

the Federal Lands Subcommittee and who has jurisdiction over this.

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

Mr. Speaker, this year marked the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service and of that uniquely American notion that the most beautiful and historic lands should be set aside for the “use, resort, and recreation” of the American people, as the original Yosemite Grant Act put it, or, in the words of the Organic Act of 1916 that established the national parks, “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild-life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same.”

Yet, a century into this endeavor, the Park Service faces considerable challenges to achieving its objectives. The Park Service’s original charge was to manage just 35 national parks and monuments. Today it is responsible for more than 400 units across 84 million acres. This exponential growth has left many locations in disrepair, facing a growing backlog of deferred maintenance now exceeding \$12 billion.

In addition to desperately needed maintenance, the Park Service also faces challenges with fee collection, technological upgrades, management of concessions contracts for visitor services, and, most disturbingly, a substantial decrease in overnight visitation. The decline has been particularly high among young people. Recent reports indicate that visits to parks by those 15 years of age and younger has fallen by half over the last decade.

The National Park Service Centennial Act provides the Park Service with new tools and authorities that it can use to maintain and improve the system. Provisions in this bill help reduce the Service’s maintenance backlog by generating new revenue to pay for needed capital improvements and leveraging private philanthropic donations to amplify this effort. In turn, these funds will be used to enhance visitor services, provide WiFi and cellular access that young people demand, and expand the Volunteers-In-Parks and Public Lands Corps programs that are so important in welcoming the public to the public lands.

I believe the three greatest challenges to Federal lands management are to restore public access to the public lands, to restore sound management to the public lands, and to restore the Federal Government as a good neighbor to those communities directly affected by the public lands.

This bill does all three. It promotes public access and enjoyment of the parks by promoting the expansion, modernization, and improvement of visitor services and amenities. It promotes good management by placing priority and generating funds necessary to address the growing maintenance backlog. It repairs the relationship between the Federal and local governments by giving local officials a say in future historic designations.

I can’t think of a better way to celebrate the last century and to begin the next century of our National Park Service than to restore the vision of its founders. Mr. Speaker, this bill does so, and I urge its adoption.

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

This month marks the end of a year of celebration. Over the past 12 months, hundreds of millions of people from our country and from around the world have joined together to celebrate one of the most valued and uniquely American ideas: our national park system. In our democratic society, the park system is uniquely one of the most democratic public institutions because, after all, all Americans own the park system and it is for all Americans, regardless.

For many, this year was a time to reflect on what began 100 years ago with a single mission: to protect our unique American heritage for the enjoyment of future generations. Last year, national parks across this Nation saw a record 307 million visitors. People came to the parks to explore, to learn and reflect on the grand natural beauty and the diverse history of our Nation.

Fifty years ago, Members of Congress understood the need to recognize these types of milestone accomplishments by passing legislation to reinvestigate not only the agency, but the American public. A decade before the 50th anniversary of the National Park Service, the House began pulling together a bill that demonstrated to the American people that they were willing to put their money where their mouth was.

In honor of the National Park Service’s 50th anniversary, Congress funded the Mission 66 program at over \$900 million, the equivalent of \$8 billion in 2016 dollars. The National Park Service expected 80 million visitors to celebrate that anniversary. Unsurprisingly, the American public beat expectations. The parks saw almost 130 million visitors in 1966 alone.

This Congress, which has the benefit of knowing how much Americans value their national parks, should be authorizing at least an equal amount. Instead, we have before us a bill that is but a shadow of what it could have been, a far cry from what my Democratic colleagues and I in the committee introduced back in September 2015. Instead of passing a bill that gives a standing ovation to the accomplishments of the Park Service and sets the bar high for the next 100 years, today we are passing legislation that is the equivalent of a golf clap—very quietly.

Even previous Republican administrations have better understood the value of our national parks. In the last Republican administration, President Bush and Secretary Kempthorne were prepared to provide \$2.5 billion in additional operating funds, an additional \$1 billion in centennial commitment funds, and \$1 billion in centennial challenge funds to encourage private charitable investment in our country’s

parks. In comparison, this legislation provides a tiny amount of funding compounded by years of budget reductions. Further, this bill asks that the mandatory spending come from only one source: mandatory increases to the price of the Parks’ Senior Pass.

What we are seeing today is a shell of a bill. Only a few provisions remain, which, although marginally helpful to ensure the vitality of the national parks for the future, fall far short of what is necessary and needed. What we are seeing today is a missed opportunity to do what is right. This bill, while optimistically named, is a year late and a couple of billion dollars short. Maybe we will get it right in the next 100 years.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. This is a good bill. I appreciate those who have spoken so far for their willingness to take “yes” as an answer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of 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 Utah (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4680, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ARBUCKLE PROJECT MAINTENANCE COMPLEX AND DISTRICT OFFICE CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2016

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1219) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1219

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 “Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. CONVEYANCE OF MAINTENANCE COMPLEX AND DISTRICT OFFICE OF THE ARBUCKLE PROJECT, OKLAHOMA.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of the Interior shall, as soon as practicable, convey to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, located in Murray County, Oklahoma, all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Maintenance Complex and District Office, Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, consistent with the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement between the United States and the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District.

(b) *DEFINITIONS.*—

(1) *AGREEMENT.*—The term “Agreement” means the Agreement between the United States

and the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District for Transferring Title to the Federally Owned Maintenance Complex and District Office to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District (Agreement No. 14AG640141).

(2) **DISTRICT OFFICE.**—The term “District Office” means the headquarters building located at 2440 East Main, Davis, Oklahoma, and the approximately 0.83 acres described in the Agreement.

(3) **MAINTENANCE COMPLEX.**—The term “Maintenance Complex” means the caretakers residence, shop buildings, and any appurtenances located on the lands described in the Agreement, to include approximately 2.00 acres, more or less.

(c) **LIABILITY.**—Effective upon the date of conveyance of the Maintenance Complex and District Office under this section, the United States shall not be held liable by any court for damages of any kind arising out of any act, omission, or occurrence relating to the Maintenance Complex and District Office, except for damages caused by acts of negligence committed by the United States or by its employees or agents prior to the date of conveyance. Nothing in this section increases the liability of the United States beyond that provided in chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code (popularly known as the “Federal Tort Claims Act”) on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) **BENEFITS.**—After conveyance of the Maintenance Complex and District Office to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District—

(1) the Maintenance Complex and District Office shall not be considered to be a part of a Federal reclamation project; and

(2) such water district shall not be eligible to receive any benefits with respect to any facility comprising that Maintenance Complex and District Office, except benefits that would be available to a similarly situated person with respect to such a facility that is not part of a Federal reclamation project.

(e) **COMMUNICATION.**—If the Secretary of the Interior has not completed the conveyance required under subsection (a) within 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a letter with sufficient detail that explains the reasons the conveyance has not been completed and stating the date by which the conveyance will be completed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill, H.R. 1219, sponsored by the great Congressman from Oklahoma, allows a water district in Oklahoma to take ownership of two buildings and 2 acres of land that they have paid for, they have operated, and they have maintained for the last several decades. Unfortunately, they still remain in Federal ownership, and they need this legislation to actually transfer it

to relieve the district of burdensome paperwork and also relieve the Federal Government of some liability.

This bill has been done 27 other times over the last two decades, which simply means there needs to be some kind of reform in the process to remove the slow pace of the Bureau of Reclamation so we don't have to go through such a complicated effort for such a worthy cause.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1219 is a straightforward, reasonable piece of legislation worthy of passage. The bill would allow a title transfer of two Federal buildings to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in south central Oklahoma.

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These buildings are part of the Arbuckle Project, which is a water project, authorized by Congress in 1962, to provide flood control, recreational opportunities, and municipal water supply.

Nearly all of the facilities within the Arbuckle Project were already transferred to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in 2012 after the district finished repaying what it owed the Federal Government for construction. However, due to some overly narrow language in the legislation authorizing the Arbuckle Project, two buildings within the project have yet to be transferred.

Transferring the two remaining buildings will save taxpayer money that would otherwise be needed to operate and maintain the buildings and will also relieve the Federal Government of any potential future liability associated with the buildings. This is straightforward legislation that should be quickly passed.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend for yielding, and I certainly want to thank him for moving this expeditiously through his committee and onto the floor. I want to associate myself with his remarks about the need for reform because this is a fairly routine matter.

I rise in support of H.R. 1219, the Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act. This bill is a straightforward land conveyance, which has both Federal and local support.

H.R. 1219 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain lands and buildings of the Arbuckle Project, in Murray County, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District.

In 1962, Congress authorized the payment of reimbursable costs for construction, operation, and maintenance

of the Bureau of Reclamation's Arbuckle Master Conservancy District in south-central Oklahoma. The district completed repayment of the capital costs of the project in September of 2012.

In accordance with the Bureau of Reclamation's policy framework for title transfer, in December 2014, the Bureau of Reclamation and the district executed an agreement to transfer, in fee title, certain facilities that could be more efficiently and effectively managed at the local level.

The title transfer involves approximately 2.83 acres of land. On this land is a small house, associated structures, and the conservancy district's headquarters office building. The House and property are used to accommodate a district employee who maintains and inspects the dam and the pumping facilities. The headquarters office building is the base of operation for the district.

This bill also divests the Federal Government of its responsibility and liability associated with the district's facilities. Reclamation and the district have worked cooperatively and successfully to address all of the elements necessary to bring this legislation forward and make this transfer proceed as smoothly as possible.

I am pleased that this bill is an agreement with which both the Federal and local interests are satisfied.

I want to urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation. Again, I want to thank the chairman for his help in this matter.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, again, like I said, this is straightforward legislation that should be quickly passed. We urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill, and I urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1219, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. 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.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS ECONOMIC EXPANSION ACT

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6401) to amend Public Law 94-241 with respect to the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows: