



Floor Statement for the Record
Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

September 23, 2024

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to S. 2228 the Building Chips in America Act.

It is really unfortunate that this bill was added to the schedule at the last minute, with no consultation with the committees of jurisdiction, at least on the Minority side. Republicans promised us the most open House in history, but instead now officially preside over the most closed House in our Nation's history.

I say this, because this bill is the poster child of something that needs further review. I'll note here that this bill hasn't received a single hearing in the House of Representatives.

And this is a bad bill.

This bill would eliminate NEPA environmental reviews from semiconductor projects funded under the Chips and Science Act.

This issue is personal to me. My home county, Santa Clara County, is the heart of Silicon Valley. It is also the largest collection of superfund sites in the nation. Most of those sites were tied to semiconductor or microelectronics manufacturing. While most of these toxic sites have since been remediated, the legacy of this pollution remains in the contaminated groundwater in many places in Silicon Valley.

Moreover, there was a human toll from the use of toxic chemicals in chips manufacturing. Some workers at factories developed health problems. Stillborn babies, infant deformities, and disease were also tied to exposure.

In California, we learned lessons from the past semiconductor manufacturing in Silicon Valley. We should be learning from this legacy and ensuring we don't repeat it. NEPA reviews are a vitally important tool in this regard.

When Congress passed the Chips and Science Act, we rightly decided that the trade imbalance in semiconductor manufacturing was an issue of economic and national security. As a result, we gave companies in this sector unprecedented amounts of taxpayer money. That money comes from regular people, like nurses, firefighters, custodians, and the like. We should require, at a minimum, that when we take these people's money and give it to corporations, the government will review the environmental impacts of these activities.

Furthermore, NEPA reviews provide an avenue for public participation in this process. I think we owe it to the hardworking taxpayers of America to provide them with this process.

The last thing I'll say about this is that it is unnecessary. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo herself said as much at a hearing this summer when she stated: "[w]e are on track to complete the environmental review for all these companies before we issue the award." The NEPA process is not slowing down the Chips awards.

So, I am deeply disappointed we are here today considering this ill-advised and unnecessary legislation. There really is no good reason anyone should support this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote against S. 2228.

I yield back the balance of my time.