the House floor. It is my hope that we shall soon see this bill signed into law.

THE STERLING FOREST

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce, along with my colleagues RICHARD POMBO and FRANK LUCAS, the Federal Lands Prioritization Act of 1995. This legislation will sell idle public lands deemed pointless for Federal ownership and will use the proceeds to purchase Sterling Forest; therefore ending the funding deadlock that has existed in Congress with regard to Sterling Forest.

With the help of Representatives POMBO and LUCAS, I now introduce a bill that, not only saves Sterling Forest, but also specifies a funding source for its acquisition. Last week I heard of Representative FRANK LUCAS' desire to sell public lands in Oklahoma and approached Representative POMBO of the House Resources Committee to propose that Sterling Forest be the beneficiary of funds from those Federal lands being reverted to private ownership.

Together, we were able to propose a bill that makes the Federal land acquisition process more fiscally responsible, and sets a precedent that the Federal Government reprioritize its land holding policies and streamline its inventory to better target budget resources and meet environmental goals.

As a Passaic County Freeholder, I understood early on the need to take action to protect Sterling Forest. In fact, during my service on the Passaic County Board of Freeholders, the board was the first entity to secure part of Sterling Forest in 1993—purchasing 2,000 acres. I have since been looking forward to the day that the reserve would have complete Federal protection. Selling dead-weight public lands to buy Sterling Forest is a fiscally responsible solution to a decade-old stalemate.

Located in southern New York and bordering northern New Jersey, Sterling Forest, in its current undeveloped State, is important to the residents of both States for a variety of reasons.

Sterling Forest is a 17,500-acre water and recreational reserve that area residents and public officials have repeatedly requested the Federal Government protect. Stalls in the actual purchase have been attributed to budget-cutting times and the concern about adding more public land to the already bloated Federal Government inventory.

As a recreational area for New York and New Jersey, Sterling Forest offers a haven for families and individuals interested in leaving behind stresses of everyday life. The picturesque beauty of this natural sanctuary provides a wide variety of outdoor activities for the enjoyment of everyone. Sterling Forest even serves as a connections to the Northeast with the Appalachian trail winding its way through the forest's rough terrain.

Most importantly, however, Sterling Forest is a watershed for most of northern New Jersey and the surrounding area. It provides nearly 2 million New Jersey residents with clean and safe drinking water.

Proposed development and urbanization of this area will destroy a great bounty of natural resources to the entire Northeast. Furthermore, if the land is developed, the water that flows from Sterling Forest could become polluted. The only viable solution at that point would be to build a water treatment center at the cost of $150 million to New Jersey taxpayers. Not only would this cost the taxpayers revenue they just don't have, but it is, at best, a second-rate solution. Truthfully, Mr. Speaker, there is just no comparison between treated water and water from a natural watershed such as Sterling Forest.

Sterling Forest is an issue of national significance, involving one of Government's most essential functions: the preservation of a vital, life-sustaining resource—water. As stated before, Sterling Forest provides clean water for 2 million Americans in New Jersey alone—a fact that transcends any suggestion of parochial interests.

For this reason, an alliance of governmental agencies and public interest groups have joined together in the fight to save this vital resource. This legislation sets up a management and fiscal partnership between all levels of Government. In fact, purchasing this land is just a one-time expense. The Department of the Interior will not be burdened by the costs of managing and maintaining the forest, for this will be done jointly by New York and New Jersey. A partnership such as this of local, State, and Federal Government is positive for all involved and should serve as a model for future land acquisition. It is our responsibility to protect Sterling Forest and assure an ample water supply for generations to come.

It is important to note that there is a bipartisan consensus to save Sterling Forest. Senator BILL BRADLEY of New Jersey has already sponsored a bill in the U.S. Senate, Gov. Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey signed the appropriation and authorization of $10 million toward the project, and Gov. George Pataki of New York approved the 1995–96 budget including $18 million for land conservation. Many members in the New Jersey delegation have been active in the collective pursuit of this achievement, and I commend them for all they have done.

The States and the Federal Government have been working to preserve this vital resource to insure that Sterling Forest is around to meet both the recreation and environment needs of the area. It is time that we realize our goals.

No matter how you look at this project, saving the forest yields no negative repercussions. The preservation of a vital source of water to one of the most populated areas of the country is not simply a laudable aspiration, but rather a necessary undertaking. Furthermore, the residents are opposed to development; the local governments are opposed to development; and the taxpayers are opposed to development.

Three sites totalling 56,000 acres will be put up for sale to the private sector: Optima ''Lake''—the failed flood control project, which now consists of a 17,000-foot earthen dam and a dry lake bed (13,500 acres), Black Kettle National Grasslands (30,710 acres), and Rita Blanca National Grasslands (13,576 acres). Both Black Kettle and Rita Blanca are odd-lot Federal tracts. These proceeds will be earmarked for the purchase of the Washita National Battlefield and Sterling Forest.

Please support this budget-friendly preservation of land that actually needs the Federal Government protection. Support the Federal Lands Prioritization Act of 1995.

EXTENDING AU PAIR PROGRAMS, H.R. 2767

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 13, 1995

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to extend the authorization for a program important to many American families. This measure renews the authority for the Au Pair program that expired on September 30. This bipartisan measure includes as original sponsors the ranking Democrat on the International Relations Committee, the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Hamilton, the chairman of the International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee, Mr. Smith of New Jersey the gentlelady from Maryland, Mrs. Morella, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Moran, the gentleman from California Mr. Baker, the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wolf, and the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Davis.

This measure will: Extend the authority for the program for 2 years; open it up to world wide participation; lift the limitation on the number of organizations that may participate and manage an au pair program; and, require the U.S. Information Agency to report on the compliance of the au pair organizations with recently adopted regulations.

Many families rely on the au pair program for their child care and particularly welcome the opportunity to broaden their children's experience by having someone from another country live with them for a year. The lapse in the program has caused untold inconvenience to many families turning their child care plans upside down. It is time to fix this problem.

Accordingly, I am pleased to be able to introduce this bipartisan bill and will seek rapid consideration by both Houses of Congress.

I request that the entire text of H.R. 2767 be inserted at this point in the RECORD.

H.R. 2767

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AU PAIR PROGRAMS.

(a) REPEAL.—Section 8 of the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–454) is repealed.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR AU PAIR PROGRAMS.—The Director of the United States Information Agency is authorized to continue to administer an au pair program, operating on a world-wide basis, through fiscal year 1997.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 1996, the Director of the United States Information Agency shall submit a report regarding the continued extension of au pair programs to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives. This report shall specifically detail the compliance of all au pair organizations with regulations governing au pair programs as published on February 15, 1995.