

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the first experimental forest at Fort Valley, Arizona, by the Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Experimental forests and ranges provide places for long-term science and management studies in many of the major vegetation types across the country.

Fort Valley, the first experimental forest research station, established in 1908, as was mentioned earlier, was used to study how the ponderosa pine regenerates as the entire forest was being decimated through extensive logging, yet was not regrowing. Recommendations derived from research at Fort Valley were the basis of many U.S. Forest Service management practices that now allow us to responsibly log our forests so that they continue to produce.

The 80 experimental forests and ranges in existence today play an integral role in our Nation's ability to maintain healthy forests and establish responsible forestry practices. Thirty-five States have one or more experimental forests, including three in my home State of Mississippi.

Experimental forests and ranges provide samples of many ecological and environmental conditions across the United States. They support many forms of multisite research, monitoring and data sharing that address questions at regional and national scales.

As a tree farmer, I understand the vital role that experimental forests and ranges play in keeping myself and other tree farmers at the forefront of forestry research. As we continue to face challenges such as new diseases and invasive species in the forestry industry, experimental forests and ranges will be the key to finding solutions to these challenges and ensuring America's tree farmers continue to be competitive and profitable.

So I ask my colleagues, Members on both sides of the aisle today, to join me in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the establishment of experimental forests and support the passage of this resolution.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I join the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. LUCAS from Oklahoma, in urging adoption of this resolution and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 95.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1415

TERMINATING CERTAIN EASEMENTS IN CASEYVILLE, ILLINOIS

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 511) to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to terminate certain easements held by the Secretary on land owned by the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, and to terminate associated contractual arrangements with the Village.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 511

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

SECTION 1. TERMINATION OF NRCS EASEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS, VILLAGE OF CASEYVILLE, ILLINOIS.

(a) TERMINATION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Agriculture may terminate any easement held by the Secretary on land owned by the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, and terminate associated contractual arrangements with the Village.

(b) CONSIDERATION.—As consideration for the termination of an easement and associated contractual arrangements under subsection (a), the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, shall enter into such compensatory arrangements with the Secretary as determined to be appropriate by the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 511 would provide a limited authorization regarding the administration of a flood plain easement in the village of Caseyville, Illinois. The village of Caseyville and the United States Department of Agriculture executed a warranty easement deed in 1999 under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. However, differences in approach on how to best protect and restore the flood plain led Caseyville to seek termination of the easement, including paying back the entire easement purchase price of \$60,000 to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 511 would allow the National Resource Conservation Service the flexibility to release the terms of the easement so that the village can use the land for flood prevention. This bill passed the House Agriculture Committee by voice vote earlier this year, and I encourage my colleagues to support it today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 511. This bill will allow the Secretary of Agriculture to terminate certain flood easements in the village of Caseyville, Illinois, in return for compensation. Termination of easements is essential for flood protection projects in Caseyville. This bill has passed the House Agriculture Committee with no opposition. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 511, a bill I introduced to correct a problem in Caseyville, Illinois, which is part of the congressional district I represent. I appreciate the efforts of Chairman PETERSON and Ranking Member LUCAS to bring this bill to the floor today.

H.R. 511 simply gives the USDA the authority to terminate an easement it entered into with the Village of Caseyville on September 20, 1999, due to a disagreement over how the land could be used. The Village received \$60,000 and the easement covered 44 acres.

The Village believed that the Warranty Easement Deed under the "Emergency Watershed Protection Program" allowed the 44 acres to continue to be used for flood control. However, the National Resource Conservation Service began referring to the easement as a "Wetlands Reserve Program" property—that program is not concerned with flooding, but rather protecting and restoring wetlands.

The differences in approach led the Village to seek a termination of the easement, including paying back all of the \$60,000 to the Department of Agriculture. After a great deal of discussion, the Department of Agriculture stated that it did not have the authority to terminate the easement, and suggested this legislative approach.

I again, thank the Committee for its attention to this matter and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I have no further speakers and will yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I join the gentleman from Oklahoma in encouraging our colleagues to pass this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 511.

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.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3175) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey to Miami-Dade County certain federally owned land in Florida, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3175

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