

In closing, let me emphasize that this bill isn't just about a historical basketball court. It is about honoring a man who used basketball as a tool for social change, for empowering young people, and for building a brighter future for his community. It is about continuing the legacy of resilience and empowerment that Holcombe Rucker started decades ago.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 6852. Let's honor the history, the culture, and the transformative impact of Holcombe Rucker Park.

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, too, want to thank Representative ESPAILLAT for his work on this bill, which honors an important landmark without adding to the Federal estate or using taxpayer resources.

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 Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6852, 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.

CONTINUED RAPID OHIA DEATH RESPONSE ACT OF 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1726) to require the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address Rapid Ohia Death, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1726

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 "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **RAPID OHIA DEATH.**—The term "Rapid Ohia Death" means the disease caused by the fungal pathogen known as *Ceratocystis fimbriata* that affects the tree of the species *Metrosideros polymorpha*.

(2) **STATE.**—The term "State" means the State of Hawaii.

SEC. 3. COLLABORATION.

The Secretary of the Interior shall partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State to address Rapid Ohia Death.

SEC. 4. SUSTAINED EFFORTS.

(a) **TRANSMISSION.**—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey, and the Chief of the Forest Service, acting through the Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, shall con-

tinue to conduct research on Rapid Ohia Death vectors and transmission.

(b) **UNGULATE MANAGEMENT.**—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall continue to partner with the Secretary of Agriculture, the State, and with local stakeholders to manage ungulates in Rapid Ohia Death control areas on Federal, State, and private land, with the consent of private landowners.

(c) **RESTORATION AND RESEARCH.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall continue to provide—

(1) financial assistance, including through agreements with the Secretary of the Interior—

(A) to prevent the spread of Rapid Ohia Death; and

(B) to restore the native forests of the State; and

(2) staff and necessary infrastructure funding to the Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry to conduct research on Rapid Ohia Death.

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 in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1726, 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, Representative TOKUDA's legislation, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act, directs the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address rapid ohia death.

Rapid ohia death is a fungal disease that has devastated Hawaii's ohia tree population. The ohia tree is important ecologically and culturally to Hawaii. Ohias regulate water flow and help prevent soil erosion. The continued loss of ohia trees can have significant economic impacts, including the loss of tourism revenue and increased water treatment and erosion control cost. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure that can help the affected trees.

H.R. 1726 would help address rapid ohia death by focusing Federal and State agencies' efforts on detection, prevention, and restoration efforts for combating this disease.

I recognize Representative TOKUDA for her work on this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 15, 2023.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 1726, the "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023". Thank you for collabor-

ating 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. 1726 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 18, 2023.

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

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 1726, the "Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 21, 2023.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 1726 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.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1726, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023, introduced by my colleague from Hawaii, Representative JILL TOKUDA.

This vital legislation addresses the urgent need to combat rapid ohia death, or ROD, which has already led to the loss of over 1 million native ohia lehua trees in Hawaii since its discovery in 2014.

The significance of these trees cannot be overstated. They are Hawaii's most abundant native trees and play a crucial role in preserving the State's unique biodiversity and protecting its ecosystems.

It is essential that we take immediate action to prevent further devastation and ensure the survival of this iconic species.

This bill emphasizes the need for research and aid to enhance our understanding of this deadly fungus and explore innovative solutions to combat its impact.

Furthermore, the bill fosters collaboration between Federal agencies, the State of Hawaii, and local stakeholders.

The comprehensive approach will help mitigate the threat of ROD and protect Hawaii's native forests and ecosystems, so that we can safeguard Hawaii's ohia trees for future generations and preserve the unique ecosystems and rich biodiversity that make our Nation so exceptional.

I commend my colleague, Representative TOKUDA, for championing this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill and reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. TOKUDA), the sponsor of the bill.

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1726, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act of 2023.

Ohia lehua trees form the backbone of Hawaii's forests and watersheds. It is the first tree that you will see spring up from a recent lava flow.

It grows from the sea level to 8,000 feet, and it protects our communities by literally keeping our mountains from eroding.

Ohia lehua also provides critical habitat for Hawaii's federally endangered forest birds and many other species.

They are what you call a keystone species in Hawaii's forests, and its catastrophic decline has the potential to cause major ecosystem imbalances that would impact watersheds, cultural traditions, natural resources, and the safety and quality of life of our people.

Because of this vital role they play in maintaining Hawaii's forest canopies and watersheds, rapid ohia death, or ROD, poses a lethal threat to the ecological balance and everyday life in our islands.

Initially reported in 2010, ROD has already spread to tens of thousands of acres and killed over a million trees on Hawaii island alone.

Large swaths of dead ohia trees pose a fire risk and a danger and are more prone to habitat-modifying noxious weeds and trees like miconia and strawberry guava, all of which are known to greatly impact watershed health and alter ecosystem function.

Despite efforts to contain the spread of ROD to Hawaii island through restrictions on the movement of plant material and increased sanitation protocols, ROD has now been found on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, and Maui.

Because there is no known cure for ROD, it has the potential to kill off ohia trees statewide and devastate our precious island ecosystems.

While ROD creates acres of deadly fire fuel with its dry and dead trees and poses a critical threat to our native birds, our native forests, watersheds, critically endangered forest birds, and I should note, natural beauty, support for combating ROD has been extremely limited.

For example, the Lyon Arboretum, a local research facility on Oahu, relied on funding through a GoFundMe campaign to further the vital seed banking of ohia lehua.

My bill, the Continued Rapid Ohia Death Response Act, seeks to address ROD and the urgent threat it presents.

The bill requires the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address ROD. It also supports ongoing detection, prevention, and restoration efforts to combat rapid ohia death.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, and especially Federal lands Ranking Member NEGUSE and his staff for their support and assistance on this bill.

We cannot stand alone, and we cannot lose our native forests in Hawaii. It protects and sustains our people and provides critical habitat for native species.

This bill is essential in turning the tide in the fight against rapid ohia death and protecting and preserving ohia lehua and Hawaii's unique ecosystems for our future generations.

I thank again all who have supported it, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes".

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, the ohia tree is important to Hawaii's ecosystem, people, and the economy. This legislation will help focus Federal and State resources on conserving one of the most important tree species in Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize and support my colleague Ms. TOKUDA's work on this issue, 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. 1726, 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.

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GEOTHERMAL COST-RECOVERY AUTHORITY ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7422) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to provide cost-recovery authority for the Department of the Interior, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7422

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 "Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. COST RECOVERY FROM GEOTHERMAL LEASING, PERMITTING, AND INSPECTIONS.

Section 6 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1005) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(j) COST RECOVERY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this subsection and ends September 30, 2031, the Secretary may require an applicant for, or a holder of, a geothermal lease to reimburse the United States for all reasonable administrative and other costs incurred by the United States from—

"(A) processing the application for the geothermal lease, including any application for an operations plan, geothermal drilling permit, utilization plan, site license, facility construction permit, commercial use permit, and any other approval associated with a geothermal lease; and

"(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities;

"(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to the geothermal lease.

"(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining whether to require reimbursement under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider whether there is in existence a cooperative cost share agreement between the United States and the holder of a geothermal lease.

"(3) ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary may reduce the amount to be reimbursed under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines—

"(A) that full reimbursement would impose an economic hardship on the applicant; or

"(B) that a less than full reimbursement is necessary to promote the greatest use of geothermal resources.

"(4) USE.—The amounts reimbursed under this subsection shall be credited to the currently applicable appropriation, account, or fund of the Department of the Interior as discretionary offsetting collections, and shall be available only to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts for—

"(A) processing the application for geothermal leases, including any application for operations plans, geothermal drilling permits, utilization plans, site licenses, facility construction permits, commercial use permits, and any other approval associated with geothermal leases; and

"(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities;

"(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to geothermal leases."

SEC. 3. REPORT.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the geothermal industry and other stakeholders, shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and make publicly available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of how the amendments made by section 2 of this Act affected the Bureau of Land Management's geothermal program;

(2) any recommendations for reauthorization of section 6(j) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as added by this Act; and