

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 226, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their kind words in support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, this legislation has passed this House four times and must pass again today. It needs to go to the United States Senate, and it needs to go to President Trump's desk for signature.

It has been far too long. The Eastern Band of Cherokee have been waiting and had a lot of promises made to them over the years, which have been broken.

This is a great bill for America, and it is a great bill that will honor our wonderful Eastern Band of Cherokee. In my home State, the great State of Tennessee, it takes its name from Tanasi, a historic Overhill Cherokee settlement in present-day Monroe County, Tennessee, in the Third District of Tennessee, which I am privileged to represent.

Tanasi served as the Cherokee capital as early as 1721. Unfortunately, due to misguided Federal policies, the Cherokee were forced from their homes in Tennessee and surrounding States. This tragic period in American history led to the Trail of Tears, a journey in which 15,000 Cherokees were forcibly marched to the Indian territory.

My bill returns important historic sites back to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Tribal Nation comprised of descendants of those Cherokees who resisted removal in the Great Smoky Mountains and escaped the Trail of Tears.

It is on these same lands where the Eastern Band of Cherokees have, for decades, honored the birthplace of Sequoyah, whose likeness we all in this House have the opportunity to pass as we make our way from the rotunda in our Capitol to the House floor.

Let me be clear. My bill, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act, is limited and targeted. It restores 76.1 acres of federally owned Tennessee Valley Authority land to the Eastern Band of Cherokees and will grant two permanent easements over TVA property to be held in trust for the Tribe to create recreational trails between the sites.

Madam Speaker, this is about honoring history and keeping our promises. I strongly urge Members of both Chambers to understand the importance of the Cherokee Tribal land preservation and support H.R. 226 so it may be brought to President Trump's desk promptly.

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

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legisla-

tion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, H.R. 226 is a commonsense bill that facilitates greater control for the Eastern Band of Cherokee over their sacred and historic homelands in Tennessee. It ensures the protection of their timeless heritage, culture, and tradition and allows them to memorialize the history and culture of the Cherokee people.

This Tribe has worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority for over three decades on this issue, and this legislation is long overdue.

I will echo the words of my colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN), and say that the Senate needs to take this bill up and act on it when we pass it again.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. FLEISCHMANN for his leadership on the matter. 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. 226.

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.

NUTRIA ERADICATION AND CONTROL REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 776) to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 776

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 "Nutria Eradication and Control Reauthorization Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NUTRIA ERADICATION AND CONTROL ACT OF 2003.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3(e) of the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 8102(e)) is amended by striking "2025" and inserting "2030".

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 3(a) of the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 8102(a)) is amended by striking "Secretary)," and inserting "'Secretary')".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. ANSARI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to re-

visé and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 776, 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. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Representative HARDER's legislation, which would reauthorize the nutria eradication program at existing funding levels through 2030.

This bill is identical to the one passed in the House during the last week of the 118th Congress. Unfortunately, it failed to receive a vote in the Senate. I am glad to have the opportunity to speak again in support of this important legislation.

Nutria are invasive rodents native to South America that were imported to the United States in 1899 for fur production. Since then, the nutria population has exploded in places like northern California, Oregon, and the Louisiana bayous, as well as the Chesapeake Bay and Eastern Shore ecosystems.

These rodents eat, dig, and trample healthy wetland habitats, causing significant erosion and habitat damage to native ecosystems.

When this legislation was first enacted in 2003, an estimated 70 percent of the Chesapeake Bay's marshlands had already been destroyed by nutria. Due to the aid of this program, nutria eradication efforts have been very successful.

For example, in Maryland, they have been declared eradicated. In Louisiana, where more than 432,000 acres were damaged or destroyed by nutria from 2002 to 2021, over 5 million nutria have been taken. Passing the legislation would allow these successful efforts to continue.

I thank Representative VALADAO for co-leading this legislation, which will benefit California's Central Valley in its work to eradicate nutria.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 776, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act through fiscal year 2030, to ensure that Maryland, Louisiana, and California can manage and eradicate this destructive, invasive species.

Nutria are an invasive species of large, semiaquatic rodents found in coastal wetlands along the Gulf of Mexico, the East Coast, California, and other wetland areas within the United States.

Nutria were initially introduced into the United States in the 1930s for fur production. However, their rapid breeding and destructive tendencies toward native wetland vegetation have led to extensive erosion, displacement of native species, breached levees, and the

introduction of diseases and parasites that threaten humans, livestock, and pets.

These actions pose severe threats to our national wetlands, which are essential habitats for waterfowl and other wildlife and act as buffers for extreme weather events.

According to estimates, if measures had not been adopted to control and eradicate nutria in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, nutria could have destroyed 17 percent of the bay's marshes in just a few years.

In 2003, the Nutria Eradication and Control Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to Maryland and Louisiana for a program to eradicate or control nutria and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

In 2020, Congress passed Representative HARDER's bill to amend the Nutria Eradication and Control Act to include California, which faced a rapidly expanding breeding population of nutria in the San Joaquin Valley and adjacent areas. That bill also gave the Secretary of the Interior discretion to provide funding to States adversely affected by growing nutria populations through fiscal year 2025. This bill before us today would extend that authority to fiscal year 2030.

The Nutria Eradication and Control Act has significantly reduced nutria populations in all three States. In Maryland, nutria were entirely eradicated from Chesapeake Bay in 2022. In California, captures peaked in 2020 and have been steadily declining, but they are not yet fully eradicated.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill so this important work can continue, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I commend Representative HARDER for his bipartisan work and his hard work to bring this important bill to the floor.

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

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. HARDER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, the Nutria Eradication and Control Reauthorization Act of 2025, because communities in California and across the country are in a war right now against these giant swamp rats.

My bill would reauthorize funding to strengthen eradication efforts for the invasive swamp rats, nutria, which are destroying our levees, harming local farmland, and infecting our very drinking water.

These 40-pound monsters are larger than the average dog. They eat 25 percent of their body weight every day and can reproduce 200 offspring every single year.

In 2023 alone, 78 percent of the nutria found in California were in newly in-

festated areas, threatening our entire way of life. The only way to stop their spreading invasion is to support local eradication and control efforts.

In 2020, I was proud to work with President Trump to bring nutria eradication funding to California for the first time ever. Now, the funding is set to expire at the end of this fiscal year, right when we need it most. This comes at a time when our district is at a breaking point with nutria control efforts.

Last year, more than 1,300 nutria were captured in California, which is a record-breaking year for takings in the State.

We must reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 to ensure States like California, Louisiana, and Florida are able to effectively curb the spread of this swamp rat once and for all.

We know that following wildlife management techniques to control and eradicate nutria is effective. For instance, the Chesapeake Bay region successfully eradicated nutria from their communities in 2018 after almost two decades of infestation.

We can't afford to let our foot off of the gas in California now. It is up to us to reauthorize this program to ensure that nutria is not only eradicated in the Chesapeake Bay region but in the United States.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass my bill to stop this infestation from poisoning our waterways and damaging our communities. I also want to take the time to thank my colleague, Mr. VALADAO, for his tireless support of this legislation.

□ 1645

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 776 would reauthorize a program that has proven very effective in protecting our country's vital wetlands and marshes from destructive invasive species. While great work has been accomplished in controlling these invasive pests, or swamp rats, as my colleague called them, continuing the nutria eradication program is crucial to ensuring our native species of plants and animals can recover.

Madam Speaker, I note that if gators and Cajuns can't eradicate these things from south Louisiana, we know our friends in the Central Valley need help, as well. I thank my colleagues for their diligent work on this bill, and I urge all Members to support this common-sense, bipartisan legislation.

Madam 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. 776.

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. Madam 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 until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 43, and

H.R. 776.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE MUNICIPAL LANDS RESTORATION ACT OF 2025

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 43) to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 412, nays 1, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 28]

YEAS—412

Adams	Arrington	Barragán
Aderholt	Auchincloss	Barrett
Aguilar	Babin	Baumgartner
Alford	Bacon	Bean (FL)
Allen	Baird	Beatty
Amo	Balderson	Begich
Amodei (NV)	Balint	Bell
Ansari	Barr	Bentz