usual event in which hundreds of marine mammals perished was a source of tremendous frustration.

Further, this event highlighted the shortcomings in our knowledge about these mammals and the cause of the dolphin deaths that were occurring in such epidemic proportions. Extensive studies conducted to determine the cause of the mortality raised more questions than they answered and to this day, we do not know the cause of the massive die-off.

This legislation, which establishes programs for responding to marine mammal disasters and assessing the state of marine mammal health, therefore, is a major step forward. Under this bill, information on the rescue and rehabilitation of marine mammals would be compiled, centralized, updated, and made available to scientific researchers and members of the marine mammal stranding network to help in assessing the causes of strandings and unusual mortality events.

This legislation sets up guidelines and standardizes collection, preservation, labeling, transport, and archiving of marine mammal tissue samples which will be essential to establish baseline data that can be used in assessing health trends of marine mammals and making determinations of marine mammal health and the causes of mortality.

Finally, the bill sets up a contingency plan so that response to strandings and unusual mortality events will be timely and coordinated and designed to gather the information necessary to determine the causes and effects of these events.

This legislation will help marine mammal stranding response centers and volunteers throughout the Nation. Indeed, I am very proud of the marine mammal stranding response center in New Jersey. They do excellent work and this legislation will help them increase their effectiveness.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we support marine mammal research and pursue investigations of strandings and unusual mortality events. Just as importantly, we need to develop better baseline data so that we might better assess the condition of our oceans. Only then may we be able to answer many of the unknowns that still exist and, if possible, prevent a recurrence of the dolphin tragedy.

H.R. 3486 and the substitute amendment is a major step in this direction. The bill provides the Nation with the essential tools for monitoring the health of marine mammals and establishes programs which will act as a barometer of the impact of human activities on our coastal environment. This is a rational bill and I urge my colleagues' strong support for its passage.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out that this bill is the result of a great deal of hard work by Members of both parties, and it goes to show, I believe, what can be accomplished when we Republicans and Democrats work together on problems that we all have in common.

I would like to again commend the leadership on the other side, particularly my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. HUGHES], for the very strong advocacy role he played in this.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just echo what the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] has said. In the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, we do not give as much thought or time to partisan labels as we do toward getting things done. The legislation that I think is before us today is another piece of evidence that that, indeed, continues to be the case.

To the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON], who is an architect of this bill, to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. HUGHES], and the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. STUDDS], whose support in drafting has been very helpful, I want to say thank you, as well as to the members of our respective staffs for their assistance.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3486, the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Act.

Marine mammals have beached or stranded themselves on every coast of the United States. The response to these strandings—carried out primarily by volunteers—has been admirable, but in many cases uncoordinated.

H.R. 3486 would formalize a nationwide coordinated response system for marine mammal strandings and help fund those responses. The bill also provides for the establishment of a national marine mammal tissue bank. It is our committee's hope that scientific evaluation of the tissues taken from these stranded animals will provide a window into the health of not only marine mamals, but our oceans themselves.

I congratulate my colleagues, Mr. CARPER, Mr. STUDDS, and Mr. SAXTON for their bipartisan efforts on behalf of this most worthy of causes.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3486 and urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is designed to provide a formal mechanism for dealing with marine mammals that are unexpectedly stranded on our shores. It also provides funding for a very modest tissue bank program, so that scientists can determine the quality of our ocean waters. This is a bipartisan measure which was reported unanimously by our committee.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to note that during committee markup, my colleagues lavished a great deal of praise on the majority staff for work they did on the bill. I want to point out that two members of minority staff of this committee, Mr. Rod Moore and Ms. Laurel Bryant, spent a great deal of time making sure this bill was put together in an acceptable form. Since this was a bipartisan effort, I think a praise should be given to staff on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and its passage by the House.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware [Mr. CARPER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3486, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to provide for examination of the health of marine mammal populations and for effective coordinated response to strandings and unusual mortality events involving marine mammals.".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARPER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3486, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

ABANDONED BARGE ACT OF 1992

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5397) to amend title 46, United States Code, to prohibit abandonment of barges, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5397

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 "Abandoned Barge Act of 1992".

SEC. 2. ABANDONMENT OF BARGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part B of subtitle II of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

"CHAPTER 47—ABANDONMENT OF BARGES

"Sec.
"4701. Definitions.
"4702. Abandonment of barge prohibited.
"4703. Penalty for unlawful abandonment of barge.
"4704. Removal of abandoned barges.
"4705. Liability of barge removal contractors.

"§ 4701. Definitions

"In this chapter—

"(1) 'abandon' means to moor, strand, wreck, sink, or leave a barge of more than

100 gross tons unattended for longer than forty-five days.

"(2) 'barge removal contractor' means a person that enters into a contract with the United States to remove an abandoned barge under this chapter.

"(3) 'navigable waters of the United States' means waters of the United States, including the territorial sea.

"(4) 'removal' or 'remove' means relocation, sale, scrapping, or other method of disposal.

"§ 4702. Abandonment of barge prohibited

"(a) An owner or operator of a barge may not abandon it on the navigable waters of the United States. A barge is deemed not to be abandoned if—

"(1) it is located at a Federally- or State-approved mooring area;

"(2) it is on private property with the permission of the owner of the property; or

"(3) the owner or operator notifies the Secretary that the barge is not abandoned and the location of the barge."

"§ 4703. Penalty for unlawful abandonment of barge

"Thirty days after the notification procedures under section 4704(a)(1) are completed, the Secretary may assess a civil penalty of not more than $1,000 for each day of the violation against an owner or operator that violates section 4702. A vessel with respect to which a penalty is assessed under this chapter is liable in rem for the penalty.

"§ 4704. Removal of abandoned barges

"(a) AUTHORITY TO REMOVE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may remove a barge that is abandoned after complying with the following procedures:

"(A) If the identity of the owner or operator can be determined, the Secretary shall notify the owner or operator by certified mail—

"(i) that if the barge is not removed it will be removed at the owners' or operators' expense; and

"(ii) of the penalty under section 4703.

"(B) If the identity of the owner or operator cannot be determined, the Secretary shall publish an announcement in—

"(i) a notice to mariners; and

"(ii) an official journal of the county in which the barge is located

that if the barge is not removed it will be removed at the owners' or operators' expense.

"(2) UNITED STATES NOT LIABLE.—The United States and any officer or employee of the United States is not liable to an owner or operator for damages resulting from removal of an abandoned barge under this chapter.

"(b) LIABILITY OF OWNER AND OPERATOR.—The owner or operator of an abandoned barge is liable, and an abandoned barge is liable in rem, for all expenses that the United States incurs in removing an abandoned barge under this chapter.

"(c) REMOVAL SERVICES.—

"(1) SOLICITATION.—The Secretary may, after providing notice under subsection (a)(1), solicit by public advertisement sealed bids for the removal of an abandoned barge.

"(2) *CONTRACT.—After solicitation* under paragraph (1) the Secretary may award a contract. The contract—

"(A) may be subject to the condition that the barge and all property on the barge is the property of the barge removal contractor; and

"(B) must require the barge removal contractor to submit to the Secretary a plan for the removal.

"(3) COMMENCEMENT OF REMOVAL.—Removal of an abandoned barge may begin thirty days after the Secretary completes the procedures under subsection (a)(1).

"§ 4705. Liability of barge removal contractors

"(a) LIABILITY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—A barge removal contractor and its subcontractor are not liable for damages that result from actions taken or omitted to be taken in the course of removing a barge under this chapter.

"(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Subparagraph (1) does not apply—

"(A) with respect to personal injury or wrongful death; or

"(B) if the contractor or subcontractor is grossly negligent or engages in willful misconduct.".

(b) APPLICATION TO CERTAIN BARGES.—One year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary may assess a civil penalty under section 4703 against an owner or operator of a barge abandoned before June 11, 1992.

SEC. 3. CLERICAL AMENDMENT.

The analysis of subtitle II at the beginning of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 45 the following:

"47. Abandonment of barges ..... 4701".

SEC. 4. NUMBERING OF BARGES.

Section 12301 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a)" before "An undocumented vessel"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(b) The Secretary shall require an undocumented barge of more than 100 gross tons operating on the navigable waters of the United States to be numbered.".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] will be recognized for 20 minutes, and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FIELDS] will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN].

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support H.R. 5397, the Abandoned Barge Act of 1992. I introduced this bill along with Chairman JONES and Congressman JACK FIELDS to protect our Nation's waterways from the environmental problems resulting from abandoned barges. I chair the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Navigation, which has held hearings on this issue. We have learned that abandoned barges create a significant source of water pollution on our inland waterways.

At the outset of the subcommittee's investigation, I was amazed to learn that abandoning a barge is not a violation of law. As long as a barge does not pose a threat to navigation, it can legally remain moored on a river bank or stranded in a marsh. An abandoned barge would seem to be nothing more than an eyesore to those of us who enjoy recreation on our waterways. But to those criminals who profit by illegally disposing of chemical and petroleum wastes, an abandoned barge is an easy and efficient repository for toxic dumping.

The primary purpose of H.R. 5397 is to prevent future marine pollution from abandoned barges. Last year the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Navigation asked the General Accounting Office [GAO] to investigate the problems associated with abandoned vessels. On July 21, 1992, the GAO submitted their report to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

The GAO estimates there are between 600 and 1,200 abandoned barges along our Nation's waterways. Since 1988, the Federal Government has spent almost $6 million to clean up pollutants from 51 abandoned vessels. In only a few of these cases did the owners pay for the cleanup costs. The taxpayers paid for the rest.

In 1988, the Federal Government spent $845,600 to remove 210,000 gallons of waste material from two abandoned tank barges in Empire, LA. Following the cleanup, the tank barges were locked shut. The barges remained abandoned in an unused canal. In 1991 the site was revisited and it was discovered that the barges had been broken into. Midnight dumpers had used the barges to dispose of almost 600,000 gallons of waste chemicals. This time the Federal Government spent $1.7 million to clean and remove the barges.

We drafted the Abandoned Barge Act to correct this environmentally dangerous and unfair loophole in current law.

H.R. 5397:

First, makes abandoning a barge in the Nation's waterways illegal.

Second, establishes a new penalty which we hope will deter those who would abandon a barge on our waterways.

Third, requires that all barges be numbered and thus allows the Coast Guard to better identify the person responsible for the barge, and

Fourth, gives the Coast Guard discretionary authority to contract for the removal of the barge at the owner or operator's cost.

There are existing abandoned barges which will need removal at some point in time. Those that pose the greatest current threat to the environment by containing either oil or hazardous material can be disposed of with funds available under the oil pollution trust fund or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act [CERCLA]. We may at some point in the future need to determine whether funding will be needed to remove those that may be potential targets of midnight dumpers, but which are not a current threat.

H.R. 5347 is the result of a bipartisan effort by the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Navigation. It is also the product of a great deal of hard work and cooperation between the General Accounting Office, the Coast Guard and the American waterways operators. I am hopeful that H.R. 5397 will send a signal to those who wish to use our waters as a cheap and easy place for dis-

posal so that this practice will no longer be tolerated. I also want to encourage the industry to seek innovative methods of disposing of barges which are no longer usable. Just as the oil industry has found an environmentally beneficial use for outdated oil rigs in the rigs to reefs program, there may be a beneficial use for these vessels or the metal contained in them. I know that the responsible barge operators share my concern for protecting our waterways from pollution and will continue to work with our subcommittee as cooperatively as they have in the past.

I urge my colleagues to join with me to support H.R. 5397 which will provide needed protection to our Nation's waterways.

□ 1620

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

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 5397, I rise in strong support of this legislation and compliment my distinguished subcommittee chairman, BILLY TAUZIN, for his outstanding leadership in moving this important environmental protection bill.

H.R. 5397 is a product of 2 years of careful consideration by the Coast Guard and Navigation Subcommittee. Our subcommittee conducted two extensive oversight hearings on this issue and we commissioned the General Accounting Office to undertake a study to determine how many vessels had been abandoned, the extent of the environmental damage they have caused, and whether U.S. laws adequately addressed the problem of abandoned barges.

According to the General Accounting Office, there are some 600 abandoned barges in the United States, with the majority of them located in the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, there are at least three abandoned barges in my own congressional district which have been abandoned along the Houston ship channel.

These barges are navigational hazards and some have become convenient disposal sites for the dumping of hazardous materials which are polluting our waterways.

In 1989, the Coast Guard discovered that two abandoned tank barges in Empire, LA, had leaked 1,000 gallons of illegally dumped waste oil into the Mississippi River. Since the owners of these vessels were either deceased or bankrupt, the Coast Guard cleaned up the waste material at a cost of $835,000. Regrettably, however, the Coast Guard chose not to remove or destroy these tank barges.

This was a tragic mistake because on a subsequent visit to the site, the Coast Guard found that illegal dumping had resumed and these barges now contained 571,200 gallons of hazardous material. Using its Superfund authority, Coast Guard contractors removed this waste at an estimated cost of $1.7 million.

While the Empire barge incident may be the most famous, the Coast Guard has investigated dozens of other abandoned barges that have been used as illegal dump sites.

Mr. Speaker, this is a practice that must be stopped and H.R. 5397, introduced by the gentleman from Louisiana, is the right solution to this problem.

Under current law, incredibly, it is not unlawful to abandon a barge and there is no identification system for the thousands of undocumented barges. It is, therefore, difficult, if not impossible, for the Coast Guard to locate the owners of these vessels.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5397 will make it illegal to abandon a barge, will authorize the Coast Guard to remove them, will establish civil penalties for abandoning a barge, and will require all barges of 100 gross tons to be numbered. In this way, the Coast Guard will be able to find the rightful owners and to assess removal or cleanup costs for any environmental damage they may have caused.

Furthermore, this bill will send a clear signal to the U.S. Coast Guard that we believe they should remove abandoned barges before, and not after, they pollute our waterways.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that we are considering this important bill and my good friend from Louisiana, Mr. TAUZIN, deserves tremendous credit for leading this timely effort to protect our coastal environment.

This is an excellent bill and I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on H.R. 5397.

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

Mr. Speaker, I simply want to add my congratulations and thanks to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FIELDS], the ranking minority member, proving again that our subcommittee does work in an extraordinary bipartisan manner. If there is gridlock around here, it does not happen on our subcommittee. We work and try to get things done. This is a good thing that needs to get done, and I urge my colleagues to finally approve it.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5397, the Abandoned Barge Act of 1992.

For many years, Congress has worked to establish a comprehensive strategy to address maritime oilspills. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 [OPA '90] was the fruit of that effort. H.R. 5397 addresses an environmental threat from barges that was not adequately addressed by OPA '90 and other environmental laws, such as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, better known as CERCLA or Superfund.

Barges abandoned along this Nation's waterways are a blight on the environment, endangering both human and marine life. Our committee, through field hearings in Louisiana, has seen firsthand the problems created by these barges. We were shocked to learn that current law does not prohibit an owner or operator from abandoning a barge, unless the barge presents a hazard to navigation or creates a clear environmental hazard under OPA '90 or CERCLA.

Barges, as they reach the end of their economic life, present a dilemma for owners. The scrap value of these vessels is minimal and the cost of cleaning them, particularly those used to transport oil and chemicals, is astronomical. For example, two barges abandoned near New Orleans yielded about 260 tons of scrap steel, which had a value of $2,900, but cost over $300,000 for cleanup, removal, and disposal.

As a result, many owners take the irresponsible approach of abandoning these vessels along our waterways. Federal authorities cannot remove the barge unless it is a hazard to navigation or creates a clear and immediate environmental hazard.

However, these abandoned barges can pose a danger to human and marine life. Unscrupulous individuals have found these barges to be convenient receptacles for illegal dumping of oil or hazardous wastes, which often spill into and pollute our waterways. The committee has learned that even after cleaning and removal of hazardous materials by Federal agencies, illegal dumpers have broken into locked barges and refilled them with hazardous materials, thereby requiring further cleanup expenditures.

Starting over a year ago, the General Accounting Office [GAO], at the request, began an extensive study of the abandoned barge problem.

The GAO study found:

Federal laws do not specifically prohibit vessel abandonment;

As a result, at least 1,300 vessels are abandoned in waterways throughout the Nation;

These vessels pollute the marine environment and pose a continual pollution threat;

Abandoned vessels cost millions to clean up and remove; and

Vessel owners are not being held accountable for damages.

GAO advised Congress to enact legislation, first, to make it illegal to abandon barges, second, to provide appropriate administrative fines and penalties to deter abandonment, and third, to require permanent registration and marking of all barges.

To give a sense of the magnitude of this problem it should be noted that the Army Corps of Engineers estimates that 1,201 abandoned barges now clog our waterways.

Since 1988, the Coast Guard has investigated over 100 incidents of potential pollution from abandoned vessels. The cleanup costs associated with these investigations reached almost $6 million. Approximately 40 percent of this has been spent on abandoned barges alone.

To make matters even worse, little of the cleanup expenses have been recovered from the barge owners or operators responsible for the abandonment and resultant pollution. Because barges are exempt from current identification and documentation requirements, it is often impossible to determine the owner or operator of an abandoned barge.

It is high time to give the Federal agencies the authority to remove these barges before they become environmental nightmares, and the ability to track down the persons responsible for this environmental disgrace.

H.R. 5397 would end these problems by—

Prohibiting owners and operators from abandoning a barge;

Authorizing the Coast Guard to remove these environmental eyesores;

Allowing the Coast Guard to recover removal costs from the owners or operators of abandoned barges; and

Requiring the numbering of barges so Federal agencies will be able to identify individuals who illegally abandon a barge.

H.R. 5397 is an appropriate response to the findings of GAO and the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. It fills gaps in the current regime established by OPA '90 and CERCLA. The Coast Guard, using the tools in H.R. 5397, will be better able to safeguard the environment and hold those who damage it financially responsible. This bill is a necessary addition to the arsenal of weapons essential to defending the marine environment.

I commend Mr. TAUZIN for developing this important legislation and urge its adoption.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5397, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE GREAT LAKES FISH AND WILDLIFE TISSUE BANK ACT

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5350) to establish the Great Lakes fish and wildlife tissue bank, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5350

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

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as "The Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Tissue Bank Act".

SEC. 102. TISSUE BANK.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall coordinate existing facilities for the storage, preparation, examination, and archiving of tissues from selected Great Lakes fish and wildlife, which shall be known as the 'Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Tissue Bank'.

(b) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary shall, in consultation with appropriate Federal and State agencies and the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers, issue guidance, after an opportunity for public review and comment, for Great Lakes fish and wildlife tissue collection, preparation, archiving, quality control procedures, and access that will ensure—

(1) appropriate uniform methods and standards for those activities to provide confidence in Great Lakes fish and wildlife tissue samples used for research;

(2) documentation of procedures used for collecting, preparing, and archiving those samples; and

(3) appropriate scientific use of the tissues in the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Tissue Bank.

SEC. 103. DATA BASE.

(a) MAINTENANCE.—The Secretary shall maintain a central data base which provides an effective means for tracking and assessing relevant reference data on Great Lakes fish and wildlife, including data on tissues collected for and maintained in the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Tissue Bank.

(b) ACCESS.—The Secretary shall establish criteria, after an opportunity for public review and comment, for access to the data base which provides for appropriate use of the information by the public.

SEC. 104. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(2) "Great Lakes fish and wildlife" means fauna, fish, and invertebrates dependent on Great Lakes resources, and located within the Great Lakes Basin.

SEC. 105. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary, $250,000 for each of fiscal years 1993 and 1994 to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. STUDDS] will be recognized for 20 minutes, and the gentleman from Alaska [Mr. YOUNG] will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. STUDDS].

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5350. The Great Lakes, like many of our fragile marine environments, have suffered over the years from our human tendency to view these areas as limitless dumping grounds. Thanks to the efforts of my colleagues who represent the various States bordering the Great Lakes, that view is changing.

This bill will help scientists to monitor the general health trends of the wildlife that depend on the Great Lakes ecosystem for survival, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

□ 1630

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Tissue Bank Act and urge its adoption.

This bill, authorized by Congressman BOB DAVIS, directs the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate existing facilities for handling selected Great Lakes fish and wildlife tissues. The Secretary must also issue guidance for tissue collection, establish criteria for access to the bank, and maintain a data base for tracking data on Great Lakes tissues.

This bill can greatly aid our work in cleaning up the Great Lakes. Coordination of facilities and development of uniform collection and storage standards will also make this information more valuable to users and save time and money.

I urge support for the measure and commend our ranking minority member for his leadership in protecting the Great Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the cooperation of Chairmen STUDDS, JONES, and HERTEL in supporting this legislation and moving it through committee.

This bill authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate existing facilities to create a Great Lakes Tissue Bank for specimens of fish, wildlife, and even zebra mussels. The bill also authorizes the establishment of a centralized data base for information collected on Great Lakes fish and wildlife to give resource managers one-stop shopping.

The need for a centralized tissue bank in the Great Lakes has been recognized for a decade. The International Joint Commission recommended its creation in 1983, and the need was echoed in 1986, when the Council of Great Lakes Governors signed a toxic pollutant control agreement. More recently, the idea was promoted by the Northeast-Midwest Institute.

Specimen banking is needed to help monitor the environmental health of the lakes, as well as judge the effectiveness of our cleanup and control methods. Current tissue collection and storage methods are haphazard, and no central depository of information about Great Lakes tissues exist. The few banking efforts are uncoordinated, underfunded, and understaffed.

Mr. HERTEL. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5350, the Great Lakes Wildlife Tissue Bank Act was introduced by Mr. DAVIS on June 9, 1992. I cosponsored this bill along with Mr. NOWAK, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. PEASE, and Mr. LIPINSKI. The bill requires that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service take steps to provide for the storage, preparation, examination and archiving of Great Lakes wildlife, fish, and invertebrate tissues. H.R. 5350 also requires the establishment of uniform guidance on methods for collection, preparation, analysis, archiving, and quality control, while establishing a data base for tracking and evaluating information on Great Lakes animal tissue.

On April 8, 1992, the Subcommittee on Oceanography, Great Lakes and the Outer Continental Shelf held an oversight hearing on Great Lakes Federal research efforts. H.R. 5350 was one outcome of the findings of that hearing. The bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment which discharged it on July 1, 1992, prior to the bill's markup by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. I would like to thank Chairman STUDDS for discharging the bill, allowing its subsequent unanimous approval by the committee. This is a valuable contribution to our ongoing effort to manage and protect our Great Lakes.

In 1983, a report by the Science Advisory Board of the United States-Canada International Joint Commission advocated estab-