

Reversing this action to, once again, permit the use of a beach's natural, historic borrow site is imperative for physical resiliency and safety, as well as the local economic benefits that accrue. Further, it will save taxpayer dollars and protect the ecology of these areas that has developed over all these years.

Mr. Speaker, simply put, the bill before us today resolves this issue for good by putting the original decades-old clarification into law. It allows for the use of historical borrow sites within a CBRA zone provided such site has been utilized for the past 15 years in response to an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of this legislation. I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their work with me to produce this bipartisan project that solves a real problem for many in these particular communities.

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

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, America is blessed with pristine coastlines that are both vital ecosystems and vital economic engines. CBRA is an important safeguard that helps us as a Nation balance these two important factors. H.R. 524 furthers this ideal by ensuring that local communities who rely on beach renourishment projects to protect their citizens and their beaches can responsibly continue to do so.

I thank Congressman ROUZER, once again, for his leadership on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support 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 Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 524, 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.

SEA TURTLE RESCUE ASSISTANCE AND REHABILITATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2560) to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2560

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 "Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. SEA TURTLE RESCUE ASSISTANCE AND REHABILITATION GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish a grant program, to be known as the "Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Grant Program", to encourage and facilitate coordinated rapid response and rescue by awarding grants for the purposes described in subsection (c).

(b) **DESIGNATION OF STRANDING AND REHABILITATION REGIONS.**—The Secretary shall designate geographic regions of the United States as stranding and rehabilitation regions for the purposes of carrying out this section.

(c) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of the Program are to provide for—

(1) the recovery, short- or long-term care, transportation, and treatment of stranded marine turtles;

(2) the release of rescued and recovered marine turtles;

(3) the collection of data and samples from stranded marine turtles for scientific research related to marine turtle health; and

(4) facility operation costs that are directly related to activities described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).

(d) **EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.**—The Secretary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that funds awarded under this section are distributed equitably among stranding and rehabilitation regions, taking into account—

(1) the number of stranding and rehabilitation events that occurred in each stranding and rehabilitation region in the preceding 5 years; and

(2) the conservation priorities and recovery needs of species of marine turtles that are threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

(e) **APPLICATION.**—An applicant for a grant under this section shall submit an application in such form and manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.

(f) **GRANT CRITERIA.**—

(1) **DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA.**—The Secretary shall, in consultation with the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, establish by regulation appropriate criteria for awarding grants under this section.

(2) **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.**—As part of the process for developing and finalizing criteria under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, in consultation with the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, provide opportunities for engagement with representatives from stranding and rehabilitation regions and representatives of State governments and public and private organizations with an established record in coordination, rescue, rehabilitation, and release, as well as related scientific research, marine conservation, and forensic science, with respect to stranded marine turtles.

(3) **REQUIRED CRITERIA.**—The criteria developed under paragraph (1) shall prioritize applicants with an established record of coordination, rescuing, rehabilitation, scientific research, and forensic science with respect to stranded and rehabilitated marine turtles or conducting scientific research and forensic science on stranded and rehabilitated marine turtles.

(g) **LIMITATIONS.**—

(1) **MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.**—No grant awarded under this section may exceed \$150,000 in any 12-month period.

(2) **MATCHING REQUIREMENT.**—The non-Federal share of the costs of an activity conducted with a grant awarded under the Program shall be not less than 50 percent of such costs, including in-kind services and the use of property.

(h) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **MARINE TURTLE.**—The term "marine turtle" means any member of the family Cheloniidae or Dermochelyidae.

(2) **PROGRAM.**—The term "Program" means the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Grant Program established under subsection (a).

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Commerce.

(4) **STRANDING.**—The term "stranding" means an event in which—

(A) a marine turtle is dead and is—

(i) on a beach or shore of the United States; or

(ii) in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States (including any navigable waters); or

(B) a marine turtle is alive and is—

(i) on a beach or shore of the United States and unable to return to the water;

(ii) on a beach or shore of the United States and in need of medical attention; or

(iii) in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States (including any navigable waters), and in need of medical attention or other necessary intervention to aid its likelihood of survival.

(5) **STRANDING AND REHABILITATION REGION.**—The term "stranding and rehabilitation region" means a geographic region designated by the Secretary under subsection (b).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2560, as amended, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Representative KEATING's bill would establish a Federal grant program for the recovery, care, and treatment of stranded sea turtles in the United States.

All six turtle species found in U.S. waters are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. According to the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network, their partners cared for more than 2,000 sea turtles over the last 2 years. H.R. 2560 will build on the network of these organizations and further support sea turtles.

At our full committee markup of this bill last October, an amendment in the nature of a substitute was offered by Representative LUNA of Florida to incorporate feedback from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to include rehabilitation as an intent of the legislation. In addition, to ensure its compliance with floor protocols, the ANS ensured the program would be funded through NOAA's general authorities.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. KEATING and my colleagues across the aisle for working with us to amend this bill to address the concerns of some of our Members, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1245

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 2560, Mr. KEATING's Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Act, would establish a Federal grant program to support response and rehabilitation efforts for federally protected endangered sea turtles.

As my colleague across the aisle mentioned, all six of the species of sea turtles in the U.S. are either threatened or endangered, and human activities, such as urban development, accidental capture, vessel strikes, and marine debris entanglement, are causing increasing sea turtle strandings. A stranded sea turtle is defined as one that has been found either dead or still alive but unable to go about its normal behavior due to injury or illness.

As a result of more frequent stranding events, the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network was created. This is a coalition of 50 Federal, State, and private partners that responds to stranded sea turtles and collects information to help us better protect and ultimately save them.

Now, NOAA Fisheries oversees the coordination of this network, but it is the dedicated local organizations that actively respond to stranded turtles. They gather crucial scientific data, facilitate the transportation of sick and injured turtles to rehabilitation centers, and play a pivotal role in educating the public about the importance of sea turtle conservation. I am pleased that we are here today supporting these efforts.

The legislation before us would create a grant program that funds the recovery, care, and treatment of stranded marine turtles, as well as the collection of stranding data for scientific research and facility operating costs.

This act is a step in the right direction for our national efforts to recover our endangered sea turtle populations, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), the author of this important legislation, a champion of sea turtle conservation, and a Representative from the other national seashore. I represent the great Point Reyes National Seashore on the West Coast, and Mr. KEATING represents our East Coast brother seashore, sister seashore in Cape Cod.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) for his support, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. LUNA), and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) for his great support on this and so many other issues we work on together.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2560, the Sea Turtle Rescue As-

sistance and Rehabilitation Act of 2023. This bill is an important piece of legislation that, for the first time, provides assistance to many organizations that work to ensure the continued survival of endangered sea turtle populations in the United States.

Every species of sea turtle in the United States today is considered either threatened or endangered—every single one.

In my region, warming waters in the North Atlantic have wreaked havoc with the annual migration of sea turtles. Changing conditions are causing many sea turtles to become cold-stunned as they depart Cape Cod Bay in the fall during their southern migration. Having become hyperthermic, these turtles eventually wash ashore on our beaches, and sadly, they perish from exposure and predation. They perish at a rate of nearly 100 percent.

There has been a sudden, shocking change in the incidence of this mortality. As the temperatures in the ocean have vacillated and gotten colder, within the 2-year period of 2020 to 2022, the amount of mortality has increased twentyfold, a dramatic increase in just a short period of time.

Further, sea turtles face threats from entanglement and ingestion of marine debris, from which, nationally, there were more than 7,000 instances just in the year of 2022.

This isn't just about my region. This legislation is supported by 72 different organizations in 27 different States, and it is bipartisan in nature. The Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Act will provide resources to the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network, a consortium of numerous aquariums and not-for-profit organizations that work together to rescue, rehabilitate, and eventually release back into the wild stranded and entangled sea turtles.

This legislation is very efficient on many fronts.

Number one, this small amount of money, if appropriated, will move forward and take advantage of an increased ability to organize nonprofits and volunteers at no expense whatsoever to taxpayers.

It is also a moneymaker. Sea turtles are an amazing attraction. My wife and I just recently went to an area where we witnessed so many excursions, ferries, people coming from all over the world to go down and not only look at shipwrecks that are undersea but look at sea turtles.

In fact, I read just this week in a publication that there is one sea turtle, an older sea turtle in an aquarium, that was marking its 50 millionth visitor view—one turtle. It is a necessary attraction not only to preserve their uniqueness and their value but also to other people. It generates money that, again, helps taxpayers here.

Finally, the sea turtles themselves are efficient and helpful. They graze on sea grass and other areas. Their natural work enhances a cleansing of the

ocean, so there is a holistic view of the work where they actually are doing something, again, at no cost that is helpful.

The work that this stranding network does in protecting these endangered species is vital to ensuring the populations of this much-loved species continue to thrive into the future, helping to preserve a unique part of the ocean's biodiversity for our children and grandchildren.

I am proud to have sponsored this legislation. I am proud of the bipartisan support behind this legislation to support sea turtle conservation, and I am deeply grateful that the House has taken up this opportunity to listen to this today and, hopefully, pass this legislation going forward.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to briefly close.

Sea turtles are an iconic species that capture the hearts and minds of many. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, due to the hard work of organizations such as the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network, the National Aquarium, and others, more than 2,000 sea turtles have been rescued and rehabilitated over the last 2 years.

H.R. 2560 will complement the great work of these organizations. I again thank Mr. KEATING, Mrs. LUNA, and my colleagues on the committee for their collaborative work on this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2560, 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. TIFFANY. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1615

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OBERNOLTE) at 4 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.