunting, and seek to strengthen conservation and management measures to facilitate the conservation of the whale species. I urge my fellow members of Congress to support this legislation.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 350.

Next week the International Whaling Commission will host its annual meeting in Santiago, Chile, and representatives from 80 nations will come together to discuss the future of international whale conservation efforts. This presents a rare opportunity for our country to exercise real leadership in the fight to strengthen whale protection measures, preserving these rare creatures for future generations.

The meeting comes at a historic time in the debate over commercial whaling. International outrage is at an all time high while support for ending scientific whaling permits is also at its peak. In certain countries such as Japan, whaling is no longer even profitable and must be subsidized by the government.

For these reasons and many more, the IWC should seize this opportunity to close the loophole in the 1985 ban on commercial whaling that has allowed far too many countries to continue their commercial whaling programs which have been disguised as "scientific" whaling efforts. It's time for the world to abolish whaling practices altogether, and I'm hopeful that the IWC does not squander this opportunity to put an end to this brutal practice.

Phasing out all forms of commercial whaling is the only way to deal with this crisis. Those who suggest that fewer whales may be killed if a compromise is reached with pro-whaling nations to allow coastal or community-based whaling could not be more ill-advised; this type of compromise would squander this historic opportunity we have to finally put an end to this brutal practice.

The fact remains that whaling is simply not sustainable in our world. Though some would have us believe that whale populations have recovered sufficiently to renew hunting, recent studies have shown increases in global populations over the last 20 years are only marginal. These small increases in no way signal that the populations have fully recovered, for in reality, past population estimates indicate that some species were once 6 to 20 times more populous than they are today. For example, scientists believe there were once 240,000 humpback whales in the North Atlantic; today only 10,000 remain.

Even if whales have recovered to their pre-industrial numbers, sustainable whaling would still be nearly impossible. Most people do not know that whale populations are local, and groups rarely mingle or interbreed. For instance, scientists believe that a distinct population of Minke whales off the coast of Japan is already on the verge of collapse. Allowing unfettered "community" whaling or any form of commercial shore-based whaling would quickly lead to the Minke's extinction in the Sea of Japan.

The United States must firmly oppose any form of commercial whaling; to allow even limited commercial whaling puts the entire species at risk. Multiple whales would be fraudulently sold under the same permit because short of genetic testing, there is no way to distinguish the meat of two different whales. This is already a problem in Korea and Japan, where it is common to market poached whales under the guise of an accidental kill, which is eligible for sale.

Some have also falsely claimed that this bill will harm the ability of Native Alaskans to continue subsistence whaling, when in reality no one is disputing the right of Alaskan natives to continue their way of life. In fact, the bill protects Native Alaskans' way of life by defending their food source from overexploitation and extirpation. Additionally, if coastal whaling is allowed, Natives would be forced to compete for permits with commercial operations, and the resulting difficulties would do more to endanger their culture and way of life than this bill ever could.

Ending whaling does not merely promote humane treatment of animals, nor is it solely about conserving natural resources. It is also an issue of global health. With high concentrations of mercury and other toxins in their blubber, whales make an unhealthy meal with vast public health risks. Mercury has been found in concentrations that are hundreds of times higher than the acceptable levels. Japan has already ceased including whale meat in school lunches and warns pregnant women about the hazards of eating whale.

Congress's positions must reflect the views and values of our country. We do not see whales as a source of food or a resource to be managed; we view them with respect and awe rather than with hunger. Their strength, intelligence, and beauty are far more valuable than their blubber. In an age where warming seas and pollution already threaten their existence, we should not contribute to their decline by hunting them with exploding harpoons.

The world looks to the United States for leadership and we must rise to this occasion and meet our responsibilities. By opposing any new forms of whaling and working to end so called "scientific whaling," we can protect an integral part of the ocean's ecosystem. I urge my colleagues to live up to this responsibility by supporting H. Con. Res. 350.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 350, a resolution I introduced with the gentlelady from Guam, Ms. BORDALLO, and the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. DELAHUNT, urging the U.S. delegation attending the International Whaling Commission meeting in Santiago, Chile, to take a leadership role in ensuring the protection of the world's great whales. I wish to thank Chairman BERMAN and Subcommittee Chairman DELAHUNT for their support of my resolution and for ensuring its timely consideration today.

The American people care deeply about protecting whales, and the U.S. played a leading role in the adoption of the 1986 moratorium on commercial whaling by the IWC.

Before the moratorium, whalers from many countries routinely exceeded quotas established by the IWC, and whale populations plummeted. Adoption of the moratorium and the end of the slaughter represented an historic milestone in the history of whale conservation, and many stocks have recovered.

Despite this, whales still face many threats—from pollution, climate change, and even continued hunting. Norway officially objected to the moratorium when it was adopted and resumed commercial whaling in 1993. Japan and Iceland exploit loopholes in the Convention and continue to hunt whales under the guise of “scientific whaling,” despite the fact that the scientific committee of the IWC has decry the need for and condemned the quality of this science.

At the same time, Japan is calling for the IWC to once again sanction commercial whaling in the form of “coastal” whaling, “community” whaling, or some other iteration of small-scale commercial whaling that will effectively eviscerate the moratorium, threatening to leave the IWC and resume larger-scale whaling operations unless their request is met.

The issues of commercial whaling under the guise of scientific or community whaling will likely be debated at this year’s IWC meeting, and many will claim that the future of the organization is in jeopardy. We must be very careful, however, that our efforts to fix what some people perceive as a broken institution, do not come at the expense of the very species that institution is intended to protect.

H. Con. Res. 350 calls on the U.S. delegation to remain firmly opposed to commercial whaling in all its forms at the upcoming meeting of the IWC. The resolution urges the U.S. not only to oppose the unnecessary lethal taking of whales for scientific purposes, but also to reject proposals that would weaken or lift the moratorium by creating the new category of coastal or community whaling that is nothing more than commercial whaling in disguise.

Now, it is more critical than ever that the U.S. maintain its leadership role in shaping global whale conservation policies through the IWC. The American people strongly oppose commercial whaling of any kind, and the Administration must not undo more than 20 years of whale conservation by yielding to a few nations who threaten to leave the IWC.

In supporting this resolution, Congress recognizes the intrinsic value of these majestic animals, as well as the vital role whales play in the world’s marine ecosystems. Conserving them for future generations requires us to uphold strong international agreements and maintain an unwavering commitment to protect these magnificent species from killing for commercial gain.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Having no additional speakers, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 350.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. 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 and the Chair’s prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PUBLIC HOUSING DISASTER RELIEF ACT OF 2008

Mr. CAZAYOUX. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6276) to repeal section 9(k) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6276

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Public Housing Disaster Relief Act of 2008”.

SEC. 2. REPEAL.

Section 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g) is amended—

- (1) by striking subsection (k); and
- (2) by redesignating subsections (l), (m), and (n) as subsections (k), (l), and (m), respectively.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CAZAYOUX) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAZAYOUX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6276, the Public Housing Disaster Relief Act of 2008. I am proud to stand here with my colleague, Congressman CHILDERS, in bringing this legislation to the floor.

This legislation is the product of a joint subcommittee hearing with the Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity and the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response.

The purpose of the hearing was to examine the roles and responsibilities of both HUD and FEMA in responding to the affordable housing needs of the gulf coast following emergencies and natural disasters.

Nearly 3 years after Katrina and Rita, we are still struggling with how to better streamline the process of delivering relief through our administrative agencies. This burden is very well known to members of my delegation, Congressmen MELANCON, JEFFERSON, BOUSTANY, and SCALISE, whose districts were directly impacted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The testimony at the hearing revealed that the Office of Capital Improvements within HUD, which awards capital funds to public housing authorities to maintain and repair public housing stock, also administers the public housing emergency and natural disaster grant program.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act included a provision, provision 9(k), which permits HUD to award natural disaster grants to housing authorities. However, since 2000, Congress has prohibited HUD from using appropriated amounts under section 9(k) and provided a separate appropriation for emergencies and natural disasters. However, since its inception, this fund has diminished every year.

In 2005, the year that Katrina and Rita struck the gulf coast, the funds appropriated for this purpose was \$29 million. According to HUD, this funding was quickly consumed in New Orleans and Biloxi.

The current funding level for 2008 is \$18.5 million, which is woefully inadequate for any disaster, especially ones on the scale of Katrina and Rita. HUD has not asked for funding for this purpose in 2009. In fact, HUD’s proposed budget for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 request no funding for disaster relief.

Normally, public housing authorities’ losses in natural disasters are mitigated through insurance. But the magnitude of the damage caused by these hurricanes was more than preexisting insurance could handle. When the PHAs that faced these shortfalls sought public assistance funding through FEMA pursuant to section 405 of the Stafford Act, they got caught in a bureaucratic mess.

Despite a memorandum of agreement between HUD and FEMA in 2007 that would have made it possible for PHAs to apply for FEMA assistance as a last resort when insurance proceeds and disaster grants from HUD were inadequate, because section 9(k) exists, FEMA funding is not available because FEMA states that it violates congressional appropriations law.

The administration has called for the elimination of section 9(k) and the set aside disaster grants to eliminate this confusion and to make it possible for housing authorities to have access to section 406 of the Stafford Act through FEMA.

I agree with that assessment, and it is my belief that repealing this section will cut some of the bureaucratic mess that has prevented public housing authorities from doing the work of reconstruction in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita.

We see today the importance of this legislation as our hearts go out to the people of Iowa, Illinois and Missouri who struggle against the flood waters that continue to threaten and wreak devastation on their homes and on their communities.

While we are still learning the extent of the damage caused by the flooding in Iowa, and the anticipated flooding in Illinois and Missouri, we do know that this legislation will help them when it is time to rebuild. When this change is enacted into law, funds will become