

been overstating their treatments by over 20 percent.

Accurate reporting is necessary to broadly track the progress made on our larger wildfire mitigation targets, as well as individual projects.

The ACRES Act is a simple solution to hold our Federal agencies accountable to see the actual work they are doing to reduce the enormous risk of wildfire.

American taxpayers deserve to know they are getting what they paid for. This bill is one of the steps needed to help ensure that happens.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.”

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

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to ensure that our forests are being managed properly. The ACRES Act is one small step in the right direction. It is a commonsense solution to a problem that really shouldn't even exist in the first place.

Again, I thank the ranking member in the minority for supporting this bill. The idea that we are actually moving toward more forest management is encouraging to me.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss H.R. 1567, which will require the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to submit accurate reports regarding hazardous fuels reduction activity.

Hazardous fuels reduction activity is an important effort to curb wildfires.

Some sources state that wildfires cost the United States upwards of \$3 billion in damage from 2022 to 2023 and have destroyed 616,486 acres across the United States since January of this year.

In the State of Texas alone, three quarters of the state have been issued a wildfire declaration.

In the city of Houston, wildfires have damaged the air quality and burned through several homes, negatively affecting many civilians' lives.

Due to both the environmental and economic havoc that wildfires present, it is important that we have accurate reporting to best prepare for these disasters.

This bill is important because it monitors the risk elimination solutions for wildfires in an accurate and dependable manner while also allowing oversight of the USDA and the Interior.

This bill is a first step to accurately determine effective methods to reduce the risk of wildfire and because of this I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend

the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1567, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes 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 motion will be postponed.

TREATING TRIBES AND COUNTIES AS GOOD NEIGHBORS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1450) to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to modify the treatment of revenue from timber sale contracts and certain payments made by counties to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior under good neighbor agreements, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1450

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 “Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF THE TREATMENT OF CERTAIN REVENUE AND PAYMENTS UNDER GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS.

(a) GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY.—Section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(6), by striking “or Indian tribe”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(C)—

(i) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Funds received from the sale of timber by a Governor, an Indian tribe, or a county under a good neighbor agreement shall be retained and used by the Governor, Indian tribe, or county, as applicable—

“(I) to carry out authorized restoration services under the good neighbor agreement; and

“(II) if there are funds remaining after carrying out subclause (I), to carry out authorized restoration services under other good neighbor agreements.”; and

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking “2023” and inserting “2028”;

(C) in paragraph (3), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act apply to any project initiated pursuant to a good neighbor agreement (as defined in section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)))—

(1) before the date of enactment of this Act, if the project was initiated after the date of enactment of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334; 132 Stat. 4490); or

(2) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1450, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support Congressman FULCHER's bill, the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act.

This legislation would greatly enhance the collaborative stewardship of our Federal lands with Tribal and county partners. This is a bipartisan effort that passed out of the House Natural Resources and Agriculture Committees unanimously, and it is my hope that we can pass this thoughtful proposal in a similar fashion here on the House floor today.

The Federal Government owns roughly 640 million acres, an astonishing 28 percent of the entire country. States, Tribes, and counties all have a very clear interest in how these lands are managed.

When Federal lands are mismanaged, it is those closest to the lands that are most impacted. There is no clearer example of this reality than the forest health and wildfire crisis affecting vast swaths of Federal lands. Fire knows no boundaries between managed land and unmanaged lands. It knows no jurisdictional boundaries.

As Federal land managers struggle to address this worsening problem, Congress developed the Good Neighbor Authority to empower States to assist in active forest management efforts on Federal lands.

Under the Good Neighbor Authority, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management had the ability to authorize States to undertake restoration projects such as hazardous fuel reduction, habitat improvement, and road restoration on Federal lands within their borders.

By all accounts, this program for States has been very successful. Since 2014, over 490 projects have begun in 38 States. Just last year, approximately 274 million board feet of timber was sold under Good Neighbor agreements.

The 2018 farm bill extended Good Neighbor Authority to counties and Tribes in the hopes that even more active forest management could be accomplished. Unfortunately, the participation of counties and Tribes has been limited.

Current law does not give Tribes and counties the same authority that States have benefited from to retain timber receipts for use on additional restoration work. This reality removes a substantial incentive for counties and Tribes to pursue Good Neighbor projects, and the numbers have shown this to be true. There are currently only six counties and five Tribes that have entered into Good Neighbor agreements.

H.R. 1450 offers a solution to this dilemma by extending the authority to retain timber receipts from Good Neighbor projects to counties and Tribes to fund additional restoration projects, bringing them into parity with the treatment that States currently receive.

In addition to providing important parity, this bill will also improve cross-boundary work by allowing restoration projects to occur on non-Federal lands. As I mentioned earlier, wildfires know no boundaries.

Good Neighbor Authority has unquestionably been a successful program that has not yet reached its full potential. I believe that Congressman FULCHER's bill will improve this program and pave the way for Tribes and counties to partner on much-needed forest management efforts. Fully empowering counties and Tribes to utilize this authority will reduce wildfire risks and improve the health of our Federal lands for generations to come. I applaud Congressman FULCHER for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

H.R. 1450 is the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act introduced by my colleague from Idaho, Representative FULCHER.

This bill updates the Good Neighbor Authority program to update the incentives for Tribes and counties to partner with the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management on restoration projects designed to enhance resilience and promote healthy landscapes.

As climate change intensifies, it is crucial that land managers utilize collaborative, consensus-driven tools such as Good Neighbor Authority to facilitate conservation, restoration, and resiliency of Federal lands and neighboring lands.

However, under current law, only States are authorized to retain revenues from timber sales and contracts executed through this program.

This legislation provides parity for Tribes and counties to increase community participation in the restoration of our public lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. FULCHER), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, for years, States could enter into cooperative agreements with Federal land management agencies to aid in reducing the excess fuel load that makes fires in the West so damaging to people, property, and wildlife.

H.R. 1450 fully extends the same authority and access to revenue that States have to counties and Tribes.

Some States, primarily in the Western U.S., have large percentages of their land controlled by the Federal Government. In my home State of Idaho, for example, it is 62 percent. As a result, citizens in my State must generate enough economic growth to sustain our needs from just the resources contained within the available land remaining.

One can argue that Idahoans and citizens from other States with a similar dynamic are merely tenants of their Federal landlord.

□ 1700

Counties and Tribes face a microcosm of that challenge within the States they reside. There are counties in my district, like Idaho around Owyhee, for example, where the Federal Government controls more than 83 percent of the land within their borders. Without ready access to the natural resources and related tax revenue in these areas, it is difficult for residents and local municipalities to create wealth and provide the ingredients necessary to raise families and grow businesses.

This bill would enable access to resources. As a result, the livelihoods of people in rural America would be enhanced through job creation, new sources of income, and the economic activity that comes with it.

Federal land management agencies are often unable, due to lack of resources, or unwilling, due to bad policy or litigation, to adequately maintain the density of tree growth, brush, and other vegetation that creates the fuel load for wildfires. Yet local residents, as tenants of the land under their own feet, can only wait and hope for their Federal landlord to come up with the resources needed to responsibly manage land in and around their communities. H.R. 1450 empowers local counties and Tribes so they can engage, and at least have a chance to put some wisdom into how these lands are managed.

We, in the West, care about our environment. God has blessed us with an abundance of natural resources, and that comes with the responsibility of wise stewardship. H.R. 1450 recognizes and incentivizes just that, allowing a portion of receipts from timber sales, for example, to be shared with counties and Tribes. That is a win-win situation. Tribes and counties are local, and as such, they are on the front lines of the land management battle.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, my co-lead, Representative MARIE GLUSENKAMP PEREZ, and all of my other colleagues on the Natural Re-

sources Committee and the Agriculture Committee for their support of this legislation.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. PEREZ), the sponsor of the legislation.

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member GRIJALVA for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1450, the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act.

This bill is critical for districts like mine. Why? This bill gives back the flexibility that is critical to counties and Tribes, who understand that wildfires and natural disasters do not discriminate between Federal and non-Federal lands, and ensures that we use all of the tools at our disposal to mitigate the effects of wildfire and maintain healthy forests.

In the 2018 farm bill, Congress expanded Good Neighbor Authority to make Tribes and counties eligible to enter into Good Neighbor agreements. However, Tribes and counties were not afforded the same authority as States to retain the receipts from these GNA project revenues to reinvest in conservation. This fundamentally reduced the ability to engage and partner on critical management projects like wildfire mitigation, invasive species management, and habitat maintenance.

Additionally, the 2018 farm bill removed the ability to carry out restoration services that were agreed to under the Good Neighbor Agreements to take place off of Federal lands. You can literally get out in the woods, and you can see the boundaries and political boundaries between the treated land and untreated land that has resulted.

As a result, adjacent Tribal and county land that is essential to the health of national forests can no longer be restored as comprehensive landscapes.

Rural, timber-based Skamania County, my home county, is leading innovation with Good Neighbor Authority by hiring foresters with these funds to advance timber harvests for forest health, fire management, and invasive species management, all mounting issues in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest that have not been addressed for decades.

Skamania County was the first to build a relationship with the State Department of Natural Resources to determine how this Good Neighbor Authority could help the forest health conditions of the national forests, which make up 80 percent of Skamania County.

This partnership between the Forest Service, the State agency, and Skamania County has been hugely successful. The additional flexibility provided by this bill is a commonsense fix to a program that has been proven to be highly successful.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I thank Congressman FULCHER for his leadership

on this bill. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and Ranking Member GRIJALVA, as well as Chairman THOMPSON and Ranking Member SCOTT, for their support of this critical legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1450, the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Representative FULCHER of Idaho.

St. Louis County, Minnesota, is the largest county east of the Mississippi River and the place I have always called home.

St. Louis County is a checkerboard of Federal and non-Federal land. As such, there are many actors managing the land, be it the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service that manage our Federal lands, or the States, the counties, and the local Tribes that manage our non-Federal lands.

Since its introduction over two decades ago, the Good Neighbor Authority program has facilitated co-stewardship of our Federal and non-Federal lands. By partnering Federal land managers with State stakeholders, we have created healthier forests, lowered fire risks, and better conserved our landscapes.

However, the most successful stewardship of our public lands occurs when all parties are brought together and everyone is able to do their part.

Unfortunately, our counties and Tribal partners, who do a lion's share of the work on Federal lands, are still unable to access the Good Neighbor Authority program.

H.R. 1450 will allow our counties and federally recognized Tribes to access this critical management tool and allow them the ability to reinvest in restoration projects. This will build on the success of the program and further benefit our conservation efforts across this Nation.

This bipartisan bill passed both the Natural Resources Committee and the Agriculture Committee with broad support. I am hopeful that the House can continue this forward momentum today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON), the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague and fellow chair for his leadership on the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1450.

The Good Neighbor Authority has been a vital tool to get forest management and restoration projects off the ground. This program helps the Forest

Service address the wildfire and forest health crises and serves as a model for highly effective partnerships.

While the 2018 farm bill expanded the Good Neighbor Authority program eligibility to counties and Tribes, the law did not authorize counties and Tribes to retain timber revenues from the Good Neighbor Authority agreement, as States do.

In extending this authority to counties and Tribes, this bill will expand this important forest management tool to help reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health at a meaningful scale.

I am proud to report that H.R. 1450 passed unanimously out of the Committee on Agriculture and followed suit with the unanimous vote in the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear this legislation represents a commonsense fix to a valuable forest management program. I urge my colleagues to support the Treating Tribes and Counties as Good Neighbors Act and vote "yes" on passage.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I must say it is an honor to work with a colleague like Chairman THOMPSON who cares so much about forest health, and I appreciate the ranking member in the minority for supporting this bill as well, as it did pass unanimously out of both committees.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. It creates parity and access for two significant constituencies, counties and Tribes, and creates parity for them. I think at the end of the day, it creates a collaborative effort that is more comprehensive and more extensive.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the magnitude of our forest health crises demands an all-hands-on-deck approach that utilizes all of the tools in the toolbox.

The Good Neighbor Authority has proven to be an exceptional tool when used by the States. We need to improve and expand on that with H.R. 1450 by including Tribes and counties.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLINE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1450, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further pro-

ceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EMERGENCY WILDFIRE FIGHTING TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3389) to require the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an evaluation with respect to the use of the container aerial firefighting system (CAFFS), and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3389

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees" means—

(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3389, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support Congressman VALADAO's bill, the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2023.