

(13) calls for continued support to the United States' European Deterrence Initiative.

Mr. ROYCE of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT TO THE PREAMBLE OFFERED BY
MR. ROYCE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. ROYCE of California. I have an amendment to the preamble at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the United States has shown strong commitment to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic development of the countries that emerged from the ashes of the former Soviet Union and the communist bloc it once dominated;

Whereas many of these countries have, during the past three decades, undertaken the extensive political and economic reforms necessary to achieve their aspirations for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, or are continuing to do so;

Whereas the incorporation of Central and Eastern European countries into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has contributed to a vision of Europe that is whole and free and united in peace, democracy, and common values;

Whereas the mission of NATO since its founding in 1949 is to defend its members from aggression, enhance cooperation on defense and security issues, and promote the peaceful resolution of disputes;

Whereas NATO remains the most important and critical security link between the United States and Europe;

Whereas on November 16, 2016, former President Barack Obama stated, "NATO, the world's greatest alliance, is as strong and as ready as it's ever been and I am confident that just as America's commitment to the transatlantic alliance has endured for seven decades—whether it's been under a Democratic or Republican administration—that commitment will continue, including our pledge and our treaty obligation to defend every ally.";

Whereas on July 6, 2017, President Donald J. Trump reiterated the United States' support of NATO by saying, "To those who would criticize our tough stance, I would point out that the United States has demonstrated not merely with words but with its actions that we stand firmly behind Article 5, the mutual defense commitment.";

Whereas NATO allies and partners in Central and Eastern Europe, including countries of the Western Balkans, and the former Soviet Union have stood alongside the United States in joint peace operations in the Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere around the globe;

Whereas NATO established the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council to promote, among other priorities, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, and crisis management cooperation as well as advancing values, including respect of international law and peaceful resolution of disputes;

Whereas Russia's aggressive actions against members of the NATO Alliance and

nearby NATO partner countries, including its many violations of Baltic airspace, occupation of Georgian territory in 2008, illegal occupation of Crimea since 2014, and continued threats to Moldovan territorial integrity and sovereignty, not only violate its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) agreements but also foment instability in Europe;

Whereas NATO allies increased their assistance to NATO partner countries by endorsing the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package in support of Georgia at the Wales Summit, the Comprehensive Assistance Package in support of Ukraine at the Warsaw Summit, and developed a phased Defense and Related Security Capacity Building package in support of Moldova;

Whereas the European Deterrence Initiative represents the United States commitment to enduring peace, stability, and territorial integrity in Europe as members and partners of the NATO Alliance;

Whereas from September 14 through September 20, 2017, Russia held a large-scale military exercise in Belarus known as Zapad 2017;

Whereas the last Zapad exercise was in 2013 which laid the foundations for Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea;

Whereas NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg expressed concerns about Russia's lack of transparency regarding military exercises;

Whereas Secretary-General Stoltenberg also stated, "Russia is our neighbor.... We don't want to isolate Russia; we don't want a new Cold War.";

Whereas the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia, Valery Gerasimov, wrote in 2013 that "informational conflict" is a key part of war;

Whereas Baltic and NATO officials believe that Russia was likely responsible for interruptions in Latvia's mobile communications network before the Zapad exercise;

Whereas three Baltic Russian-language news sites known collectively as Baltnews are secretly owned by Rossiya Segodnya, a news agency owned and operated by the Russian Government;

Whereas on June 28, 2017, Vesko Garcevic, Montenegro's ambassador to NATO from 2010 through 2014, testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that Russia has provided support to extremist groups and even used the country's religious institutions to oppose closer ties to the Western world;

Whereas on April 4, 2018, Russia began a live-fire military exercise in the Baltic Sea, just outside of the territorial waters of NATO member countries, in a move a top Latvian defense official called a "show of force" just a day after Baltic leaders met with President Trump;

Whereas at the Wales Summit in 2014, all 28 members of the NATO alliance declared their intention to move towards a minimum security investment of 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense within a decade;

Whereas on June 8, 2018, NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg spoke of increases in defense investments by European allies, that "Allies are making real progress on all aspects of burden sharing, cash, capabilities and contributions... But of course, we still have more work to do. Burden sharing will be a key theme of our Summit next month. And I expect all Allies to continue their efforts."; and

Whereas the commitment to collective defense in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty remains at the heart of the Alliance: Now, therefore, be it

Mr. ROYCE of California (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "A resolution expressing support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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 the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on if the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

□ 1445

CROOKED RIVER RANCH FIRE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2075) to adjust the eastern boundary of the Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area in the State of Oregon to facilitate fire prevention and response activities in order to protect adjacent private property, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2075

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 "Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) *The Crooked River Ranch is an unincorporated community with a population of 5,000 residents.*

(2) *The current lands located adjacent to Crooked River Ranch are managed by the Bureau of Land Management and are classified as a Wilderness Study Area.*

(3) *There is currently only one entrance/exit to the Crooked River Ranch.*

(4) *Jefferson County and Crooked River Ranch have determined that the Wilderness Study Area lands are in the highest risk category for exposure to devastating wildfire due to overstocked juniper stands under the federally mandated and locally promulgated Jefferson County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).*

(5) *The current Wilderness Study Area classification prevents mechanical fire prevention activities within the overstocked juniper stands.*

(6) *Advancing this proposed legislation will greatly enhance the life and safety of people and property by reducing the extreme fire threat to these lands.*

SEC. 3. BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT, DESCHUTES CANYON-STEELHEAD FALLS AND DESCHUTES CANYON WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS, OREGON.

(a) *BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED.*—The Secretary of the Interior shall adjust the eastern boundary of the Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area and the Deschutes Canyon Wilderness Study Area in the State of Oregon to exclude approximately 832 acres, as depicted on the map entitled “Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area” and dated April 6, 2017, in order to facilitate fire prevention and response activities on the excluded public lands and adjacent private property.

(b) *EFFECT OF EXCLUSION.*—Effective on the date of the enactment of this Act, the public lands to be excluded from the Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area and the Deschutes Canyon Wilderness Study Area pursuant to subsection (a) are no longer subject to section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1782(c)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members 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 California?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Crooked River Ranch is a residential community that is home to approximately 5,500 people. It is located between the Deschutes and Crooked Rivers in Jefferson County, Oregon. Because of this geography, there is only one all-weather road in and out of Crooked River Ranch.

Now, right next to this community, along the Deschutes River, is a roughly 3,200-acre Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area, which is managed—or, more accurately, is mismanaged—by the Bureau of Land Management. This BLM property is thick with vegetation, which poses a very real risk for catastrophic wildfires, in large part because the wilderness study area regulations greatly restrict essential measures for both fire mitigation and firefighting.

For example, in a wilderness or wilderness study area, you can't use mechanized or motorized equipment or transport. This includes chainsaws as well as electrical generators, trucks, and larger equipment essential to fuels management. You can't even use this equipment to cut fire breaks. You can't build fire roads. You can't do mechanical thinning of vegetation. Even the hand thinning that is allowed in such areas is very limited.

Absent a waiver from the Secretary of the Interior, firefighters can't drop fire retardant or use bulldozers to cut

fire breaks in the wilderness study area during a fire. Tragically, the benign neglect mandated by these requirements has made all wilderness areas firetraps just waiting for a lighting flash or a careless match.

H.R. 2075, authored by Congressman GREG WALDEN, with the support of the local community, would slightly modify the eastern boundary of the Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area, making it possible to manage the land properly to reduce fuel loads that threaten the neighborhoods in Crooked River Ranch.

The boundary change will reduce the WSA by about 830 acres, but this small change will promote public safety, allow for more efficient fuels treatments on the lands immediately adjacent to Crooked River Ranch, and give critically important flexibility to local firefighters should fire break out in that area.

This is an issue of public safety, and this bill will clearly help protect the lives and property of the thousands of Crooked River Ranch residents from wildfire.

I commend Congressman WALDEN for his work to provide a commonsense solution to a very real public safety concern. I urge adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act removes 830 acres from the wilderness study area in central Oregon. The land is adjacent to a rural subdivision, and its removal from WSA will arguably make it easier for the local community and the BLM to plan wildfire mitigation projects.

While we take issue with the point that the WSA designation limits mechanical thinning and other necessary forest treatments, the area is not suitable for wilderness designation, and the release from the WSA makes sense.

However, we still have concerns with this bill, because it ignores the collaborative process that was trying to develop a comprehensive plan for the entire area. That plan would have led to lasting conservation gains by designating wilderness and would have done even more to protect the community from wildfire by creating special management areas adjacent to Crooked River Ranch. Unfortunately, the collaborative group stalled out after this legislation was introduced.

Only Congress can permanently change the status of a wilderness study area. Whenever we choose to make a permanent change, we have a responsibility to consider the whole picture and listen to all stakeholders.

While it is disappointing that we are unable to fulfill that commitment with this legislation, we understand the need to prioritize safety of the Crooked River Ranch residents.

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to

the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the author of this legislation and the elected representative of this threatened community.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MCCLINTOCK and my friend from Arizona for their work on this, especially Chairman BISHOP as well. The Natural Resources Committee has been terrific to work with on this measure over a period of time.

The bill is really an important public safety measure. This is a life-and-death measure. There are more than 5,000 people who live in Crooked River Ranch. This is an unincorporated community in central Oregon. It is wedged between two river systems, river canyons.

You can see it here on this map. I want to point out the two rivers here. It is actually on a peninsula. It sits up. These are deep canyons. To the west over here is where the wilderness study area is that we are talking about. It is juniper. It is cheatgrass. It is sagebrush. These are the most volatile fuels you can have.

Unlike here on the East Coast, where in the summer you get thunderstorms and heavy rain with it, out in Oregon, we have humidity. We call it rain that stays in the ground. But in the summer, we don't get that. What we get is dry lightning and very little rain. When lightning strikes occur in that kind of vegetation, it explodes.

I have talked to the firefighters, and I will show you what happens when this happens. This the terrain. The overstocked juniper, you can see it over here. This is very volatile terrain. That is grasslands. As I say, there are all kinds of other volatile fuels in there.

This is at the highest risk category for exposure to catastrophic wildfire. The wildfire planning community protection plan calls it that in Jefferson County.

Fire season is already underway in central Oregon. In fact, wildfires have already burned 120,000 acres so far this year. It has just gotten started. By the way, that is the equivalent of burning about 2½ times the entire size of Washington, D.C.

So what does that look like? When fire gets into these junipers, they basically explode. It is very volatile. Jefferson County Sheriff Jim Adkins took this picture out of his rig of the Graham fire. This fire nearby—not right at Crooked River Ranch, but in the same county—burned a few weeks ago. It burned two homes. Altogether, it burned about 2,000 acres—2,000 acres—and a couple of homes before they could get in and get it out.

So what we are doing here with this legislation is removing 832 acres. That is it. Three-thousandths of 1 percent of all the WSAs in Oregon, three-thousandths of 1 percent of the acreage, 832 acres, we are saying that we are just going to take it back to the rim of the canyon, and, on that flat land, you can go in and thin out these junipers and get it back to where you can do fire management.

Now, when I have talked to the fire chiefs and crews there, they have told me: Look, in this community of 5,000, there is one road in and out.

If you have a fire that blows up like this out on the peninsula, out on the end, the fire chiefs basically said: If the conditions are wrong and there is wind, I am not going to put my firefighters' lives at risk, so we will probably not go in and fight that fire. We will just try and get people out.

Can you imagine, on a two-lane road, trying to evacuate more than 5,000 people with a monster fire breathing down your back? That is what we are trying to avoid here.

This WSA was determined in 1992 by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to not be suitable for inclusion as wilderness. They said: No, it doesn't meet the criteria. It should not be included.

But the way the Federal law works, once the agency decides to study one of these areas, all the restrictions come on the land. As you have heard from both sides of the aisle—well, at least our side of the aisle—that means that you can't go in and do mechanical thinning. You can't do the kind of work we need to do.

By the way, if there is a fire, it takes all kinds of permission to drop the retardant or to get in there with mechanical means.

All we are saying is, let's back that up 832 acres along the rim line, send people in, thin this back to where it is in balance and will not cause devastating wildfire to consume Crooked River Ranch. Let's look at what happens when that does occur.

You will remember this tragedy from my friend's home State in Santa Rosa, California. You don't think fires are monsters and killers and deadly? Look at what happened to this community, the homes and lives that were lost.

This is what we are trying to prevent from happening at Crooked River Ranch. With bipartisan support, the House is going to show its will today, and I think overwhelmingly, to say this is a measured, thoughtful piece of legislation with enormous support in the community and the county that will prevent a Santa Rosa from occurring at Crooked River Ranch.

Remember, there is one way in and one way out, and 5,500 people who live in this area.

I thank the gentleman from Alaska for his leadership on this. He and his staff have been terrific.

I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I know we have some differences about adding other things in. That can be dealt with, discussed at another time, but we have a serious and deadly threat staring us down every summer. We have fires already burning in the area.

If we want to save lives and prevent deadly fires, this is the bill to do it. This is the time to do it. Let's get it done.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the more than 5,000 residents

of the Crooked River Ranch and in the name of common sense, I ask for passage of this vital public safety measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2075, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to adjust the eastern boundary of the Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls and Deschutes Canyon Wilderness Study Areas in the State of Oregon to facilitate fire prevention and response activities to protect private property, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Lasky, one of the clerks, announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 5895) "An Act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.", disagreed to by the House and agrees to the conference asked by the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. SHELBY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. MURPHY, be the conferees on the part of the Senate, with instructions.

STRENGTHENING FISHING COMMUNITIES AND INCREASING FLEXIBILITY IN FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in H.R. 200.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 965 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 200.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1457

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the

consideration of the bill (H.R. 200) to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to provide flexibility for fishery managers and stability for fishermen, and for other purposes, with Mr. BOST in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, today I rise in strong support of my legislation, H.R. 200, the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act.

Mr. Chairman, as one of the sponsors of the original bill way back in 1975, and I fought to secure enactment in 1976, I can say it is probably the most successful legislation that ever passed this House to create a sustainable yield of fisheries for the United States of America.

I first wrote what would become the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and it hasn't been reauthorized since 2006. For 6 years, I have worked with Members of this body on both sides of the aisle to improve this legislation.

I know some of my colleagues will say that I didn't do enough to ensure the act retains the strong bipartisan nature of the original bill. It is important to remember the legislative history. While it is true that the version of the Magnuson-Stevens Act that became law passed the House under suspension of the rules, the original bill passed the Natural Resources Committee after a long markup by a vote of 26-15, with only four Democrats voting in favor of the bill.

□ 1500

So this point that the previous reauthorizations were noncontroversial and nonpartisan is not true.

My legislation, H.R. 200, would make a number of improvements to the original act in order to ensure a proper balance between the biological needs of fish stocks and the economic needs of fishermen in coastal communities.

The legislation tailors Federal fishery authorities in order to give councils the proper tools and flexibility needed to effectively manage their fisheries, and will support a more robust domestic seafood industry and greater job creation across the country.

This legislation allows added flexibility for fishery managers to rebuild depleted fisheries, more transparency for fishermen in science and management, and a requirement for NOAA to provide better accountability on how fees are collected and used. It also authorizes appropriations for the act for 5 years.