

Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the GEO Act. Utah is a leader in geothermal energy, but many companies are being held back by the current regulatory environment.

My bill simply requires the Department of the Interior to continue issuing all authorizations as long as the underlying lease remains unchallenged. Geothermal energy is affordable, reliable, and clean energy.

After companies have invested substantial time and resources in obtaining permits, the Department of the Interior sometimes withholds notices to proceed, drilling permits, and other authorizations due to litigation threats against the project.

To be clear, these pauses have occurred without any evidence of wrongdoing by the Department of the Interior or the operators. Instead, they result from unsubstantiated threats made by private organizations. This isn't sustainable if we want geothermal to be part of our clean-energy future.

The chart to my right demonstrates how important this is throughout the West, particularly rural parts of the West, where economic development can be enhanced dramatically by these projects.

The Department of Energy projects that enhanced geothermal systems could contribute up to 90 gigawatts of electricity by 2050, accounting for almost 9 percent of U.S. energy-generation capacity.

Utah is a case study in geothermal energy, and I was proud to support the establishment of Utah FORGE in southern Utah, a dedicated underground field laboratory sponsored by the Department of Energy focused on developing, testing, and accelerating geothermal breakthroughs.

Mr. Speaker, the GEO Act is a critical step toward ensuring that Utah and the United States lead in geothermal energy and technology.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS) for working on this commonsense piece of legislation. Again, 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 Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7370, 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.

GREAT SALT LAKE STEWARDSHIP ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4094) to amend the Central Utah Project Completion Act to authorize expenditures for the conduct of certain water conservation measures in the Great Salt Lake basin, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4094

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 "Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act".

SEC. 2. WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN.

Title II of the Central Utah Project Completion Act (Public Law 102-575; 106 Stat. 4605) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 213. WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES IN THE GREAT SALT LAKE BASIN.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may use any unexpended budget authority provided under subsections (a)(2) and (c) of section 202 for the conduct of water conservation measures within the Great Salt Lake basin in accordance with section 207.

"(b) COMPLIANCE WITH DEFINITE PLAN REPORT.—Any water conservation measure conducted under subsection (a) shall be considered to be compliant with the Definite Plan Report completed under section 205(a)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) 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 include extraneous material on H.R. 4094, 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 the legislation led by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), which amends the Central Utah Project Completion Act.

As we all know, the Great Salt Lake is one of Utah's most famous natural resources. In recent years, however, the lake levels have dropped to historic lows, posing a threat to the lake's ecosystem, local air quality, and the prosperity of surrounding communities.

Mr. CURTIS' legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use Central Utah Project funds toward new water conservation measures to help recover the Great Salt Lake.

Importantly, this bill does not require any new spending authorizations. I thank Representative CURTIS and the rest of Utah's congressional delegation for their leadership on this issue.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4094, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act, would authorize expenditures and funding for water conservation measures within the Great Salt Lake basin.

As drought conditions continue to worsen with climate change, the impacts are being felt throughout the West. One key example of the adverse consequences of climate change is the Great Salt Lake, which has been rapidly declining over the past few decades. In 2022, the lake reached all-time historic low water levels, presenting serious ecological concerns.

The declines in the lake's water levels have threatened ecosystem health, disrupted bird migration, and led to concerns of exposure of toxic arsenic lake dust within the lake bottom, which could be carried out with the wind.

The bill we are considering today seeks to address these serious ecological concerns by amending the Central Utah Project Completion Act to provide additional flexibility needed to redirect and authorize unexpended funds, specifically to support water conservation measures under the Water Management Improvement Program in the basin, and expand the program service area.

The Great Salt Lake is only one example of the harms that climate change presents to communities and wildlife across the West. While this legislation is a step forward, Congress must be doing more to combat climate change and drought.

This bill is a great step, and I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act.

The Great Salt Lake is essential to the ecological and economic fabric of Utah. Residents have worked tirelessly to protect the lake, but severe drought now threatens its long-term survival.

Recognizing this urgent challenge, the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act would extend the existing Colorado River Water Conservation Program to include the Great Salt Lake. This would grant the Secretary of the Interior greater flexibility to allocate unused funds from other sections of the Central Utah Project Completion Act, also known as CUPCA, to the water conservation program.

By expanding the program's geographical scope to cover the entire Great Salt Lake drainage basin, the bill would support State government of Utah, local communities, and water districts north of Salt Lake County in their conservation efforts to replenish the lake.

The Great Salt Lake is a national treasure and a vital part of Utah's way of life. The bill demonstrates our commitment to protecting this valuable resource without requiring new Federal funds.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this commonsense 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. 4094.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LAKE WINNIBIGOSHISH LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1657) to provide for a land exchange in the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1657

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 "Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **BWLT.**—The term "BWLT" means Big Winnie Land and Timber, LLC, a Minnesota Limited Liability Corporation.

(2) **MAP.**—The term "Map" means the map entitled "Heig Land Exchange" and dated December 14, 2023.

(3) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term "Federal land" means the approximately 17.5 acres of Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(4) **NON-FEDERAL LAND.**—The term "non-Federal land" means the approximately 36.7 acres of non-Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Non-Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(5) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

SEC. 3. EXCHANGE OF LAND.

(a) **EXCHANGE AUTHORIZED.**—Subject to the provisions of this Act, if BWLT offers to con-

vey the non-Federal land to the United States, the Secretary shall, not later than 1 year after the date on which such offer is made—

(1) accept the offer;

(2) convey to BWLT all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Federal land, excepting and reserving an easement for road access to National Forest System land west of the Federal Parcel; and

(3) accept from BWLT all right, title, and interest of BWLT in and to the non-Federal land.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The exchange under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) conditioned on title approval for the non-Federal land by the Secretary in accordance with subsection (e);

(2) conditioned on a cash equalization payment made by BWLT to the United States in accordance with subsection (c) if, under the appraisals conducted in accordance with this Act, it is determined that the value of the Federal land exceeds the value of the non-Federal land;

(3) conditioned on the satisfactory completion of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment by BWLT, provided to the Secretary, in advance of the acceptance of the non-Federal parcel;

(4) subject to valid existing rights; and

(5) subject to any other terms and conditions the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) **EQUAL VALUE AND CASH EQUALIZATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the exchange under subsection (a) shall be for equal value or the values shall be equalized by a cash payment.

(2) **EXCEPTION.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the appraised value of the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States exceeds the appraised value of the Federal land, a cash equalization payment by the United States to BWLT is hereby waived and the amount of such waived payment shall be considered a donation by BWLT to the United States for all purposes of law.

(d) **APPRAISALS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The value of the land to be exchanged under this Act shall be determined by appraisals conducted by an independent and qualified appraiser mutually agreed to by the Secretary and BWLT.

(2) **APPRAISAL STANDARDS.**—The Secretary shall complete appraisals of the land to be exchanged under this Act in accordance with—

(A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; and

(B) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

(e) **FORMAT.**—Title to the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States under this Act shall be found sufficient by the Secretary pursuant to section 3111 of title 40, United States Code.

(f) **MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND.**—The non-Federal land acquired by the United States under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) added to, and managed as part of, the Chippewa National Forest; and

(2) managed in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to National Forest System lands.

(g) **MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall finalize the Map and legal descriptions of all land to be conveyed under this Act.

(2) **CONTROLLING DOCUMENT.**—In the case of a discrepancy between the Map and a legal description, the Map shall control.

(3) **CORRECTIONS.**—The Secretary and BWLT, by mutual agreement, may correct any minor errors in the Map or in the legal descriptions, including with respect to the

boundaries of the Federal land and the non-Federal land.

(4) **MAP ON FILE.**—The Map and legal descriptions shall be on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(h) **CLOSING COSTS.**—As a condition for the exchange under subsection (a), BWLT shall pay all closing costs associated with the exchange, including for—

(1) title insurance and title search;

(2) any applicable inspection fees, escrow fees, attorneys fees, and recording fees; and

(3) any environmental analysis or resource survey required under Federal law, regulation, or policy, including a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the non-Federal land.

(i) **SURVEY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The exact acreages and legal descriptions of the Federal and non-Federal land to be exchanged under subsection (a) shall be determined by surveys satisfactory to the Secretary.

(2) **COSTS OF SURVEY.**—BWLT shall bear all costs associated with the surveys under paragraph (1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ) 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 include extraneous material on H.R. 1657, 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 strong support of H.R. 1657, the Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2024, a bipartisan bill being led by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER).

This commonsense legislation will authorize the U.S. Forest Service to enter into a land exchange with the Bowen Lodge, a family-operated resort on the shores of Lake Winnibigoshish in northern Minnesota.

Exchanging parcels between the Chippewa National Forest and the Bowen Lodge will create a win-win scenario. The lodge will gain permanent access to the lake, and the Forest Service will be able to reconfigure part of its unwieldy checkerboard pattern of land ownership.

This change will provide excellent fishing and recreation opportunities for the local community and improve management efficiencies for the Federal Government.

I applaud Representative STAUBER for his leadership in this effort to improve outdoor recreation opportunities for his constituents and for all who have the pleasure of visiting and recreating in northern Minnesota. He has long been a strong advocate for responsible public land management and access for outdoor recreation, and this