

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 234, after line 21, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent provisions accordingly):

TITLE VII—STUDY ON FLOOD RISK MITIGATION

SEC. 701. STUDY ON FLOOD RISK MITIGATION.

The Comptroller General shall conduct a study to determine the contributions of wilderness designations under this Act to protections to flood risk mitigation in residential areas.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 844, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. SCHRIER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, first, I would like to applaud the work of my colleagues, Representative KILMER and Representative DEGETTE, for all the hard work they have done on this underlying, very important bill. It is a great bill for Washington, and I will be supporting it. Protecting wilderness areas is so important to maintain Washington's beautiful environment for future generations.

My amendment to the bill is very simple. It requires the Government Accountability Office to study how preserving wilderness lands can help reduce flood risks in residential areas.

The area in this photo is practically in my backyard. Over the past week, Washington State has experienced severe winter storms. The Governor of Washington State recently issued an emergency proclamation for 25 counties due to flooding and winter weather. Three of those counties, Kittitas, King, and Pierce, are located in the Eighth Congressional District, my congressional district.

In my district, these storms largely took the form of excessive rain and flooding. They caused landslides on a highway that cut off access to the Greenwater community and Crystal Mountain, Washington's largest ski area, which was closed for 4 days in a very busy, typical weekend period.

In Issaquah, here, down the road from one of my district offices, the Eastside Fire Department evacuated apartment buildings that were in proximity to a creek that had breached its banks and had water rushing through the parking lot and under the building.

In Fall City, a town that has two roads in and out, there is a slow-moving landslide underneath one of those roads, and the road has started to separate. Residents have been encouraged to evacuate so they are not at risk of being isolated in this town.

As we continue to confront climate change, we need to holistically consider our approaches to wilderness and public lands. Preservation of our public lands is just one tool at our disposal to

help mitigate the impacts of flooding. We need to let nature do what nature does best: soak up water and prevent land from moving and turning into a landslide or mudslide during a flooding event.

Climate change science shows that our region will experience heavier, more intense rainfall and increased rain-on-snow events that will increase the risk of flooding.

Comprehensive watershed level planning, from the headwaters in wild and public lands all the way down to our towns and cities, is critical if we are going to address the myriad challenges facing so many of our communities, from flooding to salmon habitat restoration, to expanding recreation and outdoor access.

As we think on a watershed scale, wilderness areas in the Eighth Congressional District and across the State help protect the headwaters of our watersheds.

A little further downhill, we have collaborative groups working on active management to improve forest health; and in the lower watersheds, we have local governments, Tribes, and other stakeholders working on integrative approaches to reduce flood risks in our communities.

As our climate changes, we are going to see a marked increase in these 100-year events. Whether that is rainstorms, snowstorms, or wildfires, it can all be better managed with a thoughtful approach toward land use planning, management, and protection.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1500

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Idaho?

There was no objection.

The Acting Chair. The gentleman from Idaho is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment.

It is a simple study. We don't know what the cost is, but I want to use that comment to correct myself previously. I said that the Federal Government is \$2.3 trillion in debt. I was off by a decimal there. It is over \$23 trillion.

Wilderness areas are supposed to be "untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

It is true that wildfires in wilderness areas definitely increase flood risk, and perhaps that points out an underlying flaw in the underlying bill, of course, and that is that there are wilderness areas too close to where residences are.

But, again, the study is okay. The amendment is okay. I think it does identify one of the 992 flaws in this underlying bill, which is that wilderness is too close to residential areas.

And that 992, Mr. Chairman, is an estimate.

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

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the support of my colleague. He is absolutely right that wildfires do increase the risk of landslides and flooding later down the line. We forget about that part, what happens when the rain hits that previously scorched earth.

I am thrilled to present this amendment to have a study to protect our city urban areas in times of flood, and I appreciate the support of my colleague.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. SCHRIER).

The amendment was agreed to.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SCHRIER) having assumed the chair, Mr. CUELLAR, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2546) to designate certain lands in the State of Colorado as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1531

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CASTEN of Illinois) at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

COLORADO WILDERNESS ACT OF 2019

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 844 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2546.

Will the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) kindly take the chair.

□ 1532

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 further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2546) to designate certain lands in the