

In this hearing, we learned from both Midvale and the Bureau that this conveyance will allow the district to more easily maintain and operate the plant after the title transfer.

The message from each party involved in the conveyance was that this is a win-win for everyone involved. Transferring ownership of the power plant to Midvale will provide for greater flexibility and relieve administrative burdens for the Bureau of Reclamation.

As we all know, local communities and entities are often better equipped to understand the unique needs and challenges of their communities.

Placing control of the hydro plant in the hands of Midvale Irrigation District will empower them to make decisions that directly impact their region. This conveyance promotes a sense of ownership and accountability that will lead to more efficient operations and responsive governance.

This transfer will have positive economic benefits. Hydroelectric plants have the potential to generate substantial revenue. By allowing Midvale to control these resources, they can reinvest profits into the community. This will ultimately mean improved infrastructure and more support for local businesses.

The economic ripple effect can be profound and positively impact the lives of those living in the district.

Moreover, it is important to note that Midvale is intimately familiar with the intricacies of water management and distribution in their area. Updating and repairing this hydro plant will expand the State's portfolio, allowing for a more holistic approach to resource management.

This will help Wyoming to optimize water usage, balancing the needs of agriculture, industry, and the environment more effectively.

We have an obvious need to increase the amount of water stored through surface infrastructure and groundwater storage projects.

This particular conveyance will allow us to more effectively manage our water and provide power to our communities. Additionally, environmental stewardship is a critical consideration.

Wyomingites are more attuned to the ecological nuances of their surroundings. By placing the hydro plant under local control, we increase the practice of responsible environmental practices. This includes measures to protect aquatic life, maintain water quality, and ensure the responsible operation of the plant without compromising our ecosystems.

The Pilot Butte Power Plant Conveyance Act will empower Wyoming communities, boost Wyoming's economy, enhance resource management, and promote responsible environmental practices.

It is a decision that reflects the values of decentralization, self-determination, and self-reliance.

I thank Senator BARRASSO and Senator LUMMIS for their leadership on

this issue on the Senate side, and Midvale Irrigation District manager Steve Lynn, who was critical in elevating this issue and the solution we have before us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the principle of cooperative federalism means that decisions are made at the appropriate level of government, at the Federal, State, and local levels.

H.R. 3415 embodies this principle by transferring control of the Pilot Butte Power Plant to the Midvale Irrigation District, putting local project beneficiaries in charge of resource management, harnessing additional hydroelectric power resources, and ultimately, lowering cost.

I once again thank Congresswoman HAGEMAN for her leadership. I urge my colleagues to support this 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. 3415.

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 proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SUPPORTING THE HEALTH OF AQUATIC SYSTEMS THROUGH RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE AND ENHANCED DIALOGUE ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4051) to direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a task force regarding shark depredation, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4051

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 "Supporting the Health of Aquatic systems through Research Knowledge and Enhanced Dialogue Act" or the "SHARKED Act".

SEC. 2. SHARK DEPREDACTION TASK FORCE AND RESEARCH PROJECTS.

(a) SHARK DEPREDACTION TASK FORCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall establish a task force (referred to in this

subsection as the "task force") to identify and address critical needs with respect to shark depredation.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Secretary of Commerce shall appoint individuals to the task force, including—

(A) 1 representative from—

(i) each Regional Fishery Management Council established under section 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852(a)(1));

(ii) each Marine Fisheries Commission, as such term is defined in section 3 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802);

(iii) the fish and wildlife agency of a coastal State from each Regional Fishery Management Council established under section 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852(a)(1)); and

(iv) the National Marine Fisheries Service;

(B) an individual with expertise in the management of highly migratory species;

(C) a researcher with expertise in shark management and behavior; and

(D) a researcher with expertise in shark ecology.

(3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The task force shall—

(A) develop ways to improve coordination and communication across the fisheries management community and shark research community to address shark depredation;

(B) identify research priorities and funding opportunities for such priorities, including—

(i) identifying shark species involved in interactions;

(ii) shark stock assessments;

(iii) how sharks become habituated to humans and thus lead to more interactions between sharks and humans;

(iv) how angler behavior and fishery regulatory frameworks may influence shark interactions;

(v) techniques and strategies to reduce harmful interactions between sharks and humans, including the development and use of non-lethal deterrents;

(vi) the role of healthy shark populations in the ocean food web; and

(vii) climate change impacts on shifting shark populations, prey, and shark behavior;

(C) develop recommended management strategies to address shark depredation; and

(D) coordinate the development and distribution of educational materials to help the fishing community minimize shark interactions including through changed angler behavior and expectations.

(4) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this section, and every 2 years thereafter until the termination of the task force in accordance with paragraph (5), the task force shall submit to Congress a report regarding the findings of the task force.

(5) SUNSET.—The task force shall terminate not later than 7 years after the date on which the Secretary of Commerce establishes the task force.

(6) COASTAL STATE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "coastal State"—

(A) means a State of the United States in, or bordering on, the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, or Long Island Sound; and

(B) includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

(b) SHARK DEPREDACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS.—Section 318(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1867(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(6) Projects to better understand shark depredation, including identifying what causes increases in shark depredation and determining how to best address shark depredation."

(c) EFFECT.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect the authority and responsibility

of the Secretary of Commerce in carrying out the Endangered Species Act of 1973 or the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL) 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. 4051, 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 rise in support of H.R. 4051, sponsored by my friend and colleague, Congressman ROB WITTMAN of Virginia.

Concerns over shark depredation are increasingly common. From fishermen in the Florida Keys and throughout the Gulf of Mexico whose prized snapper or grouper catch was eaten by a shark, to charter boat captains in North Carolina's Outer Banks fishing offshore, shark interactions can be frustrating for anglers as they result in loss of catch, damaged gear, and degraded fishing experiences, and may also impact the post-release survival of target fish.

While the number of reports of depredation have increased, the underlying cause of the increase remains uncertain. It could be due to an increase in the number of sharks, as stocks rebuild, or learned behavior by sharks as they recognize motors, fishing techniques, or shark-feeding locations as a source of food.

We simply do not have enough information.

To make matters worse, shark depredation touches on many Federal and State jurisdictions, but because no single entity has a responsibility to address it, very little is being done.

H.R. 4051 would require the Secretary of Commerce to establish a task force to address shark depredation.

The task force membership would include representatives from Regional Fishery Management Councils, the Marine Fisheries Commissions, the State fish and wildlife agencies from the States within the Regional Fishery Management Councils, NOAA, and shark experts from the Fisheries Service, and non-Federal experts.

During committee consideration of this legislation, the minority worked closely with two of the bill's sponsors, Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. GRAVES, to make modest changes by including more engagement with the scientific community engaged in shark research and clarifying that the findings and work done by the task force do not impact the Secretary of Commerce's responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act or the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The legislation will help the Federal Government further understand, identify, and address critical needs as they relate to shark depredation.

I applaud Mr. WITTMAN for his work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4051, the SHARKED Act, would establish a new task force led by the National Marine Fisheries Service to identify shark conservation needs and depredation research.

Sharks are critical to healthy ocean ecosystems.

As the apex predators of the ocean, they help shape marine food webs and are a key indicator of ocean health.

Many shark species are, unfortunately, also threatened or endangered.

Oceanic sharks and rays have declined by 71 percent since 1970, and three-quarters of these wide-ranging species are threatened.

While some shark populations are recovering, scientists predict that nearly 100 million sharks are still killed each year, and current levels of fishing pressure will cause the majority of shark populations to continue declining.

According to the IUCN, half of the coastal sharks and rays are threatened with extinction, primarily due to overfishing.

A fundamental lack of understanding of shark biology and ecological importance, combined with fear, was partially responsible for dramatic increases in the recreational harvest of sharks in the United States in the 1970s and the 1980s.

Any effort to address shark depredation, therefore, needs to be considered in light of recovering shark populations and the threats that sharks face from heightened fishing pressure and climate change.

Through the committee process, we have been able to significantly improve this legislation. However, I recognize there are still some legitimate concerns about whether this legislation goes far enough to ensure good outcomes for shark populations and is not a slippery slope towards increasing shark harvests.

I am grateful that the majority worked with us to amend the original bill text, ensuring that the focus is placed on changing angler behavior and managing expectations, as well as building out the scientific understanding of shark ecology and the impacts of climate change on predators and prey in the ocean.

Recently, Australian researchers found that the use of non-lethal deterrents and simple changes in angler behavior are proven to reduce the probability of sharks taking fish by 65 percent.

NOAA has funded similar studies in the United States but admitted in the legislative hearing on this bill that

depredation research is complex and requires sustained investment due to the high intelligence and adaptability of sharks.

Notably, this bill doesn't include funding. Without it, NOAA will be unable to fund much more than what they are currently doing to address shark conservation and depredation.

I hope my colleagues who support this bill will also work with us to ensure robust funding for shark conservation priorities, like increased shark stock assessments.

This bill should promote greater collaboration between the fishing community and shark researchers to reduce risks to sharks and humans from depredation events and build out our understanding of the importance of sharks and how to conserve them.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter of support for the SHARKED Act, signed by 123 companies and organizations, including the American Sportfishing Association.

SEPTEMBER 20, 2023.

Hon. ROB WITTMAN,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. GARRET GRAVES,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. DARREN SOTO,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARC VEASEY,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES WITTMAN, SOTO, GRAVES AND VEASEY: As businesses that have experienced the negative impacts of shark depredation, we are writing to express our support for the Supporting the Health of Aquatic systems through Research, Knowledge and Enhanced Dialogue (SHARKED) Act. Collectively we represent charter captains, tackle shop owners, equipment manufacturers, and other sportfishing-related business leaders. Saltwater recreational fishing is a major economic driver in coastal communities throughout the country, with more than 13 million saltwater anglers supporting 595,000 jobs and generating \$98 billion in sales every year.

This bill brings focus to the increasing challenge of shark depredation, which negatively impacts fishing experiences, risks the safety of sharks and humans and threatens the sustainability of fish populations.

Shark depredation occurs when a shark eats or damages a hooked fish before an angler can reel in their catch. In general, the possibility of depredation occurring is accepted as a natural part of fishing. However, in recent years the frequency of shark depredation has increased rapidly in many parts of the country, likely due to increasing fishing activity, increasing shark abundance and depredation becoming a more frequently learned behavior.

As some of the nation's leading conservationists, recreational fishermen firmly believe that safeguarding our marine ecosystem is of utmost importance. Sharks play a vital role in maintaining balance in the marine ecosystem. However, shark depredation is escalating to a level that is detrimental to all involved, exposing sharks to potentially harmful fishing gear and putting anglers in dangerously close proximity to these apex predators. As the rate of shark

depredation has increased, fishermen have become increasingly frustrated by the issue and a lack of response from the fisheries management community. It is a complex issue with no simple solution, but there are policy, research, management and education tactics that warrant exploration to help mitigate the issue. Shark depredation touches on many federal and state jurisdictions. Unfortunately, because no single entity has responsibility to address it, very little is being done.

The SHARKED Act would establish a task force that would be responsible for improving coordination and communication across the fisheries management community on shark depredation, as well as identifying research priorities and funding opportunities. This bill would be a critical first step toward addressing shark depredation nationally and establishing foundational knowledge that can be used to improve future management, education and research actions.

By implementing efforts to minimize interactions between sharks and anglers, the SHARKED Act will advance conservation for the benefit of sharks, anglers, fisheries and the economy. We are grateful for your support of this bill and for providing a voice to the recreational fishing industry.

Sincerely,

Carl Abissi, National Manager, Dexter Outdoors, Southbridge, MA; Steve Atkinson, President, Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Association, Midlothian, VA; Hunter Avery, Key Accounts Manager, Jones and Company, Stuart, FL; Eric L Bachnik, President, L&S Bait Company, Largo, FL; Will Benson, Owner, World Angling, Key West, FL; Gregory Bogdan, Owner/Captain, Permitted, Inc., North Palm Beach, FL; Bryan Boyle, Captain, Dedicated, LLC., Jupiter, FL.

Scott Brown, Owner, Push it Good Inshore Fishing Charters, Destin, FL; Tad Burke, Captain, The Wild Side Guides, Tavernier, FL; Brandon Carter, Owner, Fathom Offshore, Wilmington, NC; Nicholas Castillo, Captain, Castillo Charters, LLC., Islamorada, FL; John Chauvin, Sr., Owner, Fin-tastic Charters, Grand Isle, LA; Louis Chemi, Vice President, Freedom Boat Club, Venice, FL; Dennis Clark, Owner, Frontier Sales and Marketing Group, LLC., Katy, TX.

Eric Cosby, Vice President, Top Brass Tackle, Starkville, MS; John Crews, President/Owner, Missile Baits, Salem, VA; Mike Cyr, Captain, C Hawk Charters, Key West, FL; Bill Dantuono, Owner, Offshore Naples, Naples, FL; Adam Debruin, Captain, Red Hook Fishing, Tavernier, FL; Mike Delzingo, Owner, Fishbucket Sportfishing, Boston, MA; GW De Pauw, Captain, Captain GW Guide Service, Tavernier, FL.

Joe Diebold, Outfitter, Bass Pro, Apollo Beach, FL; Paul Diggins, Owner/Captain, Reel Pursuit Charters, Charlestown, MA; Michael Dixon, Vice President, Engel Coolers, Jupiter, FL; Robert Dufek, Sales Manager, Shimano, Ladson, SC; Aaron Dykes, CEO & Captain, Triple D Charters, Tavernier, FL; Brian Esposito, President, Skiff Guide Charter Service, Hollywood, FL; Drue Eymann, Owner/Captain, Keys on The Fly, LLC., Key West, FL.

Bill Falconer, President/CEO, Anglers Resource, Foley, AL; Richard Fischer, Executive Director, Louisiana Charter Boat Association, Metairie, LA; Tammy Foshee, OEM Manager, GSM Outdoors, Georgetown, GA; Thomas Fote, Legislative Chairman, Jersey Coast Anglers Association, Toms River, NJ; Steve Friedman, Owner, A Fishing Guide, LLC., Islamorada, FL; Patrick Gill, CEO, TackleDirect, Egg Harbor Township, NJ; Austin Glassman, Captain, Gladesman Charters, Tavernier, FL.

Alan Gmann, President, REC Components, Stafford Springs, CT; Lain Goodwin, Owner/

Captain, Dirty Waters Charters, Inc., Key Largo, FL; Scott Gregg, Captain/Owner, Wreckless Sport Fishing, Mechanicsville, VA; Mike Guerin, Owner, Capt. Michael Guerin, Big Pine Key, FL; Chris Hanson, Owner, Scales 2 Tales, LLC., Key Largo, FL; Jim Hardin, Government Relations Manager, Grady-White Boats, Inc., Greenville, NC; Richard Hastings, Captain, Capt. Rich Hastings, Islamorada, FL.

Gary Hayes, Owner/Captain, Sunrise South Charter Fishing, Dulac, LA; Patrick Healey, President/CEO, Viking Yacht Co., New Gretna, NJ; Mark Hlis, Owner, Flamingo Charters, Islamorada, FL; Barry Hoffman, Captain, flatsguide.com, Tavernier, FL; Mike Holliday, Captain, Fish Tail Guide Service, Stuart, FL; Houston Hoover, Captain, Gene's Fishing Charters, Gonzales, LA; Dylan Hubbard, Owner/Captain/VP, Hubbard's Marina, Madeira Beach, FL.

Dylan Hubbard, President, Florida Guides Association, Madeira Beach, FL; Buddy Hughes, CEO, Bates Fishing Co., Celina, TX; Robbie Hunziker, Owner, RH Marine, Parrish, FL; Steven Impallomeni, Owner/Captain, Gallop Ghost Charters, Summerland Key, FL; Rich Johnson, Owner/Operator, Scotty J's Charters, Clearwater, FL; Luke Kelly, Captain, Key Flat Charters, Summerland Key, FL; Doug Kilpatrick, Owner, Capt Doug Kilpatrick Inc, Sugarloaf Key, FL.

Frank-Paul King, President, Temple Fork, Dallas, TX; Luke Krenik, Captain, LVKFL, LLC, Key Largo, Florida; Steve Lavoie, Captain, Capt Lavoie, Tavernier, FL; Mike Leonard, Vice President of Government Affairs, American Sportfishing Association, Alexandria, VA; Phillip Lillo, President, Don Coffey Company, Orlando, FL; Patrick Lynch, CEO, Bionic Bait, Pompano Beach, FL; Putnam Maclean, Captain, Eagle Eye Fishing Co., Marshfield, MA.

Gary Maier, Chief Design Officer, DroneFisher Tackle, Tomball, TX; Michael Manis, Owner/Captain, Punta Gorda Fly Charters, Punta Gorda, FL; Spencer Marchant, Senior Manager, Don Coffey Company, Jupiter, FL; Colby Mason, Mate, Kalex, Islamorada, FL; Chase Masters, Owner, The Chase Fishing Charters, Islamorada, FL; Will McCabe, Captain, Will McCabe Charters, Islamorada, FL; James McGrath, President, Grand Slam Tackle, Riviera Beach, FL.

Daniel Medina, Captain, Salty Fishing Charters, Cape Coral, FL; Andy Mezirow, Owner, Gray Light Fisheries, LLC, Seward, AK; Daniel Miers, Owner/President, King Sailfish Mounts, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Tom Morgan, Captain, Flying Thief Charters, Big Pine Key, FL; Patrick Neukam, Owner, Offshore Addict Charters, Madeira Beach, FL; Andrew Nobregas, Captain, Fishy Business Charters, Tavernier, FL; Daniel Nussbaum, President, Z-Man Fishing Products, Inc., Ladson, SC.

Frank Ortiz, Owner, Capt. Frank Ortiz, Key Largo, FL; William Pappas, Owner/Operator, Playin Hookey Charters, Virginia Beach, VA; Jason Parker, Captain, Reel Steel Fishing, Ocean City, MD; Donald Patnaude, President, Jones & Company, Stuart, FL; Cheryl Pawlak, President, Aquatic Nutrition, Inc., Eustis, FL; David Peck, Captain, Skilgal Charters LLC, Nags Head, NC; Michael Pierdinock, Owner/Captain, CPF Charters, Plymouth, MA.

Greg Poland, Owner/Captain, Capt. Greg Poland Inc, Islamorada, FL; Matt Ponzio, Captain, Smoking Reels Charters, Fort Myers, FL; Victor Porter, Owner, Chief Charter Fishing, Islamorada, FL; Jason Prieto, President, Steady Action Fishing Charters, Ruskin, FL; Thomas Putnam, President, Half Hitch Tackle, Panama City, FL; Kellie Ralston, Vice President for Conservation and Public Policy, Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, Tal-

lahassee, FL; Sean Rice, Owner, Lawless Lures, Grenada, MS; Olden Rodrigue, Owner, Coastal Charter Services LLC, Montegut, LA.

Joe Rodriguez, Captain, Fishing Guide Fla keys, Summerland Key, FL; Paul Sabayrac, Owner & Captain, Goin' Raptor Fishing, Juno Beach, FL; Amanda Sabin, VP Marketing, Contender Boats, Ormond Beach, FL; Jonathan Schrier, Owner/Operator, Shake Your Tail Feather, LLC., Marathon, FL; Peter Schulz, President, Schulz Brothers Fishing Headquarters, Jupiter, FL; Perry Scuderi, Owner/Operator, P.S. Fishing Inc., Islamorada, FL; Robert Shamblyn, Vice President, JL Marine Systems, Inc., Valrico, FL.

Anthony Solmo, Owner, Got 'Em on Sportfishing Charters, Key West, FL; Ron Stallings, PR/Marketing, TTI-Blakemore, Wetumpka, AL; Brandon Storin, Owner, Bean Sportfishing LLC, Islamorada, FL; Gary Stuve, Captain, Native Guide Jupiter, Jupiter, FL; Larry Sydnor, Captain, Capt. Larry Sydnor, Islamorada, FL; Andrew Tipler, Owner/Captain, Last Cast Charters, Cudjoe Key, FL.

Georgios Toris, Owner, Salta Americas, Inc, West Palm Beach, FL; Chris Trosset, Owner/Operator, Reel Fly Charters, Key West, FL; Brandon Vaughan, Owner, Salty Dog Charters, LLC, St. Petersburg, FL; Russ Walker, Owner/Captain, Tide Walker Charters, Cape Coral, FL; William Walsh, Captain, P.J's Enterprises, Tavernier, FL; Jeff Watkins, Owner, Anchors Away Charters, Port Charlotte, FL.

Ashley Weber, President/Owner, Ashley Weber Art, Inc., Rockledge, FL; Leonard Weinbaum, Owner, L. W. Fine Arts, Keystone Heights, FL; Nathan Weinbaum, President, KeysXplorer, Islamorada, FL; Bryan Williams, Sales Representative, Shimano, Wilmington, NC; Holly Williams, President/CEO, Cablz, Birmingham, AL; Chris Wilson, Owner, Rivers End Outfitters, LLC, Belle Chasse, LA.

Edward Wilson, Owner/Operator, Captain Ted Wilson Charter Fishing, Islamorada, FL; Jerry Winton, National Sales Manager, Winton Electronics, Manasquan, NJ; Billy Wood, Captain, Mine Time LLC, Key Largo, FL; Shane Wood, Owner, Shane Wood Charters, Sugarloaf Key, FL; Alex Zapata, Owner, Silver King Charters, Miami, FL; Ed Zyak, Captain, Captain Ed Zyak Fishing, Jensen Beach, FL.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support of my bill, H.R. 4051, the Supporting the Health of Aquatic Systems through Research Knowledge, and Enhanced Dialogue Act, also known as the SHARKED Act.

Picture this: A charter boat fisherman takes a group of excited anglers 90 miles off the coast in hopes of reeling in a yellow fin tuna, a snapper, or grouper, or even ensure reeling in a tarpon.

One of the individuals hooks the first fish and starts to fight to reel it in. However, before the fish ever gets to the boat, sharks have completely consumed the fish, all the way up to the gill plates.

This phenomenon is called depredation, which occurs when sharks interfere with fishing activities.

Shark depredation is accepted as a natural part of fishing, but it has become a widespread issue in our waters and has increased rapidly in recent years.

During the House Natural Resources Committee hearing for the SHARKED

Act, we heard from experts discussing the impact of this phenomenon.

According to the American Sportfishing Association, 52.4 million people went fishing in the United States, supporting 826,000 jobs and contributing \$129 billion to the economy.

The American Sportfishing Association also found that 87 percent of charter guides surveyed said they experienced depredation with clients, resulting in negative impacts on their businesses.

Anglers are losing their catch and tackle to sharks at alarming rates, and they are understandably becoming increasingly frustrated by it.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced the SHARKED Act to study this issue, evaluate how we can improve sportfishing conditions for anglers while protecting sharks.

This bill establishes a fisheries management task force to focus on identifying research opportunities, recommending management strategies, and developing educational materials for fishermen.

□ 1645

This legislation will help fishermen understand which species of sharks have higher rates of depredation and where you are most likely to run into that species.

It will serve first as a major step in improving communication and coordination among fisheries managers in addressing shark depredation nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to passing this bill through the committee and further consideration on the floor, which is where we are today. It has been a great process.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have experienced what Mr. WITTMAN was talking about; you know, excited to be reeling in a fish, and you get it to the boat, and you maybe have a couple of lips and an eyeball and part of a gill. That is all that is left. I don't get to fish offshore that much, but I can tell you it can be disappointing, and that is why it is important to do this research.

I appreciate the gentleman bringing the bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is quite the fisherman himself.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, nothing ruins a great day like the tax man. Nothing ruins a great day like the tax man, and I am not talking about the IRS. I am talking about when you are out there fishing, and you have this big shark that just comes up and takes your catch.

You have great fishermen like Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. WESTERMAN, and maybe it is not that big of a deal; your next cast you are going catch another one. But you have people out there who don't know what they are doing, like

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio; it is a whole other thing. You just ruined his day.

What happens is—as Mr. WITTMAN clearly laid out—you will be out there, and you may be on a red snapper, you may be out there in some mangrove, and you are just catching fish; that is dinner.

This is an amazing experience. As Mr. WITTMAN noted, this is about economic activity all across the coastal United States. One of the biggest gaps, one of the biggest voids in our ability to properly manage fisheries is knowing more, knowing better about the impact of this apex predator, the shark.

I want to be very clear. This bill is not about culling species. It is not about killing sharks. What it is about is simply ensuring that we have the right data, that we have the right understanding to build properly managed fisheries, and to be able to ensure we can promote avoidance techniques to prevent this depredation from occurring.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia, who is an expert in this field, Mr. WITTMAN, and I thank Mr. SOTO and Mr. VEASEY, some of the cosponsors on this legislation, for their support, but this is all about improving the accuracy of fish management.

It benefits recreational fisheries, it benefits commercial fisheries, and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it benefits the sustainable fisheries, the sustainable stocks of some of these important areas like the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico, and other areas.

Again, I thank my friend from Virginia for his hard work on this legislation. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for working with us and some of the great staff on his team, Vivian and Sandra. I thank Anderson on our staff, as well as Rachel on Ranking Member GRIJALVA's staff for their work in coming together to make sure that we have the right balance here.

This is all about ensuring that for generations to come that our children and our grandchildren can enjoy the same experiences that we have for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this legislation.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am sure living in Florida you have probably stood on the edge of a boat and asked that question: Why? Why did a shark eat my fish? What was it that motivated it? Is it because there are too many sharks? Is it something I did? It leaves you with this empty feeling.

This legislation is here to answer that question. It is simple legislation. It creates a task force that would be responsible for improving coordination and communication across the fisheries management community on shark depredation, as well as identifying research priorities and funding opportunities.

Again, I commend Congressman WITTMAN for his tireless work on fisheries issues and for his work on this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, 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. 4061, 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.

DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4385) to extend authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4385

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 “Drought Preparedness Act”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION.

(a) DROUGHT PROGRAM.—Section 104(c) of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (43 U.S.C. 2214(c)) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2028”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 301 of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (43 U.S.C. 2241) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2028”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL) 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 will have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4385, the bill 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. 4385, sponsored by Congressman NEGUSE of Colorado. This legislation extends authorities granted to the Bureau of Reclamation under the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act, which provided Reclamation emergency authorities to make water available for users outside of a project's area, offer loans to water