

Certain ongoing activities, such as Iran's continuing arms transfers to Hizballah—which include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems—serve to undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 28, 2022.

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## BIG CAT PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1256, I call up the bill (H.R. 263) to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1256, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill, is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

### H.R. 263

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 “Big Cat Public Safety Act”.

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 2 of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3371) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (a) through (k) as subsections (b) through (l), respectively; and

(2) by inserting before subsection (b) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(a) *BREED.*—The term ‘breed’ means to facilitate propagation or reproduction (whether intentionally or negligently), or to fail to prevent propagation or reproduction.”.

(b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.*—

(1) *CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT.*—Section 349(a)(3) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1997(a)(3)) is amended—

(A) by striking “section 2(a)” and inserting “section 2”; and

(B) by striking “3371(a)” and inserting “3371”.

(2) *LACEY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1981.*—Section 7(c) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3376(c)) is amended by striking “section 2(f)(2)(A)” and inserting “section 2(g)(2)(A)”.

#### SEC. 3. PROHIBITIONS.

Section 3 of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3372) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting “; or”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)(iii), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by striking subparagraph (C); and  
(B) in paragraph (4), by striking “(1) through (3)” and inserting “(1) through (3) or subsection (e)”; and  
(2) by amending subsection (e) to read as follows:

“(e) *CAPTIVE WILDLIFE OFFENSE.*—

“(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Except as provided in paragraph (2), it is unlawful for any person to—

“(A) import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce, or in a manner substantially affecting interstate or foreign commerce; or

“(B) breed or possess;  
any prohibited wildlife species.

“(2) *LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.*—Paragraph (1) does not apply to—

“(A) an entity exhibiting animals to the public under a Class C license from the Department of Agriculture, or a Federal facility registered with the Department of Agriculture that exhibits animals, if such entity or facility holds such license or registration in good standing and if the entity or facility—

“(i) does not allow any individual to come into direct physical contact with a prohibited wildlife species, unless that individual is—

“(I) a trained professional employee or contractor of the entity or facility (or an accompanying employee receiving professional training);

“(II) a licensed veterinarian (or a veterinary student accompanying such a veterinarian); or

“(III) directly supporting conservation programs of the entity or facility, the contact is not in the course of commercial activity (which may be evidenced by advertisement or promotion of such activity or other relevant evidence), and the contact is incidental to humane husbandry conducted pursuant to a species-specific, publicly available, peer-edited population management and care plan that has been provided to the Secretary with justifications that the plan—

“(aa) reflects established conservation science principles;

“(bb) incorporates genetic and demographic analysis of a multi-institution population of animals covered by the plan; and

“(cc) promotes animal welfare by ensuring that the frequency of breeding is appropriate for the species; and

“(ii) ensures that during public exhibition of a lion (*Panthera leo*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), cougar (*Puma concolor*), or any hybrid thereof, the animal is at least 15 feet from members of the public unless there is a permanent barrier sufficient to prevent public contact;

“(B) a State college, university, or agency, or a State-licensed veterinarian;

“(C) a wildlife sanctuary that cares for prohibited wildlife species, and—

“(i) is a corporation that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and described in sections 501(c)(3) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of such Code;

“(ii) does not commercially trade in any prohibited wildlife species, including offspring, parts, and byproducts of such animals;

“(iii) does not breed any prohibited wildlife species;

“(iv) does not allow direct contact between the public and any prohibited wildlife species; and

“(v) does not allow the transportation and display of any prohibited wildlife species off-site;

“(D) has custody of any prohibited wildlife species solely for the purpose of expeditiously transporting the prohibited wildlife species to a person described in this paragraph with respect to the species; or

“(E) an entity or individual that is in possession of any prohibited wildlife species that was born before the date of the enactment of the Big Cat Public Safety Act, and—

“(i) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the such Act, the entity or in-

dividual registers each individual animal of each prohibited wildlife species possessed by the entity or individual with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;

“(ii) does not breed, acquire, or sell any prohibited wildlife species after the date of the enactment of such Act; and

“(iii) does not allow direct contact between the public and prohibited wildlife species.”.

#### SEC. 4. PENALTIES.

(a) *CIVIL PENALTIES.*—Section 4(a)(1) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3373(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(e),” after “(d),”; and

(2) by inserting “(e),” after “subsection (d)”.

(b) *CRIMINAL PENALTIES.*—Section 4(d) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3373(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “(e),” after “(d),”; and

(2) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting “(e),” after “(d),”; and

(3) in paragraph (2), by inserting “(e),” after “(d),”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) Any person who knowingly violates section 3(e) shall be fined not more than \$20,000, or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both. Each violation shall be a separate offense and the offense is deemed to have been committed in the district where the violation first occurred, and in any district in which the defendant may have taken or been in possession of the prohibited wildlife species.”.

#### SEC. 5. FORFEITURE OF PROHIBITED WILDLIFE SPECIES.

Section 5(a)(1) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)) is amended by inserting “bred, possessed,” before “imported, exported,”.

#### SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION.

Section 7(a) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3376(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) The Secretary shall, in consultation with other relevant Federal and State agencies, promulgate any regulations necessary to implement section 3(e).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part A of House Report 117-444, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

The gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 263.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the question that this bill addresses is whether the private, unregistered ownership and exploitation of big cats, meaning lions, tigers, leopards, jaguars, cougars, and hybrids of them should continue considering significant and real animal welfare, public safety, and law enforcement safety concerns.

H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act says no, and would end the ownership of big cats as private pets and prohibit exhibitors from allowing public contact with big cats, including cubs.

This bill is a culmination of over a decade of bipartisan effort. The Big Cat Public Safety Act, in one form or another, has been introduced by, cosponsored by, and generally supported by Republicans and Democrats alike for well over a decade. Since the 112th Congress, Big Cats have garnered 933 bipartisan cosponsors. It was initially introduced by three different Republicans over a number of Congresses, as well as the current Democratic sponsor.

We have continued to refine the bill in the decade since its first introduction. We passed it by suspension last Congress, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it again now.

The Big Cat Public Safety Act is endorsed not only by numerous environmental, animal welfare, and other organizations, but by countless law enforcement agencies and associations, including the National Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, State-specific sheriffs' associations, and individual law enforcement officers.

We need to look no further than the compelling testimony from Sheriff Matt Lutz before our Natural Resources Committee to understand the broad concerns with the status quo.

In 2011, specifically, more than 50 exotic animals, including 38 lions, tigers, and cougars were released into the public from a private residence in Zanesville, Ohio, shutting down a highway and terrifying the neighbors.

Sheriff Lutz led the law enforcement response to the crisis. He testified at our hearing this year that his department didn't have any inventory of how many animals there were, they barely even knew that they were there to start with, and his officers weren't trained, obviously, to deal with big cats and other exotic animals released into a public setting en masse.

Incredibly, no one was killed or seriously injured in Zanesville that day, but as Sheriff Lutz testified: "The outcome could have been much worse if any single condition had been just slightly different, and it could be far worse the next time."

Precisely because private ownership is unregulated and largely unknown, we don't know how many big cats are currently kept in private ownership in the U.S., but estimates are as high as 20,000.

Privately owned big cats are often purchased or bred as cubs for photo

ops, and as they grow larger, they are sold into the exotic pet trade or on the black market for wildlife parts. Adult big cats in private ownership typically live in inhumane conditions that threaten public safety.

Since 1990, around 300 dangerous incidents involving big cats have resulted in human injuries, mauling, and death. In many cases, the animals are shot and killed, as first responders are not equipped for these situations.

In 2003, Congress unanimously passed the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, which amended the Lacey Act to prohibit importing, exporting, buying, selling, transporting, receiving, or acquiring big cats across States and the U.S. border.

Though State laws vary, there is no Federal policy regarding the private possession or use of big cats, and one is critically needed.

This bill narrowly focuses on privately owned animals. It includes exemptions for exhibitors with U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA, Class C licenses, and current owners are grandfathered in as long as they register with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and abide by listed regulations.

H.R. 263 will protect first responders and the public, as well as the animals themselves.

In addition to public safety concerns, the exotic cat trade fuels other criminal behavior that we in Congress should not be supporting.

As just one example, the TV series "Tiger King" showed us that there is a dark and dangerous side to keeping lions, tigers, and other big cats in captivity. In fact, Joe Exotic from that series is in jail for violating the Lacey Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Now, some opponents of this bill argue that we need to make changes to the bill to help small zoos stay in business. This bill would not affect small zoos. The reality is that most zoos, whether they are big or small, already have policies in place that reflect the Big Cat Public Safety Act standards. They are not going to be asked to do anything that they are not doing already. They don't allow public contact or cub petting, and they already keep cats at a safe distance away from the public. There are only a small few who still allow it, and they shouldn't.

Now, we may hear claims from my colleague on the other side this is a USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture issue, not a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issue. The fact is that the USDA does not regulate private ownership of animals like big cats.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has long been responsible for regulating big cats' interstate transfer and commerce under the Lacey Act and has the authority to regulate the possession and breeding of endangered species, including big cats.

While the USDA provides basic requirements for preventing cruelty to exhibited animals, the Fish and Wildlife Service is the one that must pro-

vide stringent standards to ensure that threatened and endangered species are managed to actively promote conservation, regardless of whether the animals are exhibited to the public.

The Big Cat Public Safety Act merely strengthens and expands an already existing framework under the Lacey Act. It is a commonsense, and, again, uniquely bipartisan solution to address public safety and animal abuse concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a July 26, 2022, letter from the Congressional Budget Office.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
U.S. CONGRESS,  
Washington, DC, July 26, 2022.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

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

Sincerely,  
PHILLIP L. SWAGEL.

Enclosure.  
H.R. 263, BIG CAT PUBLIC SAFETY ACT—JULY  
22, 2022  
(By fiscal year, millions of dollars)

	2022	2022– 2027	2022– 2032
Direct Spending (Outlays) .....	0	*	*
Revenues .....	0	*	*
Increase or Decrease (–) in the Def- icit .....	0	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays) .....	*	3	**

\* = between –\$500,000 and \$500,000.  
\*\* = not estimated.

Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? Yes.

Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2033? No.

Mandate Effects:  
Contains intergovernmental mandate? Yes, Under Threshold.  
Contains private-sector mandate? Yes, Under Threshold.

Current law prohibits the import, export, purchase, sale, transport, or acquisition of big cats, such as lions and tigers, across state lines or the national border. H.R. 263 would generally prohibit the breeding and possession of those animals, although wildlife sanctuaries, veterinarians, colleges and universities, zoos, exhibitions, and other entities that meet certain requirements would be exempt. In addition, people who already own such animals would be permitted to keep them if they register with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 263 will be enacted late in fiscal year 2022. The bill would direct USFWS to issue regulations to implement the prohibition on breeding and possession. In addition, CBO expects that under the bill, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) could revise existing regulations on the licensing of entities that possess, exhibit, and breed big cats. Based on the costs of similar tasks, we estimate that developing those regulations would cost \$1 million over the 2022–2023 period.

Many states already prohibit ownership of the affected species and CBO expects that people who currently own such animals would register with USFWS. Thus, violations under the bill would probably occur infrequently. On that basis, CBO estimates that

USFWS would incur costs of less than \$500,000 annually after 2023 to maintain the registry and conduct enforcement. In total, we estimate that implementing H.R. 263 would cost about \$3 million over the 2022–2027 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Under H.R. 263, violators would be subject to criminal and civil penalties, which are recorded in the budget as revenues; some of those penalties could be spent without further appropriation. Thus, enacting the bill would increase revenues and direct spending, but CBO estimates that those increases would be insignificant over the 2022–2032 period because we expect the number of violations would be small.

Because H.R. 263 would either prohibit the possession and breeding of big cats or require owners, exhibitors, and breeders to take actions that would exempt them from the prohibitions, the bill contains intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

Although CBO cannot estimate the cost to comply with some of the bill's mandates, we expect the aggregate cost of the mandates, which would include both lost income and additional expenses to comply with the bill's requirements, would not exceed the annual threshold established in UMRA for intergovernmental and private-sector mandates (\$92 million and \$184 million respectively, in 2022, adjusted annually for inflation).

The bill would establish different requirements for entities licensed by USDA to possess, exhibit, and breed big cats; for wildlife sanctuaries; and for all other owners to be eligible for an exemption from the prohibitions. Approximately 340 facilities, both public and private, are licensed by USDA to possess, exhibit, and breed big cats.

To qualify for an exemption from the bill's prohibitions, exhibitors would be required to: Prohibit public contact, with limited exceptions, with the big cats; and

Maintain a 15-foot gap between the public and the animals or erect a permanent barrier.

Approximately 30 exhibitors, including public zoos, allow physical contact with big cats through seasonal encounters with the animals, and about 150 mostly privately-owned facilities host or participate in special fundraising events that allow some form of encounter with the animals.

CBO expects that prohibiting contact with the cats (or keeping the 15-foot gap) would decrease the financial success of these events. Using information provided by conservation groups and industry sources, CBO estimates that the cost of prohibiting or limiting these activities, in the form of foregone income, would be about \$80 million each year.

CBO has no data about the physical characteristics of exhibition settings or the ability of licensed exhibitors who wish to continue public exposure to the big cats to meet the new setback and barrier requirements. Thus, CBO cannot estimate the cost to comply with the exemption.

H.R. 263 would prohibit wildlife sanctuaries from transporting and displaying their big cats off site. CBO has no data on the number of sanctuaries that transport and display big cats, or the income stemming from that activity, and thus cannot estimate the cost of this prohibition.

The bill would require all other entities that possess big cats born before enactment to register the animals with USFWS if they want to be exempted from the bill's prohibitions. CBO cannot precisely estimate the cost of this mandate because regulations implementing the bill, including the cost to register the animals, have not been devel-

oped and the number of animals that would need to be registered is unknown. But based on information from animal welfare organizations, CBO expects the aggregate costs to be small.

Finally, to be eligible for the exemption, those owners also would be prohibited from breeding or selling their cats. Approximately 200 cubs are traded or sold each year at value of roughly \$8,000 per animal, according to industry sources; many of those cubs are born in facilities that would be unable to continue breeding big cats. CBO estimates the cost of the breeding prohibition would be less than \$1.6 million per year.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Lilia Ledezma (for federal costs) and Fiona Forrester (for mandates). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Illinois, Mr. QUIGLEY, on his work on this bill, and I urge all Members to vote "yes."

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 263. There are a lot of things the gentleman from Hawaii said that I think me, and a lot of other Republicans would agree on about what needs to happen as far as the outcomes of regulating big cats. But the devil is in the details, and that is what I hope to show today, that the details and the process and the procedures that the policy will create with this Democrat bill are not what is best for this policy.

Today's consideration of H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act, follows action last month by the Committee on Natural Resources, where this bill passed on a party-line vote after 2 days of lengthy markup.

At a time when gas prices were setting record highs on a near daily basis, the Committee on Natural Resources considered big cat legislation, once again, failing to address the economic and energy crisis facing Americans. At that time, committee Republicans offered several amendments aimed at reminding our majority that we should be focused on reducing energy and food prices, not on exotic pet ownership.

Rather than address the real crisis of the day, Democrats shut down debate on our amendments and forced a vote on final passage of this bill.

So here we are, once again, considering this big cats bill in what looks to be a very crowded legislative week, a week that does not focus on energy prices and inflation, even when gas is still averaging an unbearable and unacceptable \$4.50 per gallon.

Versions of this bill have been around since the 112th Congress, begging the question of why, if it is such a good idea, has it not been enacted over the last decade. Two clear reasons are that it would create a new regulatory framework and strip away States' rights.

The bill before us today is aimed at regulating the private ownership of so-called big cats by creating a new and

uplicative regulatory authority at the Department of the Interior.

The legislation is a considerable expansion of Federal regulation under the Lacey Act. In 2003, Congress amended the Lacey Act to make it illegal to import, export, buy, sell, transport, receive, or acquire certain live big cats across State lines or the U.S. border. Interstate trade. The bill proposed by my friends across the aisle regulates big cats from the Federal level or an intrastate level, an area where State laws are already in place to handle this.

The Lacey Act historically deals with interstate and international commerce on endangered or injurious wildlife, and the 2003 provisions specifically state that nothing in the act will supersede State laws, but here we are today taking another step to supersede State laws.

This bill would expand the Lacey Act by blatantly overriding State law and enforcing intrastate regulation of big cats.

It would require big cats exhibited at USDA-licensed or USDA-registered facilities be at least 15 feet from the public or behind a permanent barrier, irrespective of State laws. It would end new private ownership of big cats, and it would mandate all big cats be registered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within 180 days or risk having the Federal Government confiscate their animal and impose criminal fines and penalties.

It would require big cat owners to certify that they will not breed, acquire, or sell any big cats, and would prohibit direct public contact.

All these mandates would supersede State authority and duplicate existing Federal Government regulation.

Not only would this bill expand the Fish and Wildlife Service authorities, but it would overlay the U.S. Department of Agriculture's responsibilities, which already regulates the treatment of big cats in research and exhibition pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act of 1966.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, at the USDA already has inspectors and law enforcement officers in place that are experts in animal welfare issues. But this bill ignores that existing regulatory framework and would create a new regulatory system that the Congressional Budget Office estimates would lead to \$80 million in foregone revenue from current USDA licensed facilities.

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The result of this bill would be that USDA-licensed facilities will be regulated by both APHIS under USDA and the Fish and Wildlife Service under the Department of the Interior.

My staff and I have spent considerable time on this issue. One of our first questions was: Why not just work with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees under the jurisdiction of the Animal Welfare Act?

The response we received was an admission that the bill's outside proponents would rather work through the Committee on Natural Resources than the Committee on Agriculture. This is a classic case of venue shopping.

Creating two regulatory frameworks and dual Federal agency management superseding existing State regulation will create confusion, waste taxpayer dollars, and risk failing to adequately regulate these facilities at all.

There is a simple fix to the issues that exist. For that reason, I offered an amendment at our markup that will move the authorities proposed by H.R. 263 into the current USDA framework without superseding State authorities. That commonsense alternative was, unfortunately, rejected on a party-line vote, and unfortunately, it was not allowed to be considered today during the debate in the full House of Representatives. I would dare say that had we adopted that amendment, this bill would be on the suspension calendar.

While I agree that we want to reduce dangerous encounters between the public and big cats, I cannot support this bill because it is an overreaching, duplicative, and precedent-setting proposal that has already served as a blueprint for pending legislation on other species.

We need to work within existing authorities, not create new and duplicative ones. More importantly, we need to focus on the crises facing Americans, including staggering inflation and the high price of energy, not big cats.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 263, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, to my colleague's initial comments as to energy and the economy, nobody denies the critical importance of those issues, and, yes, of course, we all should be working collectively on those particular issues.

But by that measure, frankly, I would have wished that more of my colleagues on the other side would have voted for the bill immediately prior to this, which is a major issue and initiative to solve our supply chains and to take care of our national defense in terms of our chips. Also, by the measure that he outlines, we should not have addressed other critical issues in our country—for example, gun violence, women's rights, and civil rights. Of course, we should have done that.

The fact of the matter is that this Congress must and can address the many challenges of our country, and, yes, those challenges include, for this particular hour, the danger posed to our public and our law enforcement communities by unregulated big cats.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY), the author of this legislation.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I indeed rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

In the 116th Congress, we passed this legislation overwhelmingly with a vote of 272–114. So, apparently, there are a significant number of Republicans, at least a quarter of the caucus, that think this is a good idea.

Sadly, the Senate didn't take the bill up then, but since that vote, we have been able to work with our colleagues in the House and Senate to ensure we don't forget this important legislation because law enforcement and our communities deserve better.

Today, I am grateful that this body has had an opportunity to vote on this bill once again, and I am grateful to Mr. GRIJALVA and the House Natural Resources Committee for their continued support and their efforts to protect our neighborhoods from the threat of wild animals being held captive in dangerous conditions.

This legislation is about public safety and the safety of our first responders. Indeed, it is inherently inhumane and dangerous to keep big cats in private residences.

In 2011, as Mr. CASE detailed, more than 50 animals were released from their enclosures into the streets of Zanesville, Ohio: 18 tigers, 3 cougars, and 17 lions. This was just one horrific example of how first responders in our communities are put in danger when big cats are held captive in substandard living conditions by private, unregistered, unprepared owners.

The Big Cat Public Safety Act has been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association, and numerous State and local law enforcement agencies because 500-pound carnivores pose a serious and very real threat.

There have been over 740 serious safety incidents, including hundreds of maulings and 25 human deaths in the U.S. since 1990.

Lions and tigers do not belong in urban apartments or in cages in suburban backyards. Private citizens simply do not have the resources to care for dangerous animals that were meant to roam hundreds of square miles.

This bill is supported by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, which represents over 235 accredited zoos and aquariums across the country and abroad, as well as the Humane Society of the United States, and countless other animal welfare organizations because big cats are wild animals that inherently suffer when they are kept as pets in these substandard living conditions.

This bill should be supported by every American because, right now, taxpayers shoulder the cost of monitoring and regulating private owners, and when big cats are rescued from horrific conditions or simply abandoned by overwhelmed owners, they pay for the care and feeding of these cats.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all 258 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle who

support this bill, especially my friend, Representative BRIAN FITZPATRICK, who has been a leader on this issue for many years. I urge every Member to stand with law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to add to what my colleague, Mr. CASE, said about the challenges this country faces. If we were to argue that we should only focus on the top one or two issues in our minds at that time, the hundreds of other issues that this country and our world face would be set aside. Indeed, in this case, we would tell law enforcement: Yes, we know these animals put you at risk, but we want to work on these other priorities.

We can and must be able to do many things and meet all the challenges this country faces. We have that ability, and we are showing it right now. We passed landmark infrastructure legislation, gun safety legislation, and, today, CHIPS. God willing, very soon we will be dealing with infrastructure and the ability to negotiate prescription drug prices.

It is a complicated world, but we can't say in response: Well, we are only going to deal with the top one or two.

We can do better, and we must.

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

Mr. Speaker, we were just wanting a hearing on addressing the energy crisis that is facing our country, and we have yet to have that. We have continued to see development of energy on Federal lands put to a halt by this administration, and we are still waiting for when we are going to have that first hearing to address that issue.

While it is unfortunate that 18 big cats and 49 animals escaped and had to be put down by police officers in Zanesville, Ohio, that was in 2011. It is unclear how this bill would have prevented the situation, for the owner committed suicide after letting all of his animals out of their pens.

Actually, if this bill was based on putting the authority under APHIS, where they already have law enforcement and the infrastructure and the structure in place to enforce the regulations, it probably would have had a better chance of stopping this than the language in the current bill does.

No one wants to have people put in danger through escaped big cats, but enacting duplicative Federal authorities under the Lacey Act and a new agency is totally unnecessary. Any new authorities at the Federal level should rest with APHIS.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA), who serves on the Agriculture Committee and can talk about why this bill should have been under APHIS.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Arkansas, the ranking member on the Committee on Natural Resources.

Indeed, I have enjoyed time spent on both of the committees we are talking

about here, Agriculture and Natural Resources. But what we are talking about here today is something already covered by current law.

It already prohibits the import, export, transport, sale, receipt, acquisition, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce of big cats. It allows exceptions for entities that are federally licensed by USDA, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, such as small family-run zoos.

The trade of big cats, and all federally licensed zoological facilities, are regulated under the Animal Welfare Act, as mentioned, which placed USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, known as APHIS, in charge of hiring inspectors and law enforcement officers who are experts at animal welfare issues.

This bill ignores existing regulatory framework and creates an additional regulatory system by adding the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service into the mix.

So, it creates a duplicative regulatory structure and supersedes State law as well. It would mandate all persons or entities that currently possess big cats to register each animal with the Fish and Wildlife Service within 180 days of enactment of this in order to keep their animals.

Some supporters of this bill have admitted it would indeed create a duplicative Federal process at the Fish and Wildlife Service because proponents would rather, as mentioned, work through the Committee on Natural Resources than through the Committee on Agriculture, which is its current jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the calendar. There are somewhere around 40 legislative days left of this session. Getting both committees to have to do this work—obviously, they pushed it through already—but let's take that to an agency level. Now, whether APHIS can do the job, do we want to add Fish and Wildlife to that?

I have issues in my own district in California, where Fish and Wildlife needs to do more work on analyzing what the effects of their mandates are on water in my State and my neighboring State. They are entering into even more responsibility that is unnecessary.

My colleague's amendment would have perfectly dovetailed into what we are talking about here and kept it in the jurisdiction where it needs to be instead of creating more bureaucracy and more effort by already overstretched government agencies that don't have the personnel to cover some of the responsibilities they already have.

Let's look at what we are looking at priority-wise.

Yes, we are supposed to be able to walk and chew gum and do other things around here, but why are we creating double effort from already stretched agencies still sometimes sitting in COVID caves, not getting the job done? Adding more, that is unnecessary.

It would have been very simple to have a clean bill here and, I think, some bipartisan effort, but it has all blown up on us here with having to have a duplicative effort.

I think, unfortunately, what good could have come from H.R. 263 is lost in a set of priorities that are just trying to make it easier to increase the bureaucracy. That is pretty sad because we want to see a good outcome here for these animals and for the people who enjoy them and would like to continue to enjoy them.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, to the comments of my colleague and friend from California, he says that this situation of private possession of big cats is already covered by current law. That is incorrect. They are not regulated under Federal law. The private possession is not regulated, nor is the private utilization and exploitation covered by current law.

He complains that this would set up a duplicative environment. Neither USDA nor the Fish and Wildlife Service is regulating in this area right now.

So, it is a question, if one accepts the premise of which way you go in terms of who is best to regulate it, it is not going to duplicate anything that either of them does, but it will complement more accurately what the Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for, which is, number one, enforcement of the Lacey Act, which this is a natural extension of, in which we focus on the trade and endangered species and the impact of that trade not only on the public safety but on the survival of those species around the world.

□ 1545

Number one, the Fish and Wildlife Service does, in fact, deal with endangered species. In fact, it is our primary agency for doing so. So this is a judgment that the Fish and Wildlife Service is the appropriate agency as opposed to the USDA which has a different direction that it takes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), who is the chair of the full committee.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative CASE for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act. The bill is a long-overdue fix to a public safety and animal welfare problem that has been with us for too long.

I hear from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, my Republican friends, that not only is it duplicative, but it is unnecessary and a waste of time. Unfortunately, my colleagues have undertaken a potted plant strategy in terms of how they do business in the House: just water us, we are just going to sit there, and we are not going to do nothing. They are using legislation like this one to sustain a blame game more political than substantive regarding decisions being made by the

administration or the majority in this House. I understand that. But it is a selective blame game.

We don't talk about the threat to our democracy, we don't talk about the criminalization of a woman's right to make health decisions, and we don't talk about the creeping authoritarianism that we see in our country. We don't talk about those things. I think that if we are going to have a discussion and assess blame, that the discussion is open on all sides.

So there are more big cats in private ownership and in captivity than in the wild. Private ownership of tigers, lions, leopards, and other big cats does absolutely nothing to help these endangered and threatened species recover in the wild.

To make matters worse, it poses a threat to first responders and the public who often don't even know they are in a community until an emergency happens.

State laws banning or regulating big cats vary greatly, and enforcement varies greatly. There is no Federal policy regarding the private possession of big cats, many of which are bred for cub petting and photo opportunities and then sold into private possession once they are too old for photo ops.

Contrary to what we have heard today, the USDA does not have jurisdiction over private ownership of big cats. Instead, the Fish and Wildlife Service is tasked with banning the breeding and possession of big cats under the Lacey Act, which is a natural extension of the work the Fish and Wildlife Service already does to regulate the breeding of ESA-listed species.

So it is germane to our committee, it is where it should be, and the Fish and Wildlife Service is the appropriate agency with both the experiences and the linkages to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend, the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, for making a point that we have made, and that is that there are bigger issues to talk about.

Unfortunately, the issues that my friend mentioned are not under the jurisdiction of the House Natural Resources Committee. But energy production on Federal lands and Federal waters are big issues that are in the jurisdiction of our committee. So is mining all the critical resources, the elements and minerals, that are going to be needed to electrify the economy.

Regarding the big CHIPS bill that was just passed on the floor here, a lot of the ingredients that go into those chips actually come from China. One hundred percent of them come from China. So there are bigger issues that we need to talk about.

Really, this bill shouldn't be taking all of this time, and it wouldn't have taken all of this time if the majority had just worked with us a little bit.

If they had done the commonsense thing and had put the jurisdiction of regulating these cats under APHIS where it belongs, as I said before, we would probably have this bill on the suspension calendar and we would all be talking about what a good piece of legislation it is and how it will benefit the country.

But when we take a simple issue and create a new Federal bureaucracy and give authorities to an agency, that I don't even think wants these authorities much less needs these authorities, is something we have to make an issue of.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE).

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the great leadership of the ranking member from Arkansas. I appreciate his yielding some time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly rise in opposition to the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

Let it be known that I also rise in opposition to the complete lack of decorum demonstrated by the majority in today's vote on the CHIPS bill. This Chamber is supposed to be a deliberative body governed by rules and norms agreed to by all the Members. The majority has made a mockery of those rules and norms today.

The complete disregard for the minority is what they showed today, and that is upsetting and disturbing. It is certainly no way to run the House, Mr. Speaker.

Turning to this legislation at hand, it seems as if the Democrats are prioritizing literally pet projects of a reality TV star instead of considering legislation that would benefit the American people during this time of economic crisis.

Natural Resources Committee Democrats have spent their time marking up legislation like this instead of working on bills that would lower the cost of gas for millions of Americans.

As the ranking member has referenced several times, our constituents sent us here to represent them and to work together to solve the issues that they are facing and that our Nation is facing. Right now, they are facing things like the cost of gasoline and energy production, and we are doing nothing about that in the Natural Resources Committee.

Legislation like this does not reflect the interests or the concerns of the American people.

We have Americans literally suffering right now economically, and we are debating big cats? Really?

Of all the things that are important, we are in here talking about big cats.

We have an administration right now gaslighting the American people by trying to change the definition of a recession which we are experiencing.

It is time for us to work on legislation that actually helps the American people.

Because of the actions of President Biden and the Democrats, Americans are suffering from the worst inflation

in over four decades and are now facing the beginning of a recession. It is time for Congress to work on critical legislation and stop wasteful and untimely bills like this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act. Mr. Speaker, you have got to be kidding me. This is ridiculous.

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

Mr. Speaker, in response to my friend and colleague from Georgia, I simply want to read a list of some of the endorers of this particular legislation.

These are all members of law enforcement: The National Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Sheriffs' Association of Texas, the Maine Sheriffs' Association, the West Virginia Sheriffs' Association, the Arkansas Sheriffs' Association, the Kansas Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association of Ohio, the Vermont Sheriffs' Association, and the Iowa State Sheriffs' Association.

I have gotten to four lines of a whole bunch of other endorsements from law enforcement.

Clearly, they regard this as one of the areas that we should address for this country out of the many challenges that we face. So I do think it is appropriate that we devote just a little bit of time to what is concerning them.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 263, the Big Cat Public Safety Act, as a proud cosponsor of this legislation for many years.

Big cats such as lions, tigers, panthers, and others deserve to live in the wild or in a safe and secure refuge like Big Cat Rescue back home in Tampa.

But too often these beautiful creatures are privately owned and exploited for profit in the exotic pet trade where they are owned by unfit individuals and kept in awful conditions. That is why we must pass the Big Cat Public Safety Act. It would be a catastrophe if we did not pass it.

Big cats are wild animals. They do not belong in backyards and garages and should not be in regular contact with people unsuited to take care of them. It is dangerous as well. We have seen numerous law enforcement and emergency calls due to the irresponsible private ownership of big cats fueled by those who are making money off of their suffering.

So I am proud to have advocated for this legislation with many of the cool cats and kittens, volunteers, and supporters of Big Cat Rescue in Tampa.

I thank Representative QUIGLEY and the Natural Resources Committee Chair GRIJALVA for moving to protect big cats from exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same with a big "yes" vote on the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

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

Mr. Speaker, I find this a bit amusing that the proponents of this bill are rolling out all the law enforcement agencies that are supportive of the bill.

And why wouldn't they be?

Why would they care which Federal agency deals with it?

They just don't want to have to deal with the problem themselves. So, sure, they support this bill because it addresses a problem that they are having to deal with now. But I doubt they have looked past the point that it is creating a new Federal agency that doesn't affect their budgets, it is creating a new Federal agency that makes things duplicative, it doesn't affect their operations, and I am quite certain, had we put the amendment in to put this under APHIS, we would still have all those law enforcement agencies supporting this bill. So, Mr. Speaker, you have to take that for what it is worth.

H.R. 263 is a template that is already being used to regulate other animals. This is the weaponization of the Lacey Act. USDA does have jurisdiction over privately owned cats. The USDA-licensed facilities are not government-owned. So every time the logic trail that you go down about why should this regulation be under U.S. Fish and Wildlife or under the Department of the Interior, it comes back to there is no logic. It is just that somebody had an agenda to put it under an agency that is not equipped right now and doesn't have the personnel right now to enforce it.

So it is creating a new authorization that, I believe, is going to have happen to it what happens to many well-intended laws. They get weaponized to go after something that they originally weren't set up to go after.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. FULCHER).

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources from the State of Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, here we are, yet again, discussing the most important issue of our day: cats. Not just any cats, but big cats.

My constituents have been hammering my office about this issue. Thankfully, my Democrat colleagues have been listening.

Of course, I jest.

I shouldn't be allowing this issue to be taking my time, and neither should you, Mr. Speaker.

My constituents are not talking about big cats. There are some misplaced priorities here. They are talking about skyrocketing food and energy prices and the never-ending deficit spending from this Democratic Congress. That is what is going on in my district.

Here is another big concern for Idaho and across the West: wildfire.

Mr. Speaker, 5.6 million acres—that is million with an M—have burned just

this year to date. For those of you who don't live in the West or are not familiar with it, wildfire is what you get when you choke off access to your forests and regulate away the ability to properly manage your land. That is what the current leadership is doing. Yet, here we are talking about big cats.

Do I dare mention the southern border crisis?

There were 207,416 apprehensions last month alone with who knows how many got-aways, how much sex trafficking, or how much illegal narcotics. But don't worry. Congress is working on big cats.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a lot of things on the agenda here for the last few months, and there are many things that are burning in the minds of our constituents and the people whom we serve.

The people whom we serve deserve better. The people whom we serve are not talking about the things that we are. But yet here we are working through things that simply do not matter in the scheme of everything else going on right now.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, to the ranking member's comments, this is an informed judgment about which of two existing Federal agencies is more appropriate to manage and administer what, I believe, if I hear the ranking member correctly, is our common goal, our common goal of ending the status quo as to the private possession and exploitation of big cats.

□ 1600

So this is a judgment that we disagree on. I have articulated our reasons why Fish and Wildlife is the better one. He has his view of USDA. It is a policy call for us to make. But we are not disagreeing with the overall goal, I don't believe.

His amendment, by the way, not only—his proposed amendment not only proposed to put it in USDA, but also to essentially preempt the preemption of Federal law. So, in other words, there is a jumble of State laws out there, ranging from good, solid State laws, to no State laws; and that creates a real complicated and very confusing puzzle for all kinds of people, again, including law enforcement.

So you cannot apply a Federal standard across the country with one sentence, and then, in the next sentence say, oh, by the way, any State can do anything it wants. That doesn't make any sense at all.

So either we go in with the Federal standard, or we don't go there at all. Our judgment under this law is that we need to go there with a Federal standard.

As to my colleague's comments on priorities, I would, again, refer to my earlier comments. Those are critical priorities that we are all trying to address.

Certainly, I haven't checked the roll call vote on the bill that we just passed, CHIPS, but I hope, if they are

truly interested and focused on inflation, on energy, on self-sufficiency in our country, then I would hope that I saw a "yes" vote for them on one of the most major pieces of legislation that we will be passing and the President will be signing shortly to end our supply chain reliance on places like China.

My colleague also knows that we have coming up a major wildfire bill to address that challenge that we all agree is a critical challenge for our country, and I certainly hope that he will view that bill favorably as well, if, in fact, we all have that shared goal.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ).

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, today we are considering the Big Cat Public Safety Act. I have some concerns.

First, this is not what most Americans are concerned about right now. People outside of the Beltway are worried about the cost of living. Food prices are way up. Gas prices are nearly double what they were last year. Crime is skyrocketing. Drought and wildfire are ravaging my State of Oregon, and the Biden administration denies responsibility; and, worse, has no plan.

Americans aren't fooled. They know that the priority number one should be lowering the cost of living.

Second, I have concerns about the Big Cat bill itself. This is a State issue, not a Federal issue. Most States already have restrictions on keeping big cats as pets, if not outright bans. In fact, 38 States have already addressed the issue.

For example, my home State of Oregon has already banned private possession of big cats. Other States can legislate on this issue as they see fit. It is not appropriate for Congress to intervene, and this would certainly be an improper expansion of the Lacey Act.

We should, instead, focus upon the most important issues facing our Nation: inflation, the price of fuel, wildfire, and drought.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I just want to point out that it has been argued that we have got a hodgepodge of laws across the State, or across the country, and that is what makes America great is that we can have different laws that are tailored to different regions of the country.

But there are two Federal laws regulating exotic animals, and they are already on the books. The Captive Wildlife Society Act governs interstate commerce of big cats, and the Animal Welfare Act governs big cat enterprises.

H.R. 263 would overlay existing exotic animal laws, further complicating

Federal law and explicitly superseding State laws. If a new Federal law is necessary—I will say it again—the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, within USDA, has the expertise and knowledge to carry out these responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, this is a simple issue. It is an issue that we shouldn't even be having to debate like this. It should be on suspension; but it just shows you how there has been an unwillingness to work on commonsense solutions to a simple problem.

It took up 2 days of committee debate when we could have been talking about energy; when we could have been talking about high inflation prices; when we could have been talking about a water crisis in the West, the drought.

Mr. Speaker, there are 600,000 acres of land laying fallow in California this summer because they don't have water. That has not even come up for one debate in our Natural Resources Committee.

The gentleman talked about the crisis at the southern border. Forty percent of the southern border is public lands, which falls under the jurisdiction of our committee. We have not had a single discussion about it.

We spent 2 days talking about big cats. We are spending valuable floor time before we split for the August break debating big cats. And we are debating an issue that could have been resolved simply.

I hope that going forward, I hope we can work on these issues in a way that is better for the country; that is not trying to create some new bureaucracy that can be used to achieve other goals. And I hope that my colleagues will vote against H.R. 263.

If it somehow gets out of the House, I hope the Senate will not pass it and maybe, in the next Congress, we can come back with commonsense legislation that addresses this issue; puts the jurisdictions under the right authorities; and we can, once and for all, move on from big cats, and we can start talking about real issues that matter to our constituents and to the hard-working taxpayers across the country.

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

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

First of all, I do want to thank my colleague, the ranking member of the full committee. He is a very good ranking member and a very good person to work with on many challenges on our Natural Resources Committee.

I appreciate his comments at the outset of this debate which, I believe, reflected an agreement as to the problem and as to the goal. We may be sitting here debating some of the implementation, but in this Congress, if we can

agree on the problem and the goal, that is a step forward, and I appreciate at least that we have that common agreement.

Yes, we do have disagreements in terms of the exact way to approach this; specifically, which Federal agency should actually have the con on this. We have outlined our arguments here and elsewhere, and we have a disagreement, and that is part of the democratic process. We believe we have the better view of that, given the Fish and Wildlife Service's focus.

I do want to take issue with his comment that it took 2 days to debate this bill in the Natural Resources Committee. Actually, the debate having to do with this particular issue in the Natural Resources Committee was far less than 2 days. In fact, I didn't add it up. It probably amounted to 2 hours of those 2 days. The rest of it was really debating other issues in the context of this bill.

So this is not a particularly complicated problem to grasp from the law enforcement, from public safety, from an animal welfare perspective, and it is not a particularly difficult problem to identify very concise options and to make a decision on those. Those things were vetted in the Natural Resources Committee and are being vetted on the floor here. But to say that this took 2 days, in all due respect, is not accurate.

I do want to comment briefly on the comment having to do with State laws are already handling this. Yes, of course, this is always an issue that we have in determining whether, in the context of our work here, we should have the Federal Government apply standards or leave it to the States.

In this particular case, we have the worst of all worlds. We have differing State laws in terms of the private ownership and exploitation of big cats; and we also have both Federal and State laws that both preempt and leave it to the States.

But I would submit that the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, which is where we started on this almost 20 years ago, a Federal law that said that we were going to, as a country, state that you can no longer import these big cats from their homes; thus, decimating their populations where they came from, and encouraging a trade that has led them to the brink of extinction in most cases. We said that that is a Federal matter, and that is what we are trying to follow.

This is only an extension of that particular act. So I think it is a particularly worthwhile area for us to develop Federal standards and end a lot of doubt among the States and among the Federal Government and the States collectively and get on with the goal of protecting our people, protecting our animals, and protecting our law enforcement.

I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The Chair understands that the amendment printed in part A of House Report 117-444 will not be offered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1057. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1842. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 7776. An act to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3742. An act to establish a pilot grant program to improve recycling accessibility, and for other purposes.

S. 3743. An act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out certain activities to improve recycling and composting programs in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 4359. An act to designate the regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs in metropolitan Atlanta as the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office", and for other purposes.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

#### SAFEGUARDING TREATMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF ECOSYSTEMS FROM ABANDONED MINES ACT

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7283) to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make certain activities eligible for grants from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7283

*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 "Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines Act" or the "STREAM Act".*

#### SEC. 2. ACTIVITIES THAT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANTS FROM THE ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION FUND.

*Section 40701(c) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (30 U.S.C. 1231a(c)) is amended—*

*(1) by striking "Grants under" and inserting the following:*

*"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), grants under"; and*

*(2) by adding at the end the following:*

*"(2) ACID MINE DRAINAGE ABATEMENT AND TREATMENT.—*

*"(A) IN GENERAL.—Not more than 30 percent of the total amount of a grant made annually under subsection (b)(1) may be retained by the recipient of the grant, if those amounts are deposited into an acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund established under State law, from which amounts (together with all interest earned on the amounts) are expended by the State for the abatement of the causes and the treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage resulting from coal mining practices, including for the costs of building, operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating acid mine drainage treatment systems.*

*"(B) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each recipient of a grant under subsection (b)(1) that deposits grant amounts into an acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund under subparagraph (A) shall—*

*"(i) offer amendments to the inventory maintained under section 403(c) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1233(c)) to reflect the use of the amounts for acid mine drainage abatement and treatment; and*

*"(ii) include in the annual grant report of the recipient information on the status and balance of amounts in the acid mine drainage abatement and treatment fund.*

*"(C) TERM.—Amounts retained under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to—*

*"(i) subsection (d)(4)(B); or*

*"(ii) any other limitation on the length of the term of an annual grant under subsection (b)(1)."*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in