

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.

This legislation, rightly named, has the potential to provide another tool in the toolbox for addressing the catastrophic wildfire crisis. Americans have tragically grown accustomed to increasingly severe wildfire years that are lasting longer and producing more destruction than ever before. This summer, devastating wildfires impacted the community of Lahaina on the island of Maui, devastation I saw firsthand along with several of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Unfortunately, the reality is that decades of inadequate forest management have created an unprecedented forest health crisis. Across the U.S., there are now 1 billion acres of at-risk land for wildfire. In the absence of dramatic change, the future outlook remains bleak.

When it comes to fighting these out-of-control infernos, we simply don't have the luxury of ignoring potential new technologies that could improve the cost efficiency or effectiveness of suppressing fires.

It is critical that wildland firefighting agencies have all tools and methods available to them to fight fires and protect lives and property. Aircraft and helicopters provide life-saving support to ground crews, often by delivering water or fire retardant. In order to drop water or fire retardant from a plane or helicopter, the aircraft must be designed or retrofitted for such purposes, limiting the number of aircraft that are available.

Mr. VALADAO has worked with various stakeholders who have developed and improved a container aerial firefighting system to drop water and fire retardant from aircraft via disposable containers. This technology could decrease the response time to wildfires by increasing the number of aircraft available, thus saving more lives and more structures. This technology is not new. However, the system has not been recently studied by the wildland firefighting agencies.

H.R. 3389 would require the U.S. Forest Service and Department of the Interior to conduct an evaluation on the use of container aerial firefighting systems in response to wildfires. The evaluation will focus on effectiveness, cost, ease of delivery, and safety.

Directing our wildfire fighting agencies to study new and emerging technology is a win for the wildland firefighting crews and a win for those who live in fire-prone areas.

I applaud Congressman VALADAO for his leadership on this important topic. He is a leader on bipartisan solutions that meaningfully improve forest health and reduce wildfires.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2023.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R.

3389, the "Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2023". Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should it become necessary and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3389 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,
GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 6, 2023.

Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 3389, the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act of 2023, which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 13, 2023.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo action on the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 3389 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3389, the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act, was introduced by my colleague, Representative VALADAO of California.

The bill requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, in coordination with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and Interagency Airtanker Board, to complete an evaluation of the container aerial fighting system to support wildland fire mitigation and suppression.

In 2011, the Forest Service conducted a study and determined that this particular delivery system did not meet existing standards and posed safety risks to our communities and forests.

However, there have been technological advancements in the decades since the initial report, and this bill aims to kick-start research that could promote the use of under-utilized technology.

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The climate crisis is clearly increasing the severity and the duration of the wildfire season, so it is imperative that we continuously research and re-evaluate any emerging technology.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority for their willingness to work with us on amending the bill at markup. The updated text that we are considering today ensures that the Forest Service retains the decisionmaking authority with respect to the use of this particular tool.

This is an important safeguard for the safety of wildland firefighters and the communities impacted by the wildfire crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support my bill that will help combat severe wildfires and save lives. My home State of California has become all too familiar with devastating wildfires.

In 2022, just over 20,000 wildfires burned approximately 5.8 million acres across the Western United States. These numbers represent people's homes, businesses, and livelihoods that have been destroyed or tragically lost.

In my district, we deal with prolonged exposure to wildfire smoke, which settles in the central valley and results in some of the Nation's worst air quality.

As these wildfires become more aggressive, we need to take concrete steps to combat wildfires, while also focusing on improving the long-term management of our forests.

The bill we are considering today will help deploy new technologies to combat widespread damage these fires cause to our communities, our health, and our environment.

The Wildfire Fighting Technology Act would dramatically increase the number of airlift assets available in wildfire emergencies. We should be using every tool available to fight these fires.

Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems, or CAFFS, are airdrop-capable disposable containers for water or fire retardant, which can be dropped from much higher altitudes with less visibility.

Current aerial firefighting operations depend on single-mission aircraft, but CAFFS can be used by any standard cargo plane. The use of CAFFS provides more coverage for firefighters on the ground and allows teams to quickly respond to prevent smaller fires from becoming uncontrollable.

These systems are being used in other countries, but not here in the U.S. We have the technology that we can and should use to stop the devastation of these fires.

The dangers and long-term impacts of wildfires are clear.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support the passage of the Emergency Wildfire Fighting Technology Act to combat and contain these fires in a quicker and more efficient way.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I again thank Mr. VALADAO for bringing this important piece of legislation. I thank the ranking member and the minority for their support on this bill.

Again, we must provide all necessary tools for the wildland firefighting agencies so that they can combat this wildfire crisis.

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

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. 3324, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY TO COLLECT SHASTA-TRINITY MARINA FEES THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2029

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3324) to extend the authority to collect Shasta-Trinity Marina fees through fiscal year 2029.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3324

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

SECTION 1. SHASTA-TRINITY MARINA FEES.

Section 422 of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110-161; 121 Stat 2149) as amended, is further amended by striking “and each subsequent fiscal year through fiscal year 2019” and inserting “and each subsequent fiscal year through fiscal year 2029”.

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 to include extraneous material on H.R. 3324, 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 rise in support of H.R. 3324. This is a good bipartisan effort being led by Representatives HUFFMAN and LAMALFA and will help to improve recreation opportunities to their constituents in northern California.

This bill extends the authority of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest to collect and retain existing marina fees for the purpose of enhancing recreation opportunities and improving access at the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area, which is located within Congressmen LAMALFA and HUFFMAN's districts.

The Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area encompasses large reservoirs and abundant mountain terrain. This area is very popular with hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists.

The authority to collect and retain marina fees expired in 2019 but has been temporarily extended through appropriations legislation. The marina fees retained by the Forest Service are spent on recreation enhancement projects such as boat ramp improvements, lake cleanup efforts, maintaining recreational facilities, and improving access for visitors with disabilities. The Forest Service also provides educational programs with these funds.

This bill would not increase or otherwise affect the price of the current marina fees. H.R. 3324 simply continues a current authority that has yielded positive results for families who enjoy visiting this idyllic destination. I commend Representatives HUFFMAN and LAMALFA for their collaborative work on this effort.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3324, introduced by my friend from California, Representative HUFFMAN, would extend the Forest Service's existing authority to collect and retain marina fees in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

The chairman has outlined the content of the legislation, and I won't repeat that again. It is a good bill and it is essential to the operation and the management of the recreation area. It is a critical tool that needs to be extended.

The continuation of this authority has been an ongoing priority for the Forest Service and the surrounding communities. I thank and congratulate Mr. HUFFMAN for his leadership on the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding time, and I thank the chairman and the ranking member for supporting this bill.

I appreciate the chance to just take a moment to talk a little more about the importance of this bill to my district.

The Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area is in northern California, part of it in my district and part of it in Mr. LAMALFA's district. It spans 246,000 acres and includes the Shasta, Trinity, Lewiston, and Whiskeytown lakes.

It is a recreation paradise. Every year, more than 3½ million people visit this area for all manner of outdoor activities, such as fishing, camping, horseback riding, swimming, paddling, backpacking, and more.

The area is a fundamental part of our regions' identity and our economy. It is one of our most popular tourist attractions, and it is obviously a very vital economic driver.

The U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service manage the Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area and support a large variety of these recreation opportunities and improvement projects, such as boat ramp upgrades, public service announcements about boating and water safety, enhancing accessibility to the lakes for those with disabilities, floating restrooms, and interpretive and educational programs.

The marina fees that they use to complete this work also support fire prevention patrols and fund 15 permanent staff members and 9 seasonal employees who make it possible for everyone to enjoy the recreation area.

It is clear how important these fees are to the continued operation of this regional treasure. My bipartisan bill on the floor today will extend the Department of Agriculture's ability to collect and hold these marina fees through the year 2029, allowing them to continue enhancing recreation and improving access.

This fee retention authority was initially granted back in 2008, and we have been fortunate enough to extend it through annual appropriations. That is pretty tenuous funding, and it is not a good basis on which to plan and implement important, longer-term projects.

The authority we are providing in this bill will provide that long-term stability. It will go a long way toward ensuring certainty and consistent funding for future projects.

Most of Trinity County is made up of Federally owned public lands, and its local economy is heavily reliant on the success of this national recreation area. It is essential that we extend this authority to collect marina fees and carry out the significant services that they support.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, especially Mr. LAMALFA, who has partnered with me on this legislation several years in a row now. I am grateful to colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working with us to support outdoor recreation in northern California.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the bill.