

Madam Speaker, H.R. 6627 authorizes construction of permanent structures to serve as Smithsonian research facilities in Edgewater, Maryland, and Gamboa, Panama. The new buildings will replace aging leased and temporary structure, and provide needed research space for the Smithsonian's research mission.

As part of a comprehensive facilities management plan, the Smithsonian has identified these two research centers as facilities in need of permanent, modern research buildings. The construction of the laboratories authorized by this bill will enable the Smithsonian to reduce its leased space inventory and consolidate its research operations. This will also allow the Smithsonian to close 80-year-old buildings that are costly to operate and not suitable for renovation.

Construction of new facilities in Gamboa will allow the Smithsonian to move out of general office space reconfigured for research and consolidate operations into a government-owned structure more appropriate and less costly for a modern research facility.

The Edgewater, Maryland, research facility will finally have permanent structures after working for many years out of temporary trailers. These trailers are expensive to maintain, and have a short, useful life.

Because the new buildings will be government-owned and cost less to operate and maintain, this legislation is expected to save money in the long term. The new facilities will be designed to meet the specific needs of the research centers.

Government ownership of the structures will save taxpayer dollars by investing in assets that will continue to serve the Smithsonian Institution over time. The dilapidated buildings and trailers currently used consume building maintenance resources and are a liability to the government rather than an asset. Replacement of the old buildings will allow us to shift dollars from maintaining aging structures to creating modern, useful facilities.

I am encouraged by the Smithsonian's responsible property management decisions in these two cases, and I ask my colleagues to please join me in supporting H.R. 6627.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6627, the "Smithsonian Facilities Authorization Act of 2008".

H.R. 6627 authorizes the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to design and construct laboratory space to accommodate the Mathias Laboratory at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center ("SERC") in Edgewater, Maryland. The bill also authorizes the Board of Regents to construct laboratory space to accommodate the terrestrial research program of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute ("STRI") in Gamboa, Panama.

The SERC is a global leader in the study of ecosystems in coastal zones. Founded on the site of an abandoned 1930s dairy farm in Edgewater, Maryland, the SERC facilities include farm buildings, the Mathias Laboratory, 10 temporary trailers, an administrative build-

ing, and a variety of lab support spaces. Nearly one-half of SERC's 146 employees and fellows conduct the majority of their work in trailers. A major part of SERC's mission is to conduct research and professional training of the next generation of environmental scientists.

The Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution requested authority to design and construct laboratory space to accommodate the Mathias Laboratory at SERC. The Board requested authority to upgrade and replace the facility to eliminate unsafe trailers and address substandard, inefficient labs. The facility and its support spaces need to be replaced. The bill authorizes a total of \$41 million for fiscal years 2009 through 2011 to design and construct the Mathias Laboratory.

The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute is located in Gamboa, Panama. STRI is the principal United States organization devoted to research in tropical biology. Both scientific advancement and human welfare depend on a continuing commitment to research in tropical biology for such things as finding untapped tropical resources to add to the important supply of food, pharmaceuticals, and fiber that we already get from the tropics, and to give us a better understanding of how to avoid further ecological catastrophes such as drought, starvation, and flooding caused by deforestation and overpopulation of tropical regions.

The STRI facility is a world-renowned research and education center dedicated to research and analysis of tropical ecosystems. The Board of Regents requested authority to replace current science building structure that is heavily infested with termites. The bill authorizes a total of \$14 million for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 to construct the laboratory.

Madam Speaker, over the past two years, the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution has worked to address numerous management shortfalls. I look forward to working with the Board of Regents and the new Secretary of the Smithsonian, Secretary G. Wayne Clough, as we continue to work together to improve the Smithsonian's management practices and carry out James Smithson's mandate of 1826: "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

I thank Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Ranking Member MICA, Subcommittee Chairwoman NORTON, Committee on House Administration Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member EHLERS, the Smithsonian Congressional Regents, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. JOHNSON of Texas, and Majority Leader HOYER for their support in authorizing construction funding of these two vital Smithsonian facilities.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 6627, the "Smithsonian Institution Facilities Authorization Act of 2008".

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the act to replace these two facilities, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6627.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

- H. Res. 1335, de novo;
- S. 2339, de novo;
- H.R. 1594, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CELEBRATING THE 120-YEAR PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND STATE VETERANS HOMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 1335.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1335.

The question was taken.

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 0, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 602]

YEAS—411

Abercrombie	Bonner	Carter
Ackerman	Bono Mack	Castle
Aderholt	Boozman	Castor
Akin	Boren	Cazayoux
Alexander	Boswell	Chabot
Allen	Boucher	Chandler
Altmire	Boustany	Childers
Andrews	Boyd (FL)	Clarke
Arcuri	Boyda (KS)	Clay
Bachmann	Brady (PA)	Cleaver
Bachus	Braley (IA)	Clyburn
Baird	Broun (GA)	Coble
Baldwin	Brown (SC)	Cohen
Barrett (SC)	Brown, Corrine	Cole (OK)
Barrow	Brown-Waite,	Conaway
Bartlett (MD)	Ginny	Cooper
Barton (TX)	Buchanan	Costa
Bean	Burgess	Costello
Becerra	Burton (IN)	Courtney
Berkley	Butterfield	Cramer
Berman	Buyer	Crenshaw
Berry	Calvert	Crowley
Biggert	Camp (MI)	Cuellar
Billbray	Campbell (CA)	Culberson
Bilirakis	Cantor	Cummings
Bishop (GA)	Capito	Davis (AL)
Bishop (NY)	Capps	Davis (CA)
Bishop (UT)	Capuano	Davis (IL)
Blackburn	Cardoza	Davis (KY)
Blumenuer	Carnahan	Davis, David
Blunt	Carney	Davis, Lincoln
Boehner	Carson	Davis, Tom