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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 18, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHARLES J. FLEISCHMANN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

UPDATE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, when the Endangered Species Act was signed into law in 1973, its goal was simple: safeguard endangered species and assist in the recovery of their population.

Until last week, no recent attempts have been made to reform this essential piece of legislation. Over the past

several years, the Congressional Western Caucus has been working together to determine what parts of the Endangered Species Act are broken and to develop solutions to repair this law.

The Endangered Species Act is in dire need of modernization and reform, which is why, last week, the Western Caucus, which I am proud to belong to, rolled out some solutions; among them is to address the broken litigation process that incentivizes litigation for profit at the expense of the taxpayer, address the lack of clear listing and delisting criteria, address the lack of transparency in Endangered Species Act decisionmaking and data collection, consider the needs of States more seriously, and address the unnecessary impediments to economic development and land management that affect endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, as far as statutes that require costly litigation, the Endangered Species Act was the third most expensive for the Department of Agriculture and the most expensive for the Department of the Interior.

Endangered Species Act litigation cost the Department of Agriculture and the Federal taxpayers \$1.63 billion from 2000 to 2010. It cost the Department of the Interior \$22 billion from 2000 to 2010, all at the expense of the taxpayer. These frivolous lawsuits have severe consequences on local economies.

Additionally, the absence of State consultation weakens the overall data that can be used to justify the Endangered Species Act listings and recovery plans, a complete lack of transparency. State and local expertise is needed to strengthen and streamline the Endangered Species Act listing and delisting process.

I am happy to say that these issues are addressed in some of the bills that were introduced last week. I proudly cosponsored a number of the bills that will make progress on this front, in-

cluding the LOCAL Act, which was introduced by my colleague SCOTT TIPTON. This bill would set up new incentives and opportunities for voluntary conservation by establishing a private party conservation grants program and a habitat conservation planning loan program for State and local governments. These programs will save the taxpayers money while boosting conservation.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the majority of the recent species that have been delisted happened not as a result of the Endangered Species Act or the Fish and Wildlife Service, but through voluntary conservation with the leadership of the Department of Agriculture.

The LAMP Act, introduced by my colleague Congressman DON YOUNG, permits the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative management agreements with States, local governments, Tribes, and other non-Federal persons in order to better manage species and improve habitat conservation. The bill also empowers States with robust species conservation programs already in place to take the lead in managing and preserving such species when meeting certain qualifying conditions.

Mr. Speaker, these are just two examples of great pieces of legislation that have been introduced in the House to upgrade, modernize, and bring into the 21st century the Endangered Species Act.

The Endangered Species Act is in dire need of modernization, and I am eager to work with my colleagues to address these needs and reform this outdated law. I urge my colleagues to examine these commonsense bills, look at the facts behind them, and cosponsor them today.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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