

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, a request for a recorded vote on an amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) had been postponed, and the bill had been read through page 22, line 7.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HECK OF NEVADA

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 22, line 3, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$75,000,000)”.

Page 25, lines 13 and 16, after each dollar amount, insert “(reduced to \$0)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 223, the gentleman from Nevada and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Madam Chair, my amendment builds on the committee’s work to support scientific research and development within the Department of Energy.

More than 30 years have elapsed since Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, and over that time, technology and scientific knowledge have evolved significantly. However, Congress still clings to outdated technology and policy prescriptions to address today’s nuclear waste issues.

The fact is that dumping our country’s highly radioactive nuclear waste in a hole and hoping for the best is a 20th century solution. Instead, we must encourage the use of 21st century technology to address this issue. My amendment eliminates the money earmarked for the Yucca Mountain High-Level Waste Geological Repository and increases funding for the Nuclear Energy University Program within DOE’s Office of Nuclear Energy so that we can better support our scientists and universities as they work to develop a 21st century solution to this problem.

According to CBO, this amendment decreases budget authority by \$75 million and has no net impact on budget outlays. The Nuclear Energy University Program is authorized by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Pursuant to these authorities, DOE’s Office of Nuclear Energy allocates up to 20 percent of its R&D to university-based programs and mission-supporting R&D and related infrastructure improvements each year.

The funds provided by my amendment will be used by the Office of Nuclear Energy to support the Nuclear Energy University Program and the efforts by our universities to research and develop ways to reduce the radiotoxicity of nuclear waste, better recycle and reuse spent nuclear fuel, and ultimately provide a 21st century solution to our nuclear waste problem.

For instance, grants provided through the Nuclear Energy University Program to the University of Nevada-

Las Vegas College of Sciences help support and maintain a world-class radiochemistry program at UNLV that is currently working to reduce the radiotoxicity of nuclear waste. In fact, the technology available to students at UNLV is so advanced that scientists working at the national laboratories often use the facilities at UNLV to conduct experiments in the field of radiochemistry.

Strengthening and supporting the research and innovations already taking place at UNLV and other universities throughout the country to solve our Nation’s nuclear waste problem is a much wiser investment of Federal resources than the flawed Yucca Mountain proposal. Instead of continuing the outdated, unworkable, one-State-must-lose-for-49-States-to-win approach to this problem, why don’t we invest in the development of research and technology that will allow every State to win?

For Nevada and other States throughout the country, the 21st century solution proposed by this amendment has the potential to create countless new high-paying R&D jobs by utilizing existing regional technological capabilities. It is time we stopped subscribing to 20th century ideas that waste taxpayer resources by trying to sweep our nuclear waste problems under a very expensive rug and instead invest in American innovation and ingenuity to develop solutions that will make our country a leader in the field of nuclear energy once again.

I urge my colleagues to embrace the future of nuclear waste disposal, support my amendment to help create jobs, and restore the United States role as a leader in science and technology development.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, I appreciate the gentleman’s amendment and him offering the amendment, and I appreciate his point of view and why he is offering it, but this amendment would eliminate \$150 million in the bill for the Department of Energy to reorganize its adjudicatory response team and get the Yucca Mountain licensing process back on track and running.

Yucca Mountain is the law of the land. You have to remember that. Yucca Mountain is the law of the land, even though the administration has failed to follow that law. It has seen overwhelming support in countless numbers of votes and countless numbers of times in the House and is the only permanent repository option we have on the table.

This amendment would put in jeopardy the more than \$15 billion—let me repeat that, the more than \$15 billion—that has been spent so far on this program.

Once the Yucca Mountain application is finished, all Members of this body

and the Senate will have the opportunity to decide whether to move forward to construct and use the facility, but killing the process at this point, I think, is shortsighted, even though I understand the gentleman’s concern.

I, therefore, urge a “no” vote on this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK).

The amendment was rejected.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

FOSSIL ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

For Department of Energy expenses necessary in carrying out fossil energy research and development activities, under the authority of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), including the acquisition of interest, including defeasible and equitable interests in any real property or any facility or for plant or facility acquisition or expansion, and for conducting inquiries, technological investigations and research concerning the extraction, processing, use, and disposal of mineral substances without objectionable social and environmental costs (30 U.S.C. 3, 1602, and 1603), \$605,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That of such amount \$120,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2017, for program direction.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 22, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$45,000,000)”.

Page 57, line 11, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$45,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 223, the gentleman from Minnesota and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, my amendment is simple and straightforward. It is designed to reduce wasteful spending, which I think we all would like to do around here.

This year Republican appropriators increased taxpayer-funded fossil fuel research and development by \$45 million above the President’s request. My amendment would simply reduce the funding for the Office of Fossil Energy by \$45 million, down to the President’s requested level, and then dedicate these funds to the spending reduction account, which is something that I think all of us want to do, given how much we talk about wasteful spending and deficit reduction around here.

The five most profitable oil companies—Exxon Mobil, Shell, Chevron, BP, ConocoPhillips—together made more than a trillion in profits last decade. A trillion dollars of profit; I think that is pretty good. Fossil fuels are reaping \$550 billion a year in subsidies, four times the amount of \$120 billion paid out in incentives for renewable energy. So fossil fuels are not getting the short shrift.

Air pollution from fossil fuels costs money. Nationwide the hidden health costs of electricity generated by fossil fuels adds up to as much as \$886 billion annually, or about 6 percent of gross domestic product. I am from Minnesota, and I live in north Minneapolis, and I can tell you, Madam Chair, that children there suffer greater rates of asthma than the rest of the State, partially as a result of emissions from vehicles that run on fossil fuels.

Climate change costs money, too. Climate change will make our electricity costs go up. Greenhouse-gas-driven changes in temperature will likely increase demand for electricity. This will make it necessary for construction of up to 95 gigawatts of new power generation over the next 5 to 25 years.

Residential and commercial ratepayers will pay up to \$12 billion more per year, and people living in coastal communities could pay as much as \$35 billion a year within the next 15 years because of sea level rise and hurricane activity.

Conclusion: let's lower the deficit; let's cut wasteful spending; let's stop wasting taxpayer money on dirty fossil fuel resources that cost all of us a lot more in the long term.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, it is almost humorous to listen to someone who wants to reduce the deficit and put this money into the deficit reduction account but then complains that we are following sequestration, and it is just too low and too crazy, and we need to do away with sequestration. We need to be able to spend more money.

The reality is, it is not that it is the deficit reduction account; it is that it is out of the fossil fuel program, which is more than what the President recommended. The administration has priorities, and Congress has priorities. This bill reflects the priorities of the subcommittee and the full committee that brought it to the floor. The amendment would reduce funding for the fossil energy account by \$45 million in favor of deficit spending.

Fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas provide nearly 85 percent of the energy used by the Nation's homes and businesses. Fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas provide nearly 85 percent of the energy used by the Nation's homes and businesses and will continue to provide for the majority of our energy needs for the foreseeable future.

The bill rejects the administration's proposed reductions to the fossil energy program, particularly the drastic cuts to the coal program, which is cut by \$31 million in the budget request, and instead funds these programs at \$605 million, a \$34 million increase over last year. With this additional funding, the Office of Fossil Energy will target

research into how water can be more efficiently used in power plants, how coal can be used to produce electric power through fuel cells, and how to efficiently capture and store carbon from our abundant natural resources.

This amendment would reduce funding for a program that ensures we use our Nation's fossil fuel resources as well and as cleanly as possible. Let me repeat. Fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, provide nearly 85 percent of the energy used by our Nation's homes and businesses, and will continue to provide for the majority of our energy needs in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, I must oppose the amendment and urge my colleagues to do so.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, do I have time remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, surely my friend and I can join together on the spending reduction account on this particular measure. It is not that much money in the scope of this big event. The fact is, we should all be trying to reduce the deficit where we can, particularly when we are talking about industries that have combined profits of a trillion dollars. A trillion.

I do not think my constituents in the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota need to foot the bill for R&D for Exxon Mobil, Shell, Chevron, BP, and ConocoPhillips. I think they should pay their own R&D if they are banking money like that. I think they are doing just fine, and they don't need more of the average taxpayer's dough.

Let me also say that we are already giving the fossil fuel industry \$550 billion a year in subsidies. Isn't that enough? Can't they live with a little less, given that they are making a trillion dollars in combined profits? We are giving them \$550 billion in subsidies, and they want more, and they just cannot possibly do with \$45 million less than we are giving them already?

I have got to tell you, I have just got a feeling that if they don't get this extra money, they will be fine. I feel ConocoPhillips and Chevron will somehow make it if they don't get our American taxpayers' \$45 million.

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I urge a very strong "yes" in favor of this amendment for deficit reduction and to end a little bit of corporate welfare.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. The reality is ExxonMobil, all of the other companies you named, don't get this money. This money goes into research, research that fuels 85 percent of the electrical needs in this country—research.

Now, you could also say: If you are going to do that, why not take away all the money that goes into renewable energy research? Why not take away all the money that goes into wind power or into solar power or into nuclear

power or into any of the other research that we do?

It is just that some people can't fathom the fact that 85 percent—that is getting close to 100—but 85 percent of our energy is produced by fossil fuel. While the gentleman talks about deficit reduction, the reality is I think he just wants to take some money out of the fossil fuel research account.

I will be interested, being so interested in deficit reduction, how the vote comes later on with the Republican budget that will be before the House later on, so I will be watching that very closely.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

NAVAL PETROLEUM AND OIL SHALE RESERVES

For Department of Energy expenses necessary to carry out naval petroleum and oil shale reserve activities, \$17,500,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, unobligated funds remaining from prior years shall be available for all naval petroleum and oil shale reserve activities.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

For Department of Energy expenses necessary for Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility development and operations and program management activities pursuant to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.), \$212,030,000, to remain available until expended.

NORTHEAST HOME HEATING OIL RESERVE

For Department of Energy expenses necessary for Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve storage, operation, and management activities pursuant to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.), \$7,600,000, to remain available until expended.

ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

For Department of Energy expenses necessary in carrying out the activities of the Energy Information Administration, \$117,000,000, to remain available until expended.

NON-DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP

For Department of Energy expenses, including the purchase, construction, and acquisition of plant and capital equipment and other expenses necessary for non-defense environmental cleanup activities in carrying out the purposes of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), including the acquisition or condemnation of any real property or any facility or for plant or facility acquisition, construction, or expansion, \$229,193,000, to remain available until expended.

URANIUM ENRICHMENT DECONTAMINATION AND DECOMMISSIONING FUND

For Department of Energy expenses necessary in carrying out uranium enrichment

facility decontamination and decommissioning, remedial actions, and other activities of title II of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, and title X, subtitle A, of the Energy Policy Act of 1992, \$625,000,000, to be derived from the Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund, to remain available until expended, of which \$32,959,000 shall be available in accordance with title X, subtitle A, of the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

SCIENCE

For Department of Energy expenses including the purchase, construction, and acquisition of plant and capital equipment, and other expenses necessary for science activities in carrying out the purposes of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), including the acquisition or condemnation of any real property or facility or for plant or facility acquisition, construction, or expansion, and purchase of not more than 17 passenger motor vehicles for replacement only, including one ambulance and one bus, \$5,100,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That of such amount, \$181,000,000 shall be available until September 30, 2017, for program direction.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FLORES

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 25, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,500,000)”.

Page 51, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$25,000,000)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 223, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chair, I rise to offer an important amendment that ensures that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is appropriately funded to meet its core mission. The NRC’s work is vital to the energy picture of our Nation, and safety remains and always will be the number one priority.

The NRC is funded in two ways: 10 percent of its budget comes from appropriated funds from the taxpayers; and, secondly, 90 percent of the fees are collected from the nuclear industry.

While I am a strong supporter of nuclear power and safety, the NRC budget has grown dramatically in the last decade from \$669 million per year in 2005 to the current level of over \$1 billion this year. Herein lies the problem.

This chart lays out the picture that we face today with the NRC. Under the NRC’s 2005 budget, there were 3,108 employees responsible for oversight on 104 reactors and the review of 1,500 licensing actions. In their fiscal year 2016 budget request of \$1.032 billion, the NRC called for 3,754 employees to oversee 100 reactors and review 900 licensing actions.

In summary, the number of reactors has gone down by 4 percent; the number of licensing actions has gone down by 40 percent; the number of employees has gone up by 21 percent, and the budget has grown by 54 percent.

Madam Chair, only in Washington does the staff and the cost grow while

the workload goes down. The historical increases in both funding and staff resources occurred in anticipation of new reactors being built under a nuclear renaissance for our country.

Unfortunately, due to increasing bureaucratic red tape and other market conditions, the work never materialized; thus, a shrinking nuclear industry has faced an ever-growing regulator over the past 10 years. Only in Washington, as I said before, does the bureaucracy grow while the workload shrinks.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission even admits that it needs to downsize. In its February 2015 report entitled, “Project Aim 2020,” they said the same thing. Additionally, the NRC has 60 rulemakings underway, and they are collecting additional fees from existing reactors to make up for lost licensing revenue. These fees are ultimately paid by hard-working American families in their electricity bills.

My amendment is simple. It reduces funding by \$25 million, or about 2.5 percent, and would right-size the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to meet its core mission and safely regulate our existing nuclear fleet.

The industry share of support, or 90 percent of that, would be reduced by \$22.5 million, and the Federal share of \$2.5 would be redirected to basic research in DOE’s Office of Science in order to develop future American energy solutions.

Madam Chair, in the last few minutes, I have had the opportunity to have great discussions with Chairman SIMPSON, and I am confident that he is aware of this issue and has taken steps to do this. He said he would work with me in the future to continue addressing this issue. I am raising this today, but I will be withdrawing my amendment.

I would like to thank Chairman SIMPSON for his efforts to address this issue and for agreeing to work with me on the issue.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, I claim time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SIMPSON. I want to thank the gentleman for being dogged on this issue. We share his concern. We had a great hearing with all the commissioners of the NRC. They also understand this concern. It was the Aim Project 2020 that they put together that realized that they have too many staff and they need to reduce it. They want to do it in a responsible way.

In the full committee, we adopted an amendment to reduce their budget by \$25 million. That is in addition to the fact that they had carryover fund that they could have spent last year that they won’t have available this year.

Their budget is going down; whether it is the right amount or not, we don’t know yet, but we are going to keep on

this because we want them to reestablish their credibility in the world. They need to do that because they are a regulatory agency that is very important, and they do incredibly important work.

We are going to be holding hearings again on this next year when we do their budget to make sure they are following through on their commitment to reduce their size and scope, particularly the rulemaking authority that they have got out there. Many people believe they are writing far too many rules, and some believe it is because they have too many employees.

I appreciate the gentleman offering this amendment and the discussion and offering to withdraw the amendment.

Ms. KAPTUR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SIMPSON. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. I would just say to the offerer of the amendment from Texas that I come from a part of the country where the Nuclear Regulatory Commission did not do its job for a long time.

I appreciate what you are attempting to do, and all I would say is, coming from a region where we have serious infractions that put human life at risk more than once, as you look at that budget and try to improve it, do not assume whatever levels of regulation existed in fact were appropriate because, in many cases, they were shortchanged and inadequate.

As you move forward in this important arena, I would urge you to look at the places in the country where mistakes happened and figure out why and then direct resources to where they are most important in this very important technology.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FLORES. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROKITA) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FOSTER

Mr. FOSTER. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.