

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

AUTHORIZING BOARD OF REGENTS
OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
TO CONSTRUCT A GREENHOUSE
FACILITY

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5492) to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to construct a greenhouse facility at its museum support facility in Suitland, Maryland, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5492

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

SECTION 1. CONSTRUCTION OF GREENHOUSE FACILITY.

The Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution is authorized to construct a greenhouse facility at its museum support facility in Suitland, Maryland, to maintain the horticultural operations of, and preserve the orchid collection held in trust by, the Smithsonian Institution.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$12,000,000 to carry out this Act. Such sums shall remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5492, which is a bill to authorize appropriations for the Smithsonian for constructing of replacement greenhouses.

Mr. Speaker, the Smithsonian is widely renowned as a national treasure. Many of our constituents come from all over the country to visit its museums. There they can explore our culture, learn about our achievements, and view pieces of our history.

But the Smithsonian is much more than a keeper of artifacts. It has nine

research facilities and is a leader in scientific research. The Horticulture Services Division provides a wide variety of services internally to Smithsonian museums, and more generally to the public through the Smithsonian's public gardens.

The Smithsonian has leased a 55,000-square-foot greenhouse complex for its horticultural operations since 1974. It is currently located on the property of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Northwest Washington, DC.

The complex includes 12 greenhouses, an office for administrative and logistical functions, and a shade house. These greenhouses produce the institution's world-class orchid collection. They also provide space to grow a wide variety of plant materials for exhibits, gardens, and special events which would be costly or impossible to obtain commercially.

The greenhouses allow the Smithsonian resources equal to, if not surpassing, any other botanical institute in the world.

The greenhouse employees do this work with limited human resources. As true to most Smithsonian endeavors, the greenhouse staff is assisted in large part by a group of dedicated volunteer staff members. During fiscal year 2007, over 4,500 hours of time were donated by these individuals. Their commitment to the greenhouse facilities' programs is evident from their dedication, some of whom have donated over 25 years of service to the organization.

The current greenhouse site will be leased commercially, and the Smithsonian must begin work on replacement greenhouses at the Smithsonian Museum Support Facility in Suitland, Maryland. Moving the facilities is the most cost-effective way to preserve the greenhouses. The Smithsonian has also created a design that will help save money during construction.

Mr. Speaker, the important work being done every day by the Smithsonian horticulturists in the current facility is vital to the mission of the Smithsonian, the increase and diffusion of knowledge.

I appreciate Chairman OBERSTAR, Chairwoman NORTON, and Ranking Members MICA and GRAVES for recognizing the significance of this relocation. H.R. 5492 will ensure that the collections thrive and the important work that is done at these facilities continues. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5492 authorizes the Smithsonian Institution to construct greenhouses at its facility in Suitland, Maryland. The bill authorizes \$12 million to construct the greenhouses. The Transportation Committee has researched the proposed cost of and the need for this greenhouse facility. We have done our due diligence on this project.

This greenhouse facility will produce the plants for the entire Smithsonian

Institution complex, which is the world's largest museum complex. In addition, the facility will house the orchid collection held in trust by the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian currently conducts these activities at an aging facility located at the Armed Forces Retirement Home here in the District of Columbia. Because the retirement home is redeveloping the site, the Smithsonian will no longer be able to use the greenhouse facility located there.

These new greenhouses will enable the Smithsonian to continue producing its own plants after it loses access to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

Satisfying the Smithsonian's requirements for plants on the open market doesn't make sense economically. Given the wide variety of plans required for the National Zoo and museums, it is more cost effective for the Smithsonian to grow its own plants rather than to purchase them.

The cost of this project is appropriate given the need for the greenhouse facility, as well as the work necessary to construct this particular type of greenhouse. I support the resolution. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5492, which authorizes the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to construct a greenhouse facility at its museum support facility in Suitland, Maryland.

The Smithsonian has leased a 55,000-square-foot greenhouse complex for its horticultural operations on the property of the Armed Forces Retirement Home ("AFRH") in northwest Washington, DC, since 1974. The complex includes 12 greenhouses, space for administrative and logistical functions, and a shade house. The complex houses the Institution's world-class orchid collection, and provides space to grow a wide variety of plant materials for exhibits, gardens, and special events that would be costly or impossible to obtain commercially.

The AFRH plans to lease the property where the greenhouse complex is currently located to real estate developers and could turn the site over to a developer as early as September 30, 2008, when the current Smithsonian lease expires, leaving the Smithsonian without a greenhouse facility.

This bill authorizes \$12 million for the construction of a new greenhouse facility. This facility will support the Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations ("OFEO") of the Horticulture Services Division ("HSD"). This office provides services for the Smithsonian museums and units through planting for exhibits and special events, and through development and management of the Smithsonian public gardens.

I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) and the other congressional Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for introducing this bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5492.

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any other requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, once again I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5492, and I yield back the balance of my time.