

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's yielding me this time. While I am prepared to support the rule and the underlying bill, I am disappointed that our proposed amendments were not ruled in order. While more progress is possible on this bill, at this late date in this session it may well be unrealistic, and there is, in fact, much to celebrate.

The inclusion in the legislation of almost \$8 billion to save the Florida Everglades is symbolic of our changing attitudes towards water resource management. It is also important to remember that we are simply paying to undo our own bad decisions. This Congress told the Corps of Engineers to drain the swamp in 1948, and drain it they did, all too well, without comprehensive planning and environmental assessment of its impact. We must do what we can to make sure that we do not repeat those mistakes of the past.

Akin to the Everglades, the Columbia Slough, in my district, was cut off from the Columbia River by a Corps project decades ago and today it is stagnant and heavily polluted. This legislation directs the Corps to work with the City of Portland to fix the problems associated with the old Corps project. I am pleased that the bill incorporates my proposal for \$40 million in funding to protect and restore the lower Columbia River and Tillamook estuaries, critical nurseries for endangered salmon.

While there are some reform measures included in the bill, I would hope that we can continue going further. I have enjoyed working with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. Kind) on legislation which would increase the Corps' transparency and accountability that would guaranty more citizen participation and lead to a better balance between economic and environmental considerations. This is an effort that I will continue to pursue.

One particular area of Corps reform that I think we in this body need to look at very carefully is the contentious beach nourishment program. In too many cases, the program is washing taxpayer dollars out to sea while actually hurting the environment. One simple change that we tried to make in order would require communities with beaches to at least pay full costs for any prospective Corps beach nourishment project if there is no public access.

But the major reform of the Corps of Engineers is to be found on the floor of this Congress. We need to be more careful of what we authorize, what we require, and how all the complex pieces of our waterways fit together. This bill can help start the process. I support the rule and the underlying bill.