

TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO TRANSFER TO THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF FRED STEFFENS OF BIG HORN COUNTY, WYOMING, CERTAIN LAND COMPRISING THE STEFFENS FAMILY PROPERTY

MARCH 17, 1999.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, from the Committee on Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 509]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 509) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. TRANSFER OF STEFFENS FAMILY PROPERTY.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—Subject to valid existing rights, the Secretary of the Interior is directed to issue, without consideration, a quitclaim deed to Marie Wambeke of Big Horn County, Wyoming, the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens, to the land described in subsection (b); *Provided*, That all minerals underlying such land are hereby reserved to the United States.

(b) LAND DESCRIPTION.—The land referred to in subsection (a) is the approximately 80-acre parcel known as “Farm Unit C” in the E½NW¼ of Section 27 in Township 57 North, Range 97 West, 6th Principal Meridian, Wyoming.

(c) REVOCATION OF WITHDRAWAL.—The Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal for the Shoshone Reclamation Project under Secretarial Order dated October 21, 1913, is hereby revoked with respect to the lands described in subsection (b).

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 509 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Stef-

fens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The property outlined in H.R. 509 (about 80 acres) has been a part of the Steffens' family working farm since the land was purchased in 1928. Mr. Steffens was issued a warranty deed to the property by Mr. Frank McKinney, predecessor of interest. Apparently, however, Mr. McKinney had neither title to the property nor an assignable right of entry. In good faith, Mr. Steffens purchased the property and, according to the Big Horn County Assessor's office, paid taxes on it since the date of purchase.

Upon Mr. Steffens' death, in an attempt to settle his estate, it was discovered that a patent had never been issued for these lands. Mr. Steffens' sister and representative of the estate filed a Color of Title application with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Wyoming office, but the title was rejected because the lands at issue were, and continue to be, withdrawn by the Bureau of Reclamation for the Shoshone Reclamation Project. Regulations specifically preclude claims under the Color of Title Act when lands are withdrawn for federal purposes.

The only option to remedy this situation is to pass H.R. 509. The bill transfers the title and surface estate to the Steffens. BLM will keep the mineral rights.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 509 was introduced on February 2, 1999, by Congresswoman Barbara Cubin (R-WY). The bill was referred to the Committee on Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. On February 25, 1999, the Subcommittee met to mark up the bill. No amendments were offered and the bill was ordered favorably reported to the Full Committee by voice vote. On March 3, 1999, the Full Resources Committee met to consider the bill. Congresswoman Cubin offered an amendment to insert the word "acre" to correct a minor drafting mistake. The amendment was adopted by voice vote. The bill as amended was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States grant Congress the authority to enact this bill.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation. Clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in car-

rying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(3)(B) of that Rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

2. Congressional Budget Act. As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. Government Reform Oversight Findings. Under clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and recommendations from the Committee on Government Reform on this bill.

4. Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate. Under clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, March 10, 1999.

Hon. DON YOUNG,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 509, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Victoria Heid Hall.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 509—A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property

H.R. 509 would direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Land Management, to transfer without consideration about 80 acres of land in Big Horn County, Wyoming, to the representative of the estate of Mr. Fred Steffens. The federal government would retain the mineral interests in the land.

CBO estimates that enacting this bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Because H.R. 509 would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. H.R. 509 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and

would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On March 10, 1999, CBO prepared a cost estimate for S. 449, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer to the personal representative of the estate of Fred Steffens of Big Horn County, Wyoming, certain land comprising the Steffens family property, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on March 4, 1999. The two bills are similar, and the estimated costs are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Victoria Heid Hall. This estimate was approved by Paul N. Van de Water, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.