

Sixteen Presidents—eight of each party—have used this act to protect America's treasures.

I am proud of what President Obama has been able to accomplish through the work he has done under the Antiquities Act. He has moved where Congress has failed to act.

Caesar Chavez and the Chicano labor movement were honored by creating the Caesar Chavez National Monument in California.

He protected Fort Monroe in Virginia in recognition of its storied history in defense of our Nation and the struggle for freedom for African Americans. It is a beautiful facility.

We have in Honolulu the Honouliuli National Monument to remember the terrible internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Last month, President Obama protected by proclamation Pullman National Monument, which celebrates the history of the African-American labor movement in America.

As a westerner, I appreciate what he has done to protect America's beautiful landscapes, such as the Rio Grande Del Norte and the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monuments in New Mexico, the Browns Canyon National Monument in Colorado, and western landscapes in California, Washington, and Hawaii.

This is something which is so important to be done, so I am disappointed that I hear that on the budget bill there is going to be an effort made to cut the Antiquities Act. I hope not. I absolutely will do everything I can to protect this act. It has been in law since 1906 and has been used by 16 Presidents.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

Pending:

Cotton amendment No. 481, to establish a deficit-neutral fund relating to supporting Israel.

Enzi (for Kirk) amendment No. 545, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reimposing waived sanctions and imposing new sanctions against Iran for violations of the Joint Plan of Action or a comprehensive nuclear agreement.

Rounds/Inhofe amendment No. 412, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from engaging in closed-door settle-

ment agreements that ignore impacted States and counties.

Rubio modified amendment No. 423, to increase new budget authority fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050).

Daines amendment No. 388, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the designation of national monuments.

Daines amendment No. 389, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided and controlled by the two managers or their designees.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to thank Chairman ENZI for his courtesy in allowing me to take a few minutes to discuss a bipartisan amendment I will be offering on this bill. It deals with what I think is going to be an enormous challenge this summer for the West, and that is dealing with this wildfire challenge and the prospect that we could literally have enormous fires—what could be virtually infernos—throughout the West this summer.

I make that judgment because recently when I was home, I got a briefing. For example, in Medford, OR, they told me it was the driest it had been for 25 years. In Medford, when you get an update on the fires—and, colleagues, it is worth noting that nobody used to have a fire briefing in March. That is just unheard of. We have fire briefings well into the summer. But fires are getting to be a year-round occurrence. I was there in March, and the fire experts said it is going to be very dry. When you look southward to California, all you see is dry, dry, dry.

The fact is that as it gets drier and as it gets hotter on the forest floor, should lightning strike, which is very common in rural America, all of a sudden you can have an inferno on your hands and one that really knows no boundaries and can affect private property owners, State lands, and Federal lands. We had an important hearing in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee the other day on the sportsmen's bill. It looked as if there were a lot of good ideas in the bipartisan bill, but it will be pretty hard to go hunting and fishing in the forests this summer if the forests are burning up.

So what a bipartisan group of us from the West want to do—and I particularly commend our colleague Senator CRAPO of Idaho. He and I have teamed up on this effort. We have a large bipartisan coalition of Senators who have joined us. We want to fix the broken system of fighting wildfire in America.

What happens today, colleagues, is that the accounts for prevention get short shrift. In effect, the work that needs to be done with the smaller trees and thinning out the underbrush

doesn't get the funding that is needed, so what happens is, as a result of the lack of prevention, you have these bigger fires and you have to put them out. The accounts for dealing with fire suppression are also short of money, so what happens at that point is the agencies borrow from the prevention fund to put the fire out, and the problem just gets worse and worse.

So what Senator CRAPO and I, with, as I have indicated, a large bipartisan coalition of Senators, are seeking to do is to end that kind of fire borrowing. What we are proposing is that the biggest fires—perhaps the 1 percent of the fires that really turn into infernos—you would fight those from the disaster fund because they are, in fact, disasters.

We have received an analysis from the budget officials indicating that this would really be a wash from a budgeting standpoint because, in effect, while you do spend a bit of money from the disaster fund putting out these infernos, you also generate some real savings from the prevention fund by not having as many fires in the first place.

What our bipartisan amendment will do is give the Departments of Agriculture and Interior the opportunity to access the disaster fund for that 1 percent of the fires that can really break a community apart. It seems to me that Americans across the country who live in communities where there are these fires deserve to know their homes and lives are not going to be threatened needlessly. That is what we will be able to prevent with this bipartisan amendment.

Freeing up the Forest Service funds that our proposal will do will ensure that the natural resources agencies have the resources they need to improve forest health and fund the very preventive work that is needed to reduce the size and severity of future fires.

We are going to be joined in this amendment. As I have indicated, Senator CRAPO and I base it on our bipartisan bill. Senators STABENOW and BALDWIN will be cosponsors, and I believe others will as well.

It is an important amendment and it is an urgent amendment because we need to have this in place quickly so as to give the natural resources agencies and our communities the tools they need this summer.

It is a real wake-up call when you get a fire briefing in March. That is an indication that we have a very, very difficult fire season coming up. This bipartisan amendment ensures that in a cost-effective way we give our natural resources agencies the tools they need to fight these infernos and protect our communities.

Once again, I thank the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator ENZI, for giving me this time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.