

Madam Speaker, the stakes can be high for a person wrongfully refused admission and the consequences of being denied admission to the United States can be significant.

For example, a U.S. research institution may lose the opportunity to employ a next generation cancer researcher if that researcher is denied admission despite possessing a valid nonimmigrant visa.

Individuals who are refused admission may be unable to reunite with their families, receive critical medical care unavailable in their home country, or pursue higher education at a U.S. college or university.

Although some individuals may be permitted to withdraw their application for admission and return home without long term consequences, others may be ordered removed without a hearing or further review under “expedited removal.”

An individual who receives an expedited removal order is barred from returning to the United States for five years.

Communication protocols are inconsistent across ports of entry and CBP provides no public guidance on an individual’s ability to communicate with counsel and other individuals during the inspection process.

According to an American Immigration Council report, CBP policies and practices on access to counsel vary from one office to another.”

While some ports of entry completely bar counsel in primary or secondary inspection,” others provide specific procedures for interacting with counsel or provide the inspecting officer with broad discretion to decide whether and with whom to communicate.

Madam Speaker, the Access to Counsel Act of 2020 ensures that no one is cut off from the world due to the Administration’s hasty and mismanaged rollout of the Muslim ban and the widespread chaos that it engendered at airports across the nation.

Affected individuals were detained at airports for hours, and many were sent back to their home countries without the ability to contact their families or receive the assistance of counsel.

Reports of similar treatment surfaced in January 2020, as tensions between Iran and the United States escalated and up to 200 individuals of Iranian descent were detained and questioned in secondary inspection at the Peace Arch Border Crossing in Blaine, Washington.

These individuals—many of whom were U.S. citizens or permanent residents, including seniors and children—were held for several hours, with some reportedly held for up to 12 hours.

Madam Speaker, although complications in the inspection process can arise in response to sweeping changes in immigration policy or shifting world events, the greatest impact on individuals comes from the consistent lack of access to counsel and other assistance at ports of entry on a day-to-day basis.

All individuals—including U.S. citizens—who seek to lawfully enter the United States are subject to inspection by CBP officers at ports of entry.

Without access to counsel and other parties, many individuals are refused admission or issued an expedited removal order instead of being provided the chance to vindicate their rights and lawfully enter the country.

The Access to Counsel Act will ensure individuals who are seeking to lawfully enter the United States are treated fairly and with dignity.

The bill permits counsel and interested parties to appear in person at the port of entry, but also gives DHS and CBP enough discretion to determine—based on operational and other practical limitations—how the consultation takes place.

The bill provides extra protection for lawful permanent residents (LPRs) by prohibiting DHS from accepting a Record of Abandonment of Lawful Permanent Resident Status from an LPR without first providing the LPR a reasonable opportunity to consult with counsel.

Madam Speaker, the Access to Counsel Act of 2020 is supported by an impressive coalition of highly respected organizations, including: Amnesty International; American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); America’s Voice; American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA); Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights; Immigration Hub; and National Iranian American Council (NIAC).

I urge all Members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 5581, the Access to Counsel Act of 2020.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5581, the “Access to Counsel Act of 2020”, a bill that will ensure that individuals who lawfully present themselves at our ports of entry are treated fairly and allowed to communicate with counsel and other parties if they are subjected to prolonged inspection.

The Immigration and Nationality Act provides individuals in removal proceedings the right to representation at no expense to the government. Although federal regulations extend this right to immigration-related “examinations,” applicants for admission—specifically those in primary or secondary inspection—are excluded unless they become the focus of a criminal investigation.

However, our immigration laws are complex, and so are some questions regarding an individual’s admissibility.

Access to outside assistance is important to ensure that CBP has a complete understanding of the facts and the law before deciding admissibility. That is because grave consequences can result from being refused admission—consequences that extend well beyond simply turning around and getting back on a plane.

Individuals who are refused admission may be unable to reunite with their families or receive critical medical care unavailable in their home country. They may be turned away from a U.S. employer who desperately needs their skills. Or they may be denied the opportunity to pursue higher education at a U.S. college or university.

If that weren’t enough, they could also be subject to a 5-year bar to returning to the United States if they are issued an expedited removal order.

That is why this legislation is so critical.

By allowing individuals who lawfully present themselves for inspection at a port of entry to communicate with counsel or other interested parties with information relevant to their request for admission, CBP will be better equipped to correctly resolve legal uncertainties and individuals will be treated more equitably.

I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Representative JAYAPAL for her leadership and commitment to this issue. Her efforts led to the introduction of this legislation, and I urge all my colleagues to support the Access to Counsel Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 891, the previous question is ordered on this portion of the divided question.

The question is: Will the House concur in the Senate amendment with the House amendment specified in section 4(b) of House Resolution 891?

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 3989. An act to amend the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 to modify certain membership and other requirements of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, and for other purposes.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

□ 1215

TAXPAYER FIRST ACT OF 2019

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1053, I move to take from the Speaker’s table the bill (H.R. 1957) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modernize and improve the Internal Revenue Service, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHNEIDER). The Clerk will designate the Senate amendments.

Senate amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Great American Outdoors Act”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LAND LEGACY RESTORATION FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle II of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 2003 the following:

“CHAPTER 2004—NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LAND LEGACY RESTORATION FUND

“Sec.

“200401. Definitions.

“200402. National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund.

“§200401. Definitions

“In this chapter:

“(1) ASSET.—The term ‘asset’ means any real property, including any physical structure or grouping of structures, landscape, trail, or other tangible property, that—

“(A) has a specific service or function; and

“(B) is tracked and managed as a distinct, identifiable entity by the applicable covered agency.

“(2) COVERED AGENCY.—The term ‘covered agency’ means—

“(A) the Service;

“(B) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;

“(C) the Forest Service;

“(D) the Bureau of Land Management; and

“(E) the Bureau of Indian Education.

“(3) FUND.—The term ‘Fund’ means the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund established by section 200402(a).

“(4) PROJECT.—The term ‘project’ means any activity to reduce or eliminate deferred maintenance of an asset, which may include resolving directly related infrastructure deficiencies of the asset that would not by itself be classified as deferred maintenance.

“§200402. National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the ‘National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund’.

“(b) DEPOSITS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025, there shall be deposited in the Fund an amount equal to 50 percent of all energy development revenues due and payable to the United States from oil, gas, coal, or alternative or renewable energy development on Federal land and water credited, covered, or deposited as miscellaneous receipts under Federal law in the preceding fiscal year.

“(2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount deposited in the Fund under paragraph (1) shall not exceed \$1,900,000,000 for any fiscal year.

“(3) EFFECT ON OTHER REVENUES.—Nothing in this section affects the disposition of revenues that—

“(A) are due to the United States, special funds, trust funds, or States from mineral and energy development on Federal land and water; or

“(B) have been otherwise appropriated—

“(i) under Federal law, including—

“(I) the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (43 U.S.C. 1331 note; Public Law 109–432); and

“(II) the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.); or

“(ii) from—

“(I) the Land and Water Conservation Fund established under chapter 2003; or

“(II) the Historic Preservation Fund established under chapter 3031.

“(c) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts deposited in the Fund shall be available to the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture, as provided in subsection (e), without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation.

“(d) INVESTMENT OF AMOUNTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may request the Secretary of the Treasury to invest any portion of the Fund that is not, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, required to meet the current needs of the Fund.

“(2) REQUIREMENT.—An investment requested under paragraph (1) shall be made by the Secretary of the Treasury in a public debt security—

“(A) with a maturity suitable to the needs of the Fund, as determined by the Secretary; and

“(B) bearing interest at a rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, taking into consideration current market yields on outstanding marketable obligations of the United States of comparable maturity.

“(3) CREDITS TO FUND.—The income on investments of the Fund under this subsection shall be credited to, and form a part of, the Fund.

“(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be used for pri-

ority deferred maintenance projects in the System, in the National Wildlife Refuge System, on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management, for the Bureau of Indian Education schools, and in the National Forest System, as follows:

“(A) 70 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be allocated to the Service.

“(B) 15 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be allocated to the Forest Service.

“(C) 5 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be allocated to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

“(D) 5 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be allocated to the Bureau of Land Management.

“(E) 5 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund for each fiscal year shall be allocated to the Bureau of Indian Education.

“(2) LIMITATIONS.—

“(A) NON-TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.—Over the term of the Fund, within each covered agency, not less than 65 percent of amounts from the Fund shall be allocated for non-transportation projects.

“(B) TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.—The amounts remaining in the Fund after the allocations required under subparagraph (A) may be allocated for transportation projects of the covered agencies, including paved and unpaved roads, bridges, tunnels, and paved parking areas.

“(C) PLAN.—Any priority deferred maintenance project funded under this section shall be consistent with an applicable transportation, deferred maintenance, or capital improvement plan developed by the applicable covered agency.

“(f) PROHIBITED USE OF FUNDS.—No amounts in the Fund shall be used—

“(1) for land acquisition;

“(2) to supplant discretionary funding made available for annually recurring facility operations, maintenance, and construction needs; or

“(3) for bonuses for employees of the Federal Government that are carrying out this section.

“(g) SUBMISSION OF PRIORITY LIST OF PROJECTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on Natural Resources and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a list of projects to be funded for fiscal year 2021 that—

“(1) are identified by the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture as priority deferred maintenance projects; and

“(2) as of the date of the submission of the list, are ready to be implemented.

“(h) SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL LIST OF PROJECTS TO CONGRESS.—Until the date on which all of the amounts in the Fund are expended, the President shall annually submit to Congress, together with the annual budget of the United States, a list of projects to be funded from the Fund that includes a detailed description of each project, including the estimated expenditures from the Fund for the project for the applicable fiscal year.

“(i) ALTERNATE ALLOCATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Appropriations Acts may provide for alternate allocation of amounts made available under this section, consistent with the allocations to covered agencies under subsection (e)(1).

“(2) ALLOCATION BY PRESIDENT.—

“(A) NO ALTERNATE ALLOCATIONS.—If Congress has not enacted legislation establishing alternate allocations by the date on which the Act making full-year appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies for the applicable fiscal year is enacted into law, amounts made available under subsection (c) shall be allocated by the President.

“(B) INSUFFICIENT ALTERNATE ALLOCATION.—If Congress enacts legislation establishing alternate allocations for amounts made available under subsection (c) that are less than the full amount appropriated under that subsection, the difference between the amount appropriated and the alternate allocation shall be allocated by the President.

“(j) PUBLIC DONATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture may accept public cash or in-kind donations that advance efforts—

“(A) to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog; and

“(B) to encourage relevant public-private partnerships.

“(2) CREDITS TO FUND.—Any cash donations accepted under paragraph (1) shall be—

“(A) credited to, and form a part of, the Fund; and

“(B) allocated to the covered agency for which the donation was made.

“(3) OTHER ALLOCATIONS.—Any donations allocated to a covered agency under paragraph (2)(B) shall be allocated to the applicable covered agency independently of the allocations under subsection (e)(1).

“(k) REQUIRED CONSIDERATION FOR ACCESSIBILITY.—In expending amounts from the Fund, the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall incorporate measures to improve the accessibility of assets and accommodate visitors and employees with disabilities in accordance with applicable law.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for subtitle II of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 2003 the following:

“2004. National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund200401”.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the implementation of this section and the amendments made by this section, including whether this section and the amendments made by this section have effectively reduced the priority deferred maintenance backlog of the covered agencies (as that term is defined in section 200401 of title 54, United States Code); and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study under paragraph (1).

SEC. 3. PERMANENT FULL FUNDING OF THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 200303 of title 54, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§200303. Availability of funds

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Any amounts deposited in the Fund under section 200302 for fiscal year 2020 and each fiscal year thereafter shall be made available for expenditure for fiscal year 2021 and each fiscal year thereafter, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, to carry out the purposes of the Fund (including accounts and programs made available from the Fund pursuant to the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116–94; 133 Stat. 2534)).

“(b) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS.—Amounts made available under subsection (a) shall be in addition to amounts made available to the Fund under section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (43 U.S.C. 1331 note; Public Law 109–432) or otherwise appropriated from the Fund.

“(c) ALLOCATION AUTHORITY.—

“(1) SUBMISSION OF COST ESTIMATES.—The President shall submit to Congress detailed account, program, and project allocations of the full amount made available under subsection (a)—

“(A) for fiscal year 2021, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act; and

“(B) for each fiscal year thereafter, as part of the annual budget submission of the President.

“(2) ALTERNATE ALLOCATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Appropriations Acts may provide for alternate allocation of amounts made available under subsection (a), including allocations by account, program, and project.

“(B) ALLOCATION BY PRESIDENT.—

“(i) NO ALTERNATE ALLOCATIONS.—If Congress has not enacted legislation establishing alternate allocations by the date on which the Act making full-year appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies for the applicable fiscal year is enacted into law, amounts made available under subsection (a) shall be allocated by the President.

“(ii) INSUFFICIENT ALTERNATE ALLOCATION.—If Congress enacts legislation establishing alternate allocations for amounts made available under subsection (a) that are less than the full amount appropriated under that subsection, the difference between the amount appropriated and the alternate allocation shall be allocated by the President.

“(3) RECREATIONAL PUBLIC ACCESS.—Amounts expended from the Fund under this section shall be consistent with the requirements for recreational public access for hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, or other outdoor recreational purposes under section 200306(c).

“(4) ANNUAL REPORT.—The President shall submit to Congress an annual report that describes the final allocation by account, program, and project of amounts made available under subsection (a), including a description of the status of obligations and expenditures.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 200302(c) of title 54, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (3).

(2) Section 200306(a)(2)(B) of title 54, United States Code, is amended by striking clause (iii).

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 2003 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 200303 and inserting the following:

“200303. Availability of funds.”.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Grijalva moves that the House concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 1957.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of July 21, 2020, the motion shall be debatable for 80 minutes, with 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and minority leader or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 30 minutes. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 1957.

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

There was no objection.

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

In February of 2019, I flew to Arizona from Washington to speak about my bill to permanently protect the Grand Canyon from uranium mining. We wanted to publicly release the legislation on the rim of the canyon to show firsthand the lands that we were attempting to protect.

Unfortunately, the weather had other ideas. That night, before the event, it snowed more than it had in decades. But by some small miracle, the roads were clear, and we found an easy pathway into the park. We made it in time and even found some rangers to help us set up in the snow.

Tribal leaders representing people who have called that land their home for a millennia joined us at the event. Standing there with them on the edge of the amazing canyon millions of years in the making and glistening in the snow, it was hard not to be moved.

Looking out over the Grand Canyon, you are reminded why we as a Nation have dedicated ourselves to protecting the unique and enduring landscapes around us. Nowhere else on Earth is there a sight quite like the Grand Canyon, or, for that matter, like Yosemite Valley or Yellowstone National Park. These places are gems of our National Park system, and they show who we are as a people.

We are judged on what we choose to pass on, and today we have an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to preserving these lands for the future and for future generations.

In a few short minutes we will vote on the Great American Outdoors Act, a bill to significantly increase conservation spending in the United States. For too long we have allowed our National Parks to fall into disrepair. We have underfunded maintenance while park visitation has skyrocketed. At the same time, we have failed to meet the full promise of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We have been diverting half of this conservation funding stream to other uses for which this money was never intended.

Today, we take the opportunity to remedy both those failures. The Great American Outdoors Act provides \$1.9 billion per year to maintain our National Parks and public lands, ensuring that special places like the Grand Canyon are accessible to all Americans as they were to me on that February morning.

The law will also make an enduring commitment to protecting green and flourishing open spaces by providing \$900 million annually to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

This funding will mean more parks for inner city families. It will allow us to protect forests, wetlands, and marshes from the destruction of climate change. It will help protect lands around the National Parks from inappropriate development and will expand recreational access and opportunity for all Americans. Combined, these two major programs amount to one of the biggest wins for conservation in decades.

We all know that not everyone here agrees about the value of these pro-

grams. In fact, we disagree almost daily on how best to protect the landscapes of our Nation.

But I hope today we can move past those political differences and to honestly consider the value of conservation and the importance of stable, predictable funding.

We have a generational opportunity to ensure America's crown jewels are protected. We have a unique chance to ensure that every tool is available to help us respond to the climate crisis, so that we can protect those landscapes that best protect clean water, clean air, and healthy green spaces.

This bill is a major win for the American people, decades in the making. I might add. I have pursued it for years. Some of my colleagues have pursued it for years. This didn't happen overnight.

Now, during a time of national disillusionment, it is perhaps more necessary than ever to demonstrate that we can still bridge the divide.

When it comes to passing along this Nation to our children and to theirs, we can still work together to find common ground.

This bill goes beyond politics. It is about ensuring that we pass along a legacy of public lands stewardship and conservation to future generations, so they, too, can marvel at the Grand Canyon covered in snow.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important measure.

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

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

Let's get a couple of things very clear.

First of all, this is not about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We reauthorized permanently the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the last Congress, and in doing that, in a House Republican bill, I might add, we took the State-side projects—these are the kinds of things like easements and picnic grounds and roads and parks that your constituents are all telling you that they like, those are called the State-side projects—and we actually increased the funding for those programs.

We also put in that act a limitation on the amount of money that could be used to buy more land. This bill is about that concept, the limitation of land acquisition. The special interest groups have been putting pressure on you and are giving you misinformation about this particular thing. They simply want to circumvent the limits that were pushed in that bill that was there earlier.

This is two bills merged together. The first one was the old H.R. 1225, the backlog maintenance bill that Mr. GRIJALVA referred to in his speech. We

wanted to see if we could actually help parks and other public lands who are having a maintenance backlog that is near \$20 billion today.

Many people, 330 people, cosponsored that bill. Obviously, it was popular. But for 1½ years, Democratic leadership failed and refused to move that bill. One of their arguments was, this is key, there is no offset for a bill that scored \$7 billion. They refused to move it because there was no offset.

That bill would fund parks' maintenance backlogs by taking excess revenue from those that come from all the energy development, but primarily oil and gas, off-coast as well as on land, and after we pay our obligations, the first \$1 billion of the excess would be used to maintain our parks. That is still a decent bill.

You have added that, or the Democrats in the Senate have added that, to a second bill that is mandatory \$900 million of spending. That mandatory spending will be from now until eternity, but the goal of that is simply to increase the buying power to buy more lands, not to create the State-side projects which we increased.

We are spending trillions of dollars on coronavirus emergency spending. We still have to pay for that. If you really think that mandatory increasing of our debt is the right policy, I think there is a problem there because the CBO did say that this new concoction—bill scores at \$17 billion. And I want you to notice there is no offset for that in this bill.

Both House Republicans and House Democrats have rules that they will not bring a bill to the floor that is not offset. The Blue Dog Democrats unanimously wrote a letter to their leadership saying, Do not bring a bill to the floor that is not offset.

This violates the rules of both the Democrats and the Republicans clearly and adds \$17 billion to the debt, and the reason this is here is, well, because.

Both LWCF, as well as what we want to do with park maintenance, is paid for by royalties from those gas and oil explorations. The excess was to go to parks. We already have obligations with those royalties. GOMESA is an obligation. Historic preservation is an obligation. State reimbursement is an obligation. Those are priorities.

Now, we are also saying in this bill, the \$1 billion of money to buy more land is now also a priority above and beyond what is happening for the parks and what will get there for the parks, which may not in normal times be a concern, but in this era, CRS has already certified that we are 84 percent lower in the amount of activity and the amount of royalties coming in from our energy development than we were a year ago. That is 2 million barrels of oil a day less than we were producing and getting royalties from them last year.

So if buying more land is the priority, the maintenance of our backlog could be totally left out.

Now, this is not for want of what we are trying to do. There were amendments to try and fix this, but they were not allowed to be brought to this floor. There are amendments in the Senate to fix these problems, but they were not allowed to be brought to the floor. There will be many on both sides of the aisle, some on our side, who will support and defend this bill.

I will remind you we are having a heat wave here in Washington, D.C. For the first time in four years we are coming close to 100 degrees, but the heat index is well into three digits. There are a lot of people suffering from heat stroke.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), a sponsor of the legislation, companion legislation to the Senate bill.

□ 1230

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Great American Outdoors Act, and to express my gratitude for so many of my friends and colleagues, including the 252 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle who are working with me to secure the greatest achievement for conservation in a generation.

Mr. Speaker, my bipartisan legislation gives Congress a chance to deliver a massive win not only for our irreplaceable parks and public lands, but also for this institution as a whole by showing the American people that we can work together and keep our promises.

The Great American Outdoors Act will honor our Nation's commitment to conservation in two important ways.

First, it fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund, our most important conservation program. LWCF preserves the best of America, ensuring hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and other recreational access for all of our constituents.

It is the backbone of our \$778 billion economy, which accounts for over 5 million jobs across this country. It protects working forests and the jobs that they support in the woods and the mills. And here is the best part: It does it all without spending a dime of taxpayer money.

Despite this, we have consistently fallen short in utilizing the full amount of funds in LWCF. Over the past 55 years, we have only spent half the money that we have deposited in the fund, thereby creating an unsustainable backlog in the Lowcountry and across this Nation. This legislation will fix that, ensuring at long last that these funds are spent how they were intended.

Second, it will relieve the growing multibillion-dollar maintenance backlog in our national forests, parks, and other Federal public lands. From crumbling roads and eroding trails to aging water systems and deteriorating his-

toric sites and visitor centers, the widespread disrepair of our national treasures is only getting worse. The Great American Outdoors Act will address this as well by making essential investments to reverse the damage, while creating over 100,000 jobs in the process.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is grounded in two basic principles: that Congress should invest funding set aside for conservation towards the public good, and that we should pay the maintenance bills we have already accrued. It is time that we honor our promises.

In South Carolina, the LWCF has protected the hallowed ground of Fort Sumter, the living outdoor classroom of Congaree National Park, the Pitt Street Bridge in Mount Pleasant, the Folly Beach Boardwalk, and literally hundreds of other local and State parks.

In my district, LWCF protected the ACE Basin, which is the largest undeveloped estuary on the Atlantic Coast, providing a home for the area's incredible wildlife, a source of recreation for sportsmen and -women, and a natural safeguard for our coastal communities from devastating weather events.

Just this past week, I heard from our veterans about the important role that public lands play in the healing process for many men and women transitioning back to civilian life. They told me how access to nature and the outdoors has helped them find a sense of calm and peace.

The power of these places to heal and unite us reaches all the way back here to Washington, where my bill is supported by the Speaker, by the minority leader, and by a large bipartisan majority. Seventy-three Senators have already voted for this bill, and President Trump has specifically asked for us to send it to his desk.

In this current climate of division and discord, the Great American Outdoors Act is exemplary of the fact that Republicans and Democrats can still come together to pursue commonsense solutions, do right by our public lands, and keep our word.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all my colleagues to join me in supporting our communities, families, public lands, and economy by voting to pass the Great American Outdoors Act.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) to explain why mandatory spending is good.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Utah for yielding. I know that was painful.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in favor of the Great American Outdoors Act. It makes sense to me that, if we are going to have public lands and preserve public lands for Americans, we should also take care of it. That is why the LWCF funding and deferred maintenance part of this bill are very important and a perfect combination.

With that in mind, I wrote the LAND Act in 2017, which funded these two

programs without using a dime of taxpayer money.

Fast-forward to 2020 and the President specifically asked Congress to send him a bill that funded both these programs and that he would sign it.

Thanks to Senator GARDNER, Senator DAINES, Senator HEINRICH, and Senator MANCHIN, the Great American Outdoors Act built upon the LAND Act and passed the Senate with 73 votes, which brings us to this historic day.

The Great American Outdoors Act creates 100,000 jobs, preserves public lands for future generations, and cares for our current national parks and trails. All this is funded by energy revenue and the existing \$20 billion fund—again, not taxpayer dollars.

The bill does not expand the Federal footprint because 99 percent of the LWCF purchases are within existing public lands.

The bill does not force anyone to sell their property since it is willing seller and willing buyer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill not for me and not for you, but for future generations so that they can enjoy our great outdoors.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), a member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, today is a great day for public lands, for land conservation, for outdoor recreation, and for every American who values these gifts that Mother Nature has provided for our country.

Last year, we made a promise to the American people to protect their public lands, our national treasures, by permanently reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund as part of the John Dingell Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. Today, we are poised to make good on that promise by passing the Great American Outdoors Act, which will permanently and fully fund the LWCF. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of that bill.

These funds have not just protected our Nation's most well-known national parks, but, over the years, LWCF dollars have also created parks, ball fields, and other outdoor recreational spaces in every corner of our country from Alaska to Florida, from Maine to Hawaii.

This also includes many communities in my district, such as Mendota, Huron, Selma, Sanger, Parlier, Lemoore, Corcoran, Allensworth, Shafter, Buttonwillow, McFarland, and Arvin, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan team of my colleagues and activists who have worked hard to make this legislation a reality.

There is an old East Asian proverb that says: One generation plants the trees for another generation to enjoy the shade. Today, we are replanting those trees.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS).

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Great American Outdoors Act.

My district has 120 projects that benefit from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, from community parks to the Wayne National Forest, to the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park.

Public lands, forests, and parks give folks the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and with each other, especially in this time of the coronavirus.

I also represent a bunch of small businesses, like Rocky Boots in Nelsonville that employs 2,800 people and depends on a thriving outdoor recreation economy.

In my district last year, \$1.37 billion was spent on outdoor recreation. And at a time when there is such a backlog in maintenance, this maintenance support will create 100,000 jobs.

During a time when we have 11.1 percent unemployment, Congress should be taking every opportunity it can to create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill isn't just about conservation, it is about jobs and the economy, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

It is a Senate bill that passed the Senate 73-25. It is not perfect, but it is a good bill, and it is a bill we should support.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Great American Outdoors Act.

Protecting wilderness reflects the best values of Oregon: environmental protection, stewardship of our land, and community partnership.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund represents a bipartisan commitment to safeguarding natural areas and providing recreation opportunities in the prized outdoor areas that make places in northwest Oregon, like Ecola State Park and the Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge, so special. Unfortunately, the program has faced significant instability in recent years, limiting the long-term planning needed for meaningful conservation efforts.

Last month, I joined my colleagues on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis in releasing a bold, comprehensive, science-based climate action plan. Our plan for solving the climate crisis recognizes the value of public lands and healthy ecosystems in sequestering carbon dioxide and promoting biodiversity, and it calls for a full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Great American Outdoors Act will help mitigate the climate crisis and protect the natural beauty and robust habitats that fish and wildlife depend on for survival.

At a time when our communities are struggling to recover from the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, a time when there is heightened awareness about the inequities

and injustices in our society, including inequitable access to our wild places, this bill will boost rural economies and expand access to public lands for future generations.

I am also pleased that this bill takes steps to tackle our national park maintenance backlog to support treasured places like the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. Oregonians care deeply about protecting our parks, forests, scenic areas, and wildlife refuges, and this bill takes important steps to safeguard them for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GRIJALVA for his leadership, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Great American Outdoors Act.

Our Nation's public lands have long been treasured sources of enjoyment and beauty available to every American. They also play a critical role in our economy, with the outdoor recreation industry supporting 5.2 million jobs.

The hardworking Hoosiers I represent know that better than anyone. Manufacturers in northern Indiana build products like boats, trailers, and 80 percent of the Nation's RVs. That is why Elkhart, Indiana, is known as the RV Capital of the World.

I am a proud cosponsor of the Great American Outdoors Act because it will support RV and boat manufacturers and their workers, promote conservation, and revitalize our national parks. By investing in long-delayed maintenance projects, it will ensure our national parks can continue to be enjoyed by all Americans for generations to come. By enhancing access to our public lands, it will boost tourism, strengthen our economy, and support good-paying jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for the Great American Outdoors Act.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), the senior member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his efforts to bring this legislation to the House floor.

I rise today to speak on the Great American Outdoors Act and the importance of this legislation and why we should move on a bipartisan effort to pass it.

This bill tackles a tremendous deferred maintenance backlog on public lands, including our national parks, our treasures, the great American national parks.

This funding will contribute towards making our parks safe and enhance the recreational access, such as the great Yosemite National Park, the crown jewel in California, as well as Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks and many others—not only in California, but across our Nation—that are

part of America's heritage and a part of our lasting legacy for future generations to come.

This bill funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund annually at \$900 million and creates a \$9.5 billion fund for deferred maintenance on public lands.

We are way in arrears in terms of deferred maintenance that we need to do not only for our national parks, but for our public lands. That is why this is so important.

Let me respond to the issue of our deficit.

Our deficit is a problem. I am a Blue Dog. But let's be clear. After 16 years here, I have come to the conclusion that trying to address incremental issues as they relate to our national deficit is not going to get us there.

Until Republicans are willing to address the issues of revenues and Democrats are willing to address the issues of expenditures together and jump off that cliff holding hands to balance revenues and expenditures, we are just not going to get there. Okay?

So we should not use that as an excuse not to do what we should do for today's generation and future generations. The creation of this permanent funding highlights the need for Congress to address the deferred maintenance backlog.

I will admit that we are not doing more to provide funding for our aging Federal water infrastructure that also needs to be invested on.

So let me close. Let's take the moment of this bipartisan success to redouble our efforts to address the need for maintenance on federally owned projects.

□ 1245

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

This bill is actually extremely poorly drafted. It assumes basic things. But if, for instance, as we said, the royalties don't show up as we are anticipating, we don't have that \$1 billion to buy more land. How do you solve that? Do you prorate that money? Do you take it from other sources? Do you put this mandatory spending above other mandatory spending, like Social Security?

CRS said those are good questions, and they don't know because this bill is silent on all those questions.

It says the President is supposed to come up with \$900 million of projects. What if he only comes up with \$800 million? Who gets that extra \$100 million? Does that go to the Department of the Interior? Is that a slush fund?

Once again, CRS said, Good questions, and no one knows because this bill is silent on those types of questions.

BLM has no idea of how much money they have spent on this program or where the land is. The State portion is actually—they are okay because they are a percentage. But this is talking about a dollar figure.

So you are going to hear a lot of platitudes, but somebody, at some

time, has got to say how this money is going to actually be funded.

To help us with that, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY), a longtime member of this legislature, who can address those things.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for the time, and perhaps we can continue that discussion in another venue because today I am rising in support of this act.

Mr. Speaker, a while back I was at the Library of Congress and I met the famous filmmaker, Ken Burns and he taught me something. He spoke to us about the creation of the National Park System last century and how it represented a singular defining moment for America; our sense of vastness, openness, and endless opportunity, and regenerated for us an understanding of an American ethos, this great ideal of conservation, caring for what we have and transferring it into the future.

Mr. Speaker, our National Park sites are majestic places, great sources of national pride, and a living heritage for all Americans. But here is the problem: We have a backlog of maintenance, but we fix it today.

Along with providing certainty for the future of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, this all is a great boost to communities eager for innovation and conservation ideals.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. HAALAND), who is vice chair of the full Committee of Natural Resources and chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.

Ms. HAALAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Great American Outdoors Act.

From the day I became the chairwoman of the National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee, I have heard from constituents, colleagues, and advocates about fixing the maintenance backlog and fully funding LWCF and making it permanent.

LWCF has helped provide recreational opportunities for underserved and low-income communities in nearly every Congressional district, and last year, we passed an historic permanent authorization.

In my district, LWCF has supported the Valle del Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Petroglyph National Monument, Tingley Beach recreation area, the Elena Gallegos Open Space picnic area, and Martineztown Park.

The Great American Outdoors Act will ensure LWCF's full \$900 million is used every year for conservation and environmental protection, to boost local outdoor economies, and to protect intact ecosystems essential for adapting to climate change.

The bill also establishes the National Park Service and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund to provide five Federal land management agencies with up to \$9.5 billion over 5 years to address

the deferred maintenance backlog on our public lands.

These agencies will now be able to aggressively address deferred maintenance, improve visitor services, and support Tribal communities in places like Carlsbad Caverns, White Sands National Parks, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, and El Malpais National Monument.

Repairing the crumbling infrastructure on our public lands today is critical so that future generations can enjoy them. I am proud of the work we did to get this bill to this point, and I urge my colleagues to invest in our National Parks and public lands, and vote "yes" on the Great American Outdoors Act.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD).

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Teddy Roosevelt once remarked that:

We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people have ever received, and each one must do his or her part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune.

Passage of the Great American Outdoors Act proves we are worthy of the good fortune and glorious heritage of our National Parks.

Future generations have been counting on us to ensure these treasures can be visited for another 100 years and, with the funding secured in this bill, we aren't letting them down.

In 1893, Katharine Lee Bates was inspired hiking up Pikes Peak, and she penned the following lines:

O beautiful for spacious skies
For amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain.
America, America
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

Passage of this bipartisan bill is a triumphant act that will benefit countless generations to come.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE), a member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak today in support of the Great American Outdoors Act. I would like to thank my colleague from Arizona, the distinguished chairman, Chairman GRIJALVA, for his leadership; and also thank my colleague from South Carolina, Representative CUNNINGHAM, for introducing this bill.

The Great American Outdoors Act, as you have heard today, Mr. Speaker, would provide full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and address the significant maintenance backlog on our Nation's public lands.

Since its inception, the LWCF program has established many of our Nation's most coveted and incredible public lands. The program has invested in over 41,000 parks, including Rocky Mountain National Park, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, Lory State

Park, and so many other iconic parks in my district, the Second Congressional District of the State of Colorado.

Nearly 1,000 LWCF grants have leveraged over \$147 million dollars for local government and State park investments in Colorado. In my district alone, there have been 191 LWCF projects. Therefore, establishing permanent and full funding truly is critical.

Additionally, deferred maintenance, as you have heard my colleagues on both sides of the aisle discuss today, on our public lands is a mounting problem that we can no longer afford to ignore.

As one of our country's most popular National Parks, Rocky Mountain National Park faces a significant maintenance backlog of \$84 million. Our park employees are working incredibly hard, but they can't do it alone. We must address this by increasing funds designed to upkeep and rebuild infrastructure on our Federal public lands.

I have consistently urged Congress to fully fund LWCF and address these challenges, and I am so heartened to see this collaborative effort considered on the House floor today and, of course, grateful to the county commissioners, and to so many local officials, conservation groups, anglers and outdoor recreation businesses who have come together to contribute their time and dedication to this effort. Let's get this bill passed.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the lead sponsor of the Great American Outdoors Act, and this is a very, very big day for this Chamber.

As my colleagues are aware, I have been pushing to both permanently reauthorize and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund literally since the day I entered this Chamber.

In addition to the LWCF, this legislation tackles the maintenance backlog that needs to be addressed on public lands and parks across our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will have a positive impact on nearly every single Congressional District in this country, and the LWCF has already had a positive impact on many sites in my district alone, most notably, Nockamixon State Park.

Hundreds of businesses, recreation, and environmental groups have come together to endorse our legislation, including the Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the League of Conservation Voters, the Audubon Society, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Ducks Unlimited, Clean Water Action, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is historic; it is bipartisan; it is bicameral, with over 250 cosponsors in the House. It overwhelmingly passed the Senate, and it will be signed into law by the Presi-

dent. That is what is called bipartisan cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, for those of us who are strong advocates of our environment, this is a good day. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN), a valued member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. LEVIN of California. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely fortunate to represent a coastal district with many beloved beaches, lagoons, and State parks. In California's 49th Congressional District, our public lands bring outdoor recreation and joy to our residents, and also to many tourists and visitors looking to catch some of our famous waves or hike our scenic trails.

This defining aspect of California culture continues to make communities in my district not only economically stronger, but also active, healthier, and happier, with locals and tourists alike enjoying all the benefits and spaces that the great outdoors offer.

The LWCF is famously known as America's most successful conservation program. This historic bill is an all-around win for our communities, benefiting local economies, and protecting our planet for future generations.

Thus far, California has received approximately \$2.5 billion in LWCF funding over the last 50 years, which has helped to protect iconic places, like San Onofre State Beach, Carlsbad State Beach, San Clemente State Beach, Torrey Pines Beach and Nature Reserve, and several flourishing lagoons, all in my district.

We are not just protecting those iconic places with this bill; we are also investing in our fight against the climate crisis. By conserving natural resources across the country, we are safekeeping critical landscapes, fragile ecosystems, and important wildlife habitat which are all part of the ecosystem we depend on.

As we continue to invest in coastal conservation of wetlands, estuaries, dunes, and reefs, we are contributing to climate change adaptation planning and protecting our coastal communities from extreme weather events, sea level rise, and bluff erosion. These efforts to combat the climate crisis are incredibly important for the 50-plus miles of coastline in my district.

I am proud to support the Great American Outdoors Act, and I hope this historic conservation legislation will soon become law, as it is certainly among the biggest bipartisan environmental accomplishments we have had in many years.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY).

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for his friendship and his encouragement. Maybe not encouragement on this specific bill, but I am proud to support this bill because it

does help with the maintenance backlog in the National Parks, as well as assist with the long-term reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Trust, which is something I strongly support.

Since its inception over 50 years ago, the Land and Water Conservation Trust has done very important things for my State and our Nation in preserving access to public lands and to the great outdoors.

Also, for the maintenance backlog, I am proud to represent a piece of the Blue Ridge Parkway, which runs through my district and was the second most visited National Park last year. I think this year would be the same.

In North Carolina alone, we have over 260,000 jobs that are directly attributable to the great outdoors; and those millions of visitors that come to the State through the Blue Ridge Parkway, they are vital for our economy in western North Carolina.

Passage of this bill will help, both the backlog and with ensuring that we have long-term reauthorization on the Land and Water Conservation Trust. I encourage a "yes" vote.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL), an effective member and a leader on the Natural Resources Committee.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my wonderful chairman.

I rise in strong support of the Great American Outdoors Act. This historic legislation makes good on our commitment to preserve our Nation's environmental heritage for future generations.

This is an emotional moment for me. It provides full permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, landmark conservation legislation that my late husband, John Dingell, wrote and helped establish in 1964.

The LWCF funding has protected Michigan and the Nation's critical natural resources, while supporting local economies, creating jobs, and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation throughout the country.

□ 1300

LWCF was permanently authorized in 2019 as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act but has received full funding only twice in its long history. The permanent full funding in this legislation is the culmination of decades of work by the conservation community; my late husband; and our wonderful current dean, DON YOUNG, who first advocated for this permanent funding through the Conservation and Reinvestment Act in 1999.

Additionally, the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Land Restoration Fund included in the legislation will allow us to finally address the \$22 billion deferred maintenance backlog in our Nation's public lands, a decades-long problem in the making.

I am proud today to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to

continue that Dingell conservation legacy—I don't look like the greatest outdoors girl, but I know how important they are—which represents the boldest, most comprehensive conservation effort in decades.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN).

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding. As an original cosponsor of this legislation, I would also like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers for helping lead the charge to get this important victory across the finish line.

I represent the First Congressional District of New York. It is a district almost completely surrounded by water on the east end of Long Island. In my district alone, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided funding for over 65 parks, and that is just one example of the impact this program has made all across our great Nation. This supports public access, fishing, hunting, recreation, and our environment.

After securing permanent authorization last year, it is an honor to continue the fight today. I am not sure about everyone else, but being cooped up over the course of these last few months has probably given just about all of us more appreciation for the great outdoors.

This is an effective program that will go a long way in keeping our magnificent outdoors great for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to the next speaker, let me echo the words of Mrs. DINGELL. John Dingell was indeed a warrior on behalf of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Today is a culmination of those efforts in which he played such a huge role, and I would be remiss in not thanking him and DEBBIE DINGELL.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON), who is a leader in conservation and access to our public lands.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this historic legislation that I was proud to coauthor. It has been more than 55 years since the Land and Water Conservation Fund was enacted to establish recreation and conservation opportunities. Now is the time to ensure that LWCF is fully and permanently funded.

This bill will create jobs and boost local economies that are currently facing significant financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also provides urgent funding of \$9.5 billion to fix broken park infrastructure and failing facilities. The bill supports parks in every State so hikers and anglers alike can visit and enjoy nature across our beautiful country.

This is desperately needed now for our communities' emotional and physical well-being.

Mr. Speaker, we need to protect and preserve our lands, and this bill does that at no expense to our taxpayers. I urge my colleagues to vote for this important legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the State of Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE).

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Utah for letting me weigh in on this important subject.

Mr. Speaker, the hunters and anglers, farmers and ranchers, and hikers and recreationists of central Washington are passionate advocates for access to public lands.

I strongly stand behind my constituents in supporting the restoration of our national parks, our public lands, and Federal infrastructure. That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act to address our country's deferred maintenance backlog in those areas. If that bill were brought to the floor before us today, I would be a resounding "yes."

Unfortunately, that is not the bill that we are debating here this afternoon. So while I agree with many provisions within the Great American Outdoors Act, I fear that the sweeping nature of this legislation will have unintended consequences for rural communities like mine in Washington's Fourth District.

Mr. Speaker, just 2 weeks ago, I was honored to welcome Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt to the north-central region of my district in central Washington. These were the two main takeaways from the conversations that we had with citizens in that region: one, a lack of trust with the Federal Government; and, two, the need for hope in the face of many challenges facing rural communities.

While I believe the intentions behind this legislation are grounded in the desire to improve our public lands, too many of my constituents think the approach within this bill is indicative of the same tired notion that we have all heard before: I am from the government, and I am here to help.

We have already determined the Federal Government's culpability in creating a \$20 billion maintenance backlog problem on our public lands. So the response is to permanently spend \$900 million a year, most of which will be spent on what? Get this, Mr. Speaker: purchasing more Federal land.

The farmers, ranchers, and hard-working men and women of my district support local management and control of our lands. We have seen firsthand the delinquency of the Federal Government, and I think we should work to continue to support our national parks but vote this bill down.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL).

Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL. Mr. Speaker, the Everglades, Dry Tortugas, and Biscayne National Parks are three of our south Floridian national parks that are magnificent parks that we cherish across our country. They are essential to preserving biodiversity, improving air quality, providing recreational opportunities, and sustaining our physical and mental well-being. They are also essential to our economy, bolstering local economies across our Nation, supporting countless jobs, and breathing life into our small businesses.

Unfortunately, our national parks are in need of help. Hiking trails are in disrepair, roads are crumbling, visitor centers are falling apart, and our lands are in need of protection.

That is why passing today's bill, the Great American Outdoors Act, is so crucial. It will permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund to address our severe maintenance backlog and ensure that these natural beauties will be there for our children and our grandchildren.

With the passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker, the ecotourism economies in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties will flourish. I urge support.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. KEVIN HERN).

Mr. KEVIN HERN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member BISHOP for his work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of a global pandemic unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime, we have spent unprecedented amounts of money this year. We have already saddled the next generation with unthinkable debt. Digging our way out of this hole is going to take time and targeted effort. We cannot continue to spend as if our debts don't exist.

This legislation needlessly increases the deficit. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is already incredibly well-funded, does not need an additional \$900 million a year in perpetuity. With immediate health needs and economic recovery our top priorities, increasing the Federal real estate holding shouldn't be on anyone's to-do list.

A recent report showed that 40 percent of LWCF funds went to projects that failed to advance any agency objectives. The oversight and accountability of the fund is laughable, but this bill seeks to exacerbate the lack of transparency by removing elected officials from the situation altogether and handing unilateral power to political appointees and unelected bureaucrats.

There are more productive ways that we should spend our time this week, and I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND).

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, let me say that the goal of the bill is positive, but how it is achieved is just flat wrong.

To pay for this legislation, what we do is go straight to Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas and take \$1.9 billion a year of potential revenue to those States to uplift their people to pay for this bill.

Let me be specific about Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. They rank 48th, 49th, and 50th in terms of quality of life for their residents. They rank 1, 2, and 5 in terms of their African-American population.

So, what are we doing here, in this time of racial inequity? We are going to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana and taking \$1.9 billion a year without sharing any of that revenue with their States where: they can improve education, where all three rank last; they can improve healthcare, where all three States rank last; and they can improve their environment, where all three States are in the bottom one-third.

So, all I am saying is, at some point, equity demands that those States get their fair share.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Ms. SHERILL).

Ms. SHERILL. Mr. Speaker, New Jersey might be the Garden State, but it is also the most densely populated State in this country. So, New Jerseyans know the importance of clean air, clean drinking water, and protecting our natural resources. That is why I am proud to lead the Great American Outdoors Act with my colleagues.

Grant funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped protect sites in my district and helped expand conservation efforts from the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge to Morristown National Historical Park. The Great American Outdoors Act will make the Land and Water Conservation Fund permanent, ensuring that future generations of Americans are able to access our natural wonders.

For too long, LWCF's promise of protecting our Nation's public lands has been broken as the funds have been diverted. The GAOA would, for the first time, mandate that such funds are used as intended to protect public lands and waters, support public access, and provide an economic boost to communities.

I am so glad Congress has stepped up to expand equitable access to the outdoors by investing in our parks and public lands at all levels.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is an active member of our committee, is ranking member of another committee, and who can actually springboard on Mr. RICHMOND's comments about this particular issue.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for yielding.

"Quick, there is a global pandemic. Let's spend billions of dollars repairing fences, putting up new signs, and fixing toilets at our wildlife refuges, parks, and forests," said no one ever. Ever.

I have been sitting here listening to this debate over the last several minutes, and I have no idea what planet people are on right now.

There is a global pandemic right now. What this legislation does is it takes everything else and puts it on the back burner. That is right. Unemployment assistance goes behind this; job opportunities go behind this; improving our schools and getting our kids actually educated go behind this; medical care for our seniors goes behind this because this is mandatory spending.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard Members sit here and say that we have a \$20 billion maintenance backlog. Do you know why that is? Because we failed to appropriate the money because we have determined it is not a priority in the appropriations process.

Why are we now stepping in and circumventing that whole process again, Mr. Speaker, in the middle of a pandemic to determine that this is the greatest priority?

Mr. Speaker, let me give you an analogy of what this bill really does. This is like someone going over to their neighbor's house, taking their credit card, and going out there and using that credit card to get a new address sign in their front yard and maybe to get a new coating of paint on their house. Meanwhile, that person who took the credit card has multiple cars and has an expansive real estate holding and never thought once about their own financial situation but instead took the credit card of their neighbor who is maybe up to their neck in medical bills because their spouse is on their deathbed. That is what this bill does.

□ 1315

I have heard people say: "Well, oh, this is not taxpayers' money."

Whose money is this? What dream world are you living in? This absolutely is funds that are taxpayer funds.

"Oh, but it comes from energy revenues."

Where do those go? They go into the general treasury. This isn't excess money. This isn't some money tree.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about one of the most offensive things about this bill that my friend CEDRIC RICHMOND, Congressman RICHMOND, talked about. And he tried to address this in committee by proposing a bipartisan amendment with Congresswoman SEWELL, with Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON, with Congressman SCALISE, with myself, and others, a bipartisan amendment to fix this.

Virtually all of the money that this bill is spending comes from energy production off the coast of Louisiana. This bill, as many have said, this goes on in perpetuity. In 5 years, we are spending \$1 billion a year; in 10 years, \$1 billion

a year; in 50 years, \$1 billion a year; in 100 years, \$1 billion a year.

Mr. Speaker, do you realize that today 28 percent of this country is owned by the Federal Government—28 percent?

The sensible thing to do is to look at those assets, determine which of, for example, the nearly 75,000 different National Park's units and assets still make sense today. You just heard my friend talk about how 40 percent of these funds historically have been used for projects that don't advance the mission of the very agency they are supposed to be advancing.

This is a tone-deaf piece of legislation. It is mandatory spending. It is putting this as a higher priority than everything else, including that we are in a global pandemic. We have record unemployment.

Whose idea was it to do this? This is absolutely crazy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge opposition to this legislation. I urge common sense, and I urge that we sit down and actually address some of the priorities.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished leader.

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

Mr. Speaker, I came in at the end of my friend from Louisiana's discussion. I have great respect for Mr. GRAVES and I have great respect for his concern, but, very frankly, the things he talks about have been pending in the United States Senate for 60 days untended.

The leader of the Senate said the States can go bankrupt. The sense of priority apparently does not exist there, and that is regrettable.

This legislation that I rise in support of is an important piece of legislation. If, however, it displaced any of those priorities of which the gentleman spoke, I would perhaps share his opinion. We are waiting for some of those priorities to be attended to by the Senate, even if they defeat them.

We have talked about healthcare. We have talked about equal rights. We have talked about campaign finance reform. We have talked about energy. We have talked about so many subjects that are pending silently untended in the United States Senate. So the wringing of hands about this legislation pressing out other priorities I think is not accurate.

It is accurate that this is an important piece of legislation that will do much good. And I thank Chairman GRIJALVA on the Committee on Natural Resources for steering the legislation before us through his committee and working with the Senate to get it passed through that body.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the ranking member for his concern about the maintenance and upkeep of our parks. He and I have spoken about that.

I would especially like to thank Representatives Cummings, SHERILL—

who just spoke before me—Congressman COX, Congresswoman TORRES SMALL, Congresswoman HORN, and Congressman GOLDEN for leading this legislation in the House, along with my good friend MIKE SIMPSON from the State of Idaho.

It should be noted that the bill before us today bears the name of our dear and departed friend John Lewis, who understood that conserving America's great outdoors and public spaces went part and parcel with protecting the legacy of civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, he was, as you know, instrumental in protecting the childhood home, neighborhoods, and church associated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Atlanta—one of America's great leaders—as part of our National Park System, using the Land and Water Conservation Fund as a critical tool in that process.

The Ebenezer Baptist Church and its visitor center are among the many sites in need of repair today. It was, of course, in Ebenezer in Atlanta, in 1957, that a young John Lewis joined Dr. King and other civil rights pioneers to create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. What an eerie and poignant coincidence the bill before us is numbered 1957.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that John is still here with us, guiding us forward in spirit to continue on the good work he started in Congress some 30 years ago.

Last year, when we enacted a permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a great accomplishment of this Congress and, yes, this President—we made it clear that doing so was only the first of a two-step process.

The second step was making sure that the Land and Water Conservation Fund is permanently paid for. That is what this bill does today, with nearly \$1 billion annually in mandatory spending to sustain the fund and support critical Federal, State, and local conservation projects across this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, but the bill creates a new fund that will help address the maintenance backlog in protecting some of our most iconic national parks. The impact of these investments will be felt not only in tourism and improved public access to our public lands, but also in a cleaner and healthier environment over the long term.

In my home State of Maryland, we have used the fund to protect some of our most historic sites, protecting nature so that every American might have the same opportunity to enjoy the sanctity of nature or contact with our history.

I was personally proud to have worked to protect the watershed and the viewshed of George Washington's Mount Vernon site permanently through the creation of Piscataway Park on our side, Maryland's side, of the river.

We also used the fund to protect the Patuxent Research Refuge established to support wildlife research, Douglas Point in Nanjemoy, and countless sites throughout the Chesapeake Bay region.

In all, Maryland has received, over the years, over \$230 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to preserve our State's most treasured landscape and historic places.

Mr. Speaker, this bill before us passed the Senate on a strong bipartisan vote 73–25—in other words, three-quarters of the United States Senate—and I believe we will demonstrate, hopefully, similar overwhelming support in the House later today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join in making this critical investment in America's public lands that will conserve them for the enjoyment of generations to come. I ask them to join me, as well, in helping to secure the legacy of our friend JOHN LEWIS.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. FULCHER).

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. While I understand the merits of the bill and while some of my colleagues support it, I still have concerns.

I spent a lot of time in the rural counties of Idaho. Residents and local governments, understandably, have serious concerns regarding additional Federal land acquisition, especially at a time when Federal resources are stretched so thin.

The Federal Government doesn't have the resources to manage the land and are often prevented from allowing local involvement. Translation: More Federal land equals less land being intelligently managed and, often, more wildlife.

Currently, about two-thirds of Idaho's land mass is controlled by the Federal Government. That means less property tax, more D.C. bureaucracy, reliance on grant programs like Secure Rural Schools, Payments in Lieu of Taxes, and the ramifications of associated strings inevitably attached.

I am also concerned about our growing national debt, now over \$24 trillion. And while I appreciate that this bill utilizes revenue streams from future oil and gas receipts, it is still ultimately taxpayer money. That authorizes permanent funding, and any time there is permanent funding, that also raises a red flag.

Mr. Speaker, to be a wise steward of the people's money, Congress should regularly reevaluate programs that it funds, not automatically renew appropriations.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our distinguished Speaker, whom I thank for helping guide this important piece of legislation to the floor and to a vote today.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank

him for being a lifelong champion of environmental justice and environmental stewardship as chair of the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, as a Californian, as an American, as Speaker of the House, I proudly rise in support of the Great American Outdoors Act, one of the most important conservation and public lands bills in decades.

This legislation builds on the progress made here by House Democrats and others earlier in our majority when we passed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, named for our former colleague, a fitting testament to Chairman DINGELL's legacy, which made permanent the authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the Great American Outdoors Act—I love the title—takes the next step in our pro-conservation agenda, as it boldly protects our country's natural and cultural heritage for our children, our grandchildren, and generations to come.

This legislation reflects the energy and expertise of our freshmen, and I particularly salute and thank Congressman JOE CUNNINGHAM of South Carolina. Congressman CUNNINGHAM is a former ocean engineer, now serving on the Committee on Natural Resources, who was the lead author on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in passing this legislation, Congress is ensuring that America lives up to its conservation promises, as we finally permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at levels that were promised.

Over 55 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided over \$17 billion in funding for over 40,000 recreational and conservation initiatives in every county in the country, creating and protecting America's iconic landscapes like the Grand Canyon and historical sites like the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park.

Some of California's most treasured natural areas benefited from the protection provided by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, including Joshua Tree, Lake Tahoe, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund also addresses environmental injustice by creating green spaces near low-income communities and communities of color across the country, permanently. Funding the LWCF will ensure that we preserve our natural heritage in an equitable manner to ensure that all communities can benefit.

The Great American Outdoors Act—I love the name, as I said—also makes an urgently needed investment in our national parks, which face a crippling \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog. Our parks are critical to preservation of our natural and cultural heritage, and we must ensure that they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

The Great American Outdoors Act enjoys overwhelming bipartisan support both in the Congress and across the country. Nearly 900 national, State, and local groups representing small businesses, ranchers, sportsmen, veterans, outdoor recreationists, and conservation organizations have written in support of this legislation sharing these thoughts:

“The Great American Outdoors Act will ensure a future for nature to thrive, kids to play, hunters and anglers to enjoy. National parks and public lands provide access to the outdoors for hundreds of millions of people every year and habitat for some of our country’s most iconic wildlife.”

□ 1330

It goes on: “These treasured places also tell the stories that define and unite us as a Nation. Funds provided in this bill will secure these vital resources while preserving water quantity and quality, sustaining working landscapes and rural economies, increasing access for recreation for all Americans no matter where they live, and fueling the juggernaut of our outdoor economy.”

Indeed, the Great American Outdoors Act supports good-paying jobs and grows the economy. Nationally, outdoor recreation supports more than 5 million jobs and adds nearly \$780 billion to the economy.

House Democrats are proud to pass this bill and send it on to the President’s desk. We hope to do so in the strongest possible bipartisan way, as it passed the United States Senate.

As we do, we will continue our work to protect our environment and natural heritage by including calling on the Senate to take up H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which rebuilds America’s infrastructure, while investing in a clean energy future, including by modernizing our energy infrastructure, boosting our commitment to renewables, building a clean transportation sector, and more.

Also we want to implement the Select Committee on Climate Crisis’ action plan, Solving the Climate Crisis, the most sweeping and detailed climate plan in decades, which sets out a vision of 30 by 30, conserving at least 30 percent of land and ocean in America by 2030 to confront the threats of the climate crisis, which the Great American Outdoors Act advances.

And urging the Senate to take up H.R. 9, the Climate Action Now Act, our strong response to the American people who are demanding climate action by keeping us in the Paris Agreement.

That is not in this bill. We have a different bill here. We must invest in the future we want for our children.

I just want to put this in a little perspective, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member. And thank you for your leadership in so many ways, Mr. BISHOP.

When our country was founded and when Thomas Jefferson became Presi-

dent, he tasked Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin to build the infrastructure of America, for an infrastructure plan that would follow the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It was Erie Canal, Cumberland Road, all kinds of things, and build into the Louisiana Purchase that would follow. It was a great undertaking. Gallatin was the Secretary of the Treasury, and so many things happened at that time to build the infrastructure into the manifest destiny of America and as we moved west.

You wonder why I am bringing that up. 100 years later, at the anniversary of that initiative, President Teddy Roosevelt did his own infrastructure initiative called the National Park Service. It was to build and respect and conserve the green infrastructure of America. It was quite remarkable. So much sprang from that initiative of Teddy Roosevelt, the great conservationist.

And now, over 200 years later, this is a tip of the hat to all of that. But so much more needs to be done. It is a recognition of the importance of the great outdoors, to the quality of life, but also the juggernaut of our outdoor economy.

So, I hope we will have a strong bipartisan vote. I once again thank the distinguished chairman, Mr. GRIJALVA, for his leadership in all of this over the years and for this bill. And I, again, salute Mr. CUNNINGHAM of South Carolina for bringing his expertise as an ocean engineer to bear as the lead author of this important legislation, the Great American Outdoors Act.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, the Dingell Act, 2 years ago, was bipartisan. If this were bipartisan, we would not be here.

But to illustrate that, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, today is a very swampy day, and I am not talking about the weather. Today, Congress will pass a bill that is, frankly, a demonstration of everything that is wrong with Washington.

The Great American Outdoors Act is a product of special interests, written not by committees, but in back rooms, full of special interest provisions, and now being forced through this Chamber without the opportunity for us to amend it.

This is permanent legislation, yet we can’t take an extra hour in the House to consider amendments to make this legislation better? Why? Because the special interests that have paid nearly \$100 million in lobbying can’t be denied another day from their victory. Well, I guess they got what they bought.

Are we not allowed to amend this bill because House leadership is afraid to offend the Senate? We can decide that the Senate isn’t perfect, their product isn’t wonderful, that the House can make amendments to make it better.

Let’s be clear. This bill is nearly nothing like the legislation introduced by the supporters in the House.

The gentleman from South Carolina may think he has got a great win, but the repeal of the 100th meridian provision, which is in this bill, allows the U.S. Forest Service to steer millions of Federal spending away from his State.

Like the Comptroller of the United States told us in December, left to their own devices, the U.S. Forest Service will spend 80 percent of their funding to the west of the meridian. And that was with Congressional oversight. Once passed and set on autopilot, this program will only get worse.

If your goal was to expand recreational opportunities to more Americans, then you have failed miserably if you vote for this bill.

But that is not the only problem with this legislation. I proposed a bipartisan amendment that would require the construction done under this act to adhere to Buy American provisions.

It was endorsed by the United Steelworkers, the AFL-CIO, American Iron and Steel Institute, and a broad coalition of trade associations and unions. The underlying bill includes billions in new spending on infrastructure. Those billions could be spent on products manufactured by American workers.

Can Congress consider this today? No.

Why? Because the Speaker rejected the amendment, rejected American workers, and rejected American manufacturing. At a time when America needs jobs, a failure to include Buy American provisions in this bill is a shame on this House.

I had amendments dealing with the infrastructure challenges facing our Native American reservations, including funding for Indian education and Indian health. In areas where COVID-19 was destructive, they need funds desperately to get back into the 21st century from their current dilapidated state.

Will Congress consider these amendments? No, because the special interests behind this legislation don’t want us to consider those needs on the floor of the House.

Considering this legislation sets the Federal Government on a massive land buying spree like never seen before, I prepared an amendment to protect our counties by ensuring full payment in the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program.

Do you remember that contract? Can we honor it? That won’t even be considered, as well as anything else.

This legislation isn’t a victory for America; it is a loss. Good process builds good policy builds good politics. It is a shame that we didn’t go there. I ask everybody to vote against this legislation.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) and thank her for her work on environmental justice legislation.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, green spaces should be a right for everyone, regardless of where they live or the color of their skin.

Unfortunately, for too many Black, Brown, and Native American communities, parks are considered a privilege. Today, we can change this injustice.

The Great American Outdoors Act will create more local parks in low-income and urban neighborhoods. Minority communities across the country lack access to green spaces.

In my district, in Compton, we only have about half an acre of parkland for every thousand residents, well below the averages in the rest of Los Angeles County and the Nation.

Voting “yes” means more outdoor recreation opportunities, including sports fields and trails. Voting “yes” means all kids, no matter their ZIP Code, have the right to play on green grass and explore the natural world.

I am proud to vote “yes” to secure this right for our young people today and for future generations.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), one of the ranking members on the committee, who has spent a lot of time on our committee and understands these issues.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I represent the Sierra Nevada of California. Yosemite Valley, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, and Lake Tahoe are all within my district.

The Yosemite Land Grant Act signed by President Lincoln in 1864 was the first time the Federal Government set aside land for “public use, resort, and recreation . . . for all time.”

Today, the Federal estate has grown to 640 million acres. That is 28 percent of the land area of our Nation. While the Federal Government owns just seven-tenths of 1 percent of New York State and 1.8 percent of Texas, it owns 46 percent of my home State of California and 93 percent of Alpine County in my district.

Now, we in the Sierra revere our public lands, and we are proud to share them with the world. But the Federal Government now holds far more land than it can take care of. The Federal lands now face a \$20 billion backlog of deferred maintenance, which makes tourism less desirable.

Now, this is all land that is off the local tax rolls, denying our local governments vital revenues. Federal restrictions on productive use of these lands has devastated local economies and, worst of all, the Federal Government has utterly neglected the management of our forests to the point that they have become morbidly overgrown and now present a constant threat of catastrophic fire.

Now, shouldn't we take care of the land we already hold before we acquire still more land? And when we have already taken two-thirds of Alaska and Utah and four-fifths of Nevada, shouldn't we pause and ask for some balance around the country?

Now, this measure does provide enough money over the next 5 years to address about half of our current de-

ferred maintenance needs, and that is very good. But then that funding disappears, and we are left with locked-in, billion-dollar-a-year mandatory spending in perpetuity for new land acquisitions placed outside of Congress' control, while removing the requirement that future acquisitions be focused where the Federal Government owns very little land.

It means that unelected bureaucrats will have a billion-dollar-a-year slush fund to take private property off the tax rolls with no accountability to our local communities, no provisions for long-term maintenance, and no reforms to protect our people from the scourge of wildfire produced by the continuing neglect of our Federal forests.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA).

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Great American Outdoors Act.

In my district on the central coast of California, we protect, we promote, and we never put a price on our environment. Partly because it is what drives our local economy, but also we appreciate what it means for those after us.

By fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, this bill ensures the type of necessary care needed for our National Parks, forests, and critical wildlife areas. This is needed today, because those treasures have been put under extreme pressure with this pandemic, but also previously with increased visitors and decreased budgets.

That is why this legislation is so important, as it will not only address needed infrastructure projects and deferred maintenance, but also because it will promote conservation, recreation, and access to the outdoors.

By passing this bipartisan bill that ensures investments in our parks and forests, we are ensuring that our natural treasures, our postcards to the future, actually get delivered to future generations.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MCADAMS).

□ 1345

Mr. MCADAMS. Madam Speaker, Utah is blessed with many treasured national areas, from parks and trails to red rock canyons. Conserving these places is more important than ever, and today, we take landmark action by passing full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This successful conservation program has given us, at no cost to the taxpayer, decades of vital funding for national and State parks, wildlife refuges, and recreational areas.

State and local officials rely on the money to improve local parks and trails, which see increased demand along the rapidly growing Wasatch Front. Utah has five of the country's

most beloved national parks, including Zion National Park, which has quite literally been loved to death and has a \$67 million backlog in deferred maintenance. This bill provides some desperately needed funding to fill that backlog.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to be voting for this legislation and the promise it holds for our economy and an excellent quality of life in Utah for my children and for future generations.

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

Mr. Speaker, I won't tell the gentleman from Utah that the Utah Association of Counties is opposed to this and all the trails that he is talking about come from the State's side of projects. That is beside the point.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member and colleague from Utah. I appreciate his service and his force with which he does things here.

Mr. Speaker, all right, where are we? Gigantic deficits, yet we want to add to the burden of that deficit with a forced \$900 million, nearly \$1 billion, every year in this bill for acquiring new Federal land.

Now, I come from the West, so we are already ravaged by wildfire, by unmanaged lands that are detrimental to the neighbors, to the private lands. I have three fires going on in my district right now. A lot of this emanates from unmanaged Forest Service lands. So, we want to add to their inability to manage even more lands in this legislation.

Now, the part of the bill that Mr. BISHOP had authored is a good part, taking care of the backlog that we have in our parks and our lands, if you would listen to him, \$20 billion worth of backlog that we haven't found a way to pay for yet. Yet, instead of finishing our dinner, we are already going for the dessert by buying more lands that we can't afford and we know we can't manage.

I will be thinking about this, and my constituents will, as more and more forest lands burn each year and threaten communities. These forests are gated off because they don't have time to do the maintenance and the work that needs to be done so the public can have access to these lands because of the \$20 billion backlog or the funding to take care of the juniper problem that we have in northeast California, the wild horse population that needs to be managed so they don't die out there of starvation during the draught, the sage grouse habitat so they don't become endangered, and our local counties, our rural counties, that are already struggling with the lack of PILT funds because they have to come back here and beg every year for the payment in lieu of taxes to get this place to keep its commitments on that and

to secure rural schools funds that our rural counties need.

Mr. Speaker, I say “no” on this bill and get back to managing what we should manage.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close when the gentleman from Utah is done with his speakers.

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

We have talked about several of the problems with this particular bill. With this particular bill, we have talked about how the poor reckoning of its sources there do not say what is going to happen if this money does not develop. I think Mr. GRAVES would be good to talk about where this money is coming and how it is being used at the same time. And we don't necessarily know what will happen with the lowering of the royalties that we are experiencing this year from next year.

There is one other consideration I hope that people will understand, especially for all those who are speaking about it who come from the eastern coast. There was a conforming amendment put in the Senate in this particular bill, a conforming amendment. In the good old days, we used to call them earmarks, but it is a conforming amendment.

The original bill said that on Forest Service land that would be bought, 15 percent of that had to come from west of the 100th meridian and 85 percent had to come from east of the 100th meridian. That was taken out, quietly and surely taken out. The end result of that means that there is a siphoning of billions of dollars that should be and could be going to Eastern States.

I mention that because one of the Democrat speakers did speak about the need for urban recreation opportunities. That was what was supposed to happen, and with this conforming amendment, that is what is taken out of the bill.

In the 1960s, as this bill was being discussed, Orville Freeman was the Secretary of Agriculture for Kennedy. He said at that time that the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission pointed out that the greatest need for recreation opportunities lies in the areas adjacent to the metropolitan centers in the Eastern States.

It would be our purpose under this bill to expand about 84 percent of what would be available under it for acquisition in the eastern national forest acquired under the Weeks Act.

In fact, that commission went on to say that outdoor opportunities are most urgently needed near metropolitan areas. Much of the West and virtually all of Alaska are of little use to most Americans looking for a place in the Sun for their families on a weekend when the demand is overwhelming.

At regional and State levels, most of the land is where people are not. One-sixth is in the sparsely populated Alaska. Seventy-two percent of the remainder is in the West, where only 15 per-

cent of the people live. The Northeast, where one-quarter of the people live, only 4 percent of the acreage is there.

But that language was not put in there by happenstance. There was a reason for it. In one iteration of this particular act that we introduced a long time ago, there was the idea of putting a specific percentage that would go to urban recreation so there would be those urban recreation concepts, as was originally designed in the bill. That has been taken out.

What that will mean is that for you who live east of the 100th meridian, basically east of Denver, there will be \$1.19 billion less dedicated to you than there would have been if this amendment had not been put in there. That works out to an average of \$32 million per congressional district of those living east of Denver.

I am glad that all those who are for this, on whatever side, will have a good time to explain to their constituents why they are in favor of giving their area \$32 million less in recreation opportunity simply because you are going to confirm a conforming amendment that was slipped into the Senate version of this bill that really hurts this process and is not necessarily positive.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER).

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and all who worked on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who grew up on the Olympic Peninsula, I learned how important protecting our parks and our public lands is to driving tourism and growing jobs and supporting rural economies.

This is a big day. Permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, providing dedicated funding to make much-needed repairs at Olympic National Park and throughout our park system, this is progress for ensuring that these natural assets can continue to provide amazing visitor experiences and serve as economic drivers for rural communities that need these jobs and need these opportunities for future generations.

This is a day to also celebrate the extraordinary coalition of environmental groups, outdoor economy groups, and local civic leaders that got involved to move this bill forward today.

I am grateful for all who worked on this. I am proud to be a supporter of this bill, and I am encouraging all of my colleagues to vote “yes” today.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce another dose of reality, something you have not heard many folks talk about today.

Where is this money coming from? How are we paying for this initially—what is it?—\$1.9 or \$2.9 billion a year in mandatory spending?

This is coming from offshore energy revenues. That is where the majority of these moneys are coming from, from oil and gas production. I want to be clear: from oil and gas production.

Now, the majority at the same time and in the same breath is taking step after step to decimate or eliminate the domestic energy industry, therefore not making us get oil and gas from the United States but getting it from places like Russia, as we have seen over and over again when these drastic policies have been put forth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing is, any time you have energy revenues like this produced on Federal land under the Mineral Leasing Act, 50 percent of the money goes to those States that host that production, and they can use it for whatever they want. They can use it for whatever they want to use it for.

In this case, the Gulf States, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, we get about 4 percent right now.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a question. I have a question for my friends on the majority. Can they tell me what they are going to say to the residents of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida next time we have a huge hurricane come through because you have refused, under the bipartisan amendment that the Congressional Black Caucus and others advocated, you have refused to allow for a larger percentage of money to be invested back in the resilience of this ecosystem, the resilience of these communities?

Tell me what you are going to say to them whenever we have another Hurricane Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, Harvey, Irma, Maria, Michael, Florence. Tell me what you are going to say to them because you are taking their money, and you are spending it in other places, and you are saying this is for the environment, these environmental groups out there advocating for this, when it is a greater environmental investment to make it in the Gulf.

Mr. Speaker, I urge opposition to the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD statements from the U.S. Farm Bureau Association and the Cattlemen's Association in opposition to this, from the American Energy Alliance in opposition to this, as well as the CRS report that analyzes from whence this money comes, whence it is going, and how much we probably won't have in the future.

JUNE 5, 2020.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS: We the undersigned western state Farm Bureau organizations write to express our concerns and areas of opposition to the S. 3422, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). While we recognize the significant benefits that the GAOA would

provide in addressing the extensive maintenance backlog for federally-managed lands, we also write to express our collective concerns with funding further expansion of federal land ownership in the west.

Farm Bureau members are significantly and directly impacted by federal land ownership, land-use policies and decisions. Throughout the West, our members hold public lands grazing permits, own property adjacent to federal lands and engage in public and private land forestry. For many ranchers, access to public lands grazing is economically and ecologically essential to their operation and provides access to land that may not otherwise be available to new or beginning farmers and ranchers.

Legislation or regulation that could be used to curtail viable multiple use access to these public resources is a threat to America's farming and ranching families. Historical experience illustrates, in many cases, that expansion of public land ownership over time leads to new policies that further limit multiple uses of land such as livestock grazing or create additional restrictions on access and rangeland improvements. Further, additional federal land acquisition does not adequately consider the reduction in economic activity and the loss of jobs in resource-dependent communities. For these reasons, Farm Bureau believes that it is essential for agricultural stakeholders to be represented on any sort of planning and/or advisory committees formed for federal land expansion especially in those areas where private or state land is proposed for purchase or exchange.

American farmers and ranchers have always demonstrated their fortitude and resilience in adapting to the ever-changing landscape—both political and ecological. While the resources made available through federally managed lands provide opportunities for ranchers to add value to their businesses, availability of private land is essential for successful business and commerce. The federal government already owns over 640 million acres, which is approximately 28% of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the U.S.

Since enactment of the LWCF in 1965, Congress has appropriated \$18.9 billion (not adjusted for inflation), of which \$11.4 billion was for federal land acquisition. Over 5 million acres of private land has been purchased by USDA and DOI agencies.

The Federal government already owns more land than it can effectively maintain and manage. In the west, the federal government owns roughly every other acre of land and many counties have more than 75% of their land in federal ownership. Further federal and ownership erodes the available tax-base and limits the ability of local governments to effectively provide critical government services.

The second title of the GAOA establishes the Land and Water Conservation Fund as a trust fund with permanent authorization and without annual appropriations oversight. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the price tag for the first year of this legislation could be upwards of \$20 billion. In this midst of the current pandemic and related economic crisis, we are concerned with the additional financial burden this legislation would create.

We believe, at this time, that funds allocated by the Land and Water Conservation Act (LWCA) would be better utilized to manage existing federal lands and request Congress amend the GAOA to allow for LWCA funds to instead be allocated to individual state foresters for their use in fire suppression, fire management and conservation efforts instead of utilizing funds to acquire additional private property. We request that you consider the following amendment requests:

1. Sunset in five years. This would allow the Congress to evaluate the program and decide whether to reauthorize, modify, or eliminate it. A five-year sunset would conform the LWCF title of the bill with the \$49.5 billion maintenance title.

2. Limit land acquisition to states with less than the collective average of those western states with federal owned/administered lands.

3. Require that all federal and acquisitions be subject to approval of the relevant state legislature, Governor, and county commissions.

4. Require notice of any potential land acquisition be given at least 90 days before title can be transferred to the state legislature, Governor, and county commissioners. Notice should include the annual loss of property tax revenues that will result; or if the land is already held by a tax-exempt owner, such as a land trust, the notice should include the tax revenues lost if the property were subject to property taxes.

5. Require that priority be given to the maintenance backlog, forgoing any acquisition requests in those instances when revenues are limited.

Additionally, our organizations would welcome the opportunity for inclusion of additional maintenance and enhancement projects that would benefit critical natural resources to the West. We ask that you consider including the provisions of S. 2044, the Water Supply Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Utilization Act. This amendment would create an aging infrastructure account within the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to provide loans to local water managers to perform extraordinary maintenance on the federal BOR infrastructure they manage. Initially, \$40 million per year over five years (\$2 billion total) would be provided to this account from the Reclamation Fund. No taxpayer funds would be used to fund the account and water users would be required to repay the loans received to repair and replace water facilities with interest. The repaid funds would be available to BOR to fund additional extraordinary maintenance projects, essentially creating a revolving fund.

The GAOA provides deferred maintenance for every federal asset agency within the Department of Interior except BOR. Yet, BOR is facing significant issues with deferred and maintenance needs at federal water supply facilities. 80% of BOR's facilities are more than 50 years old and are in need of major upgrades or replacement costs beyond regular maintenance. Since water managers do not own the infrastructure, they are unable to bond against it and therefore have limited access to other sources of capital for major repair projects. Creating this account within BOR would allow water managers to perform repairs, repay cost over time and ultimately ensure that our aging federal water infrastructure remains viable to serve the billions of dollars of agricultural and other economic activity that depends on it.

Our organizations are happy to further discuss the GAOA, our recommendations and the opportunity for inclusion of additional maintenance projects. We thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to continuing this important conversation.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation, Alaska Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Colorado Farm Bureau Federation, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, Montana Farm Bureau Federation, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, Oregon Farm Bureau Federation, Washington Farm Bureau Federation, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation.

[From the American Energy Alliance, July 22, 2020]

KEY VOTE NO ON H.R. 1957

The American Energy Alliance urges all members to vote NO on H.R. 1957 as amended by the Senate with the text of the Great American Outdoors Act. The federal government already owns far more land than it can adequately manage, which is part of the reason for the large maintenance backlog this bill tries to address. However, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is simply a vehicle for buying up even more land for the federal government to mismanage.

By buying up land, the federal government hems in and impoverishes local rural communities by removing taxable land and limiting space for economic activity. Land procured through the LWCF that is later placed off limits to development further harms the local communities as well as harming the larger economy. While the LWCF itself is questionable policy, at least the current structure of the fund allows for congressional input into the land acquisition process through appropriations. Making LWCF funding permanent removes this last Congressional check on federal land acquisition. Permanent funding of the LWCF should be opposed.

The AEA urges all members to support free markets and affordable energy by voting NO on H.R. 1957 as amended with the Great American Outdoors Act. AEA will include this vote in its American Energy Scorecard.—Thomas Pyle, President, American Energy Alliance.

[From CRS Reports & Analysis]

EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON FEDERAL LAND REVENUES, JULY 13, 2020 (R46448)

EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON ENERGY AND MINERAL OPERATIONS AND RECEIPTS

The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying recession have significantly affected energy and mineral prices, production, and consumption. Many observers expect energy consumption will remain below 2019 levels through at least 2021 . . . These expectations stem from reported and ongoing reduced demand for liquid fuels for the transportation sector and reduced demand for coal and natural gas associated with the reduced demand for electricity and industrial activity.

Royalties are the largest contributor to federal energy and mineral revenues. Royalty rates are set by statute, regulation, or for specific leases, but the rates are rarely altered once a lease has been issued. The revenues from royalties reflect the product of the royalty rate and the market value of the commodity produced. The pandemic and accompanying recession have resulted in reduced demand for oil, gas, and coal, which has resulted in lower prices and lower production for these commodities in recent months, relative to 2019.

For May 2020, ONRR reported onshore oil and gas royalty collections of \$170 million, a decline of 53% from May 2019. ONRR reported offshore oil and gas royalty collections of \$100 million, a decline of 84% from royalty collections for the same month in 2019. The royalty collections for May reflect production and sales in April. ONRR reports new monthly data on an ongoing basis.

To the extent that royalties and other revenues are reduced due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and recession, disbursements to states and some federal programs would decline accordingly. The severity of these impacts on program funding and state budgets depends on the portion of total revenue coming from energy and mineral disbursements and on other factors. Some programs (e.g., the LWCF) receive disbursements up to a specified limit; in such cases,

royalties could fall but remain sufficient to fund such programs. Reductions in energy and mineral revenues also could affect the funds remaining in the U.S. Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I actually have left here.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We have heard all sorts of platitudes about this bill today. Whether it passes or not is actually irrelevant. It is not bipartisan, and it has all sorts of flaws. There are questions about the future source of funding.

We have heard speaker after speaker come up and say: We are not talking about taxpayers' money. This is only royalties that are off there.

One of the problems we have to face is that all the royalties that come from offshore development and onshore development from energy and gas, those royalties are placed in the general fund. In fact, the second largest source of funds that go into the general fund is from these royalties, second only to the IRS taxes that go in there. If these revenues weren't deposited in LWCF, they would be deposited in the general fund of the U.S. Treasury. If that is not taxpayer money, I don't know what is.

We have talked about the need for, actually, urban recreation areas. We would like to do it, but unfortunately, this bill diminishes that opportunity and puts it in limbo, which is not good.

I have heard speaker after speaker come up here with pretty pictures about our national parks, reservation lands, BLM land, resource lands, all these things that need to be helped. A lot of them talked about all the wonderful programs that are on State lands, that are parks, roads, picnic areas, and all those things which we are already doing.

When we permanently reauthorized the LWCF last Congress, that is when we put more money into those types of things everyone says is wonderful.

□ 1400

What we didn't put more money into is buying Federal land, buying more land to put into the Federal estate. As everyone talks about how important it is actually to now start putting money into park maintenance, into maintenance of the backlog, what this bill does is put that at the very lowest rung on priorities of where this royalty money is spent.

You will spend it first on GOMESA. You will send it to the States. It will go to historic preservation. You will spend it on buying up more land before you ever come to anything that helps the parks and helps the public lands. That is because we have disproportionately done this.

This bill is not about funding our public lands. This bill is about circumventing the limitations that we put in in the last Congress on buying more

land. The only thing this bill is about is how we can find another way to buy more property.

We can't even afford the property we already have. There is a \$20 billion maintenance backlog. But what this is attempting to do is find a way to put more money into buying more land so we can exacerbate that problem.

Now, you can say all you want to about how wonderful it is, how good it is, and, I am sorry, most of those platitudes were misstated. They were talking about things that either already exist or are actually being de-emphasized by this particular bill.

What this bill is about is: Are you going to put more money into buying more land before you put more money into actually maintaining the land we already have? That is really the only issue of this bill, and that is why we are fighting this strongly about it.

Last year, when we did the Dingell Act, that was bipartisan. We had worked together to come up with a lot of bipartisan stuff. This was not a bipartisan bill. Mr. KILMER, I appreciated his work with me on the parks. That was bipartisan. This is not bipartisan. It is still about how do we buy more land. That is the goal of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "no" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Arizona has 7¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the process of this legislation reaching this point on the floor to be voted upon has, to those of us involved, been difficult. It has been frustrating. Yet, the possibility of it being done was always there, and that was the goal. I think the overwhelming support in the Senate for a clean bill to come to the House was bipartisan.

I think today would have been—I didn't feel it was necessary to engage in the same arguments that we have been engaging about with the Land and Water Conservation Fund in particular and the backlog. This legislation is not about robbing Peter to pay Paul. It is not about taking money from the East to give to the West. It is not about denying coastal States their share.

If we do transition, as we transition, which we need to urgently, to clean energy in the future, future Congresses, I think, will have the foresight to look at this legislation and deal with how we move forward with it and continue to fund it.

When I went to visit Land and Water Conservation Fund sites, I went to a park in south Phoenix, the only green space and recreation area for close to 8,000 families who live in that general area, Land and Water Conservation Fund; and when I went to other locations in urban areas across this country, Land and Water Conservation Fund.

That continues to be a priority for reasons of public health, equity, and access.

Mr. Speaker, in a strange procedural trick of the House, we have spent this afternoon debating the Great American Outdoors Act, but the bill we refer to as H.R. 1957 began as something else.

H.R. 1957 was originally a bill to protect taxpayers by ensuring fair treatment under the law. It was introduced back in March 2019 by our late friend and colleague, Representative John Lewis.

Now, I can't personally speak to Representative Lewis' thoughts on conservation spending. But I do believe our late friend would be happy with the work that we have done here today and the vote that we are about to take.

Representative Lewis truly believed in a government by and for the people, all the people. He challenged us to leave petty partisanship at the door and to consider the essential pursuit of justice and equity that we have long sought and failed to meet in this country.

I am proud to have called Representative Lewis my friend. I am proud that we can honor his legacy with the passage of this bill.

There is much work left to be done to ensure real equity and justice in the United States, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues across the aisle in continuing that work in the future.

But when we come together as we have today, as the people's representatives working toward the common goal of protecting future generations, then perhaps there is hope we might see Representative Lewis' vision realized.

I thank all of my colleagues who spoke on behalf of this legislation. I thank leadership for bringing it to the floor and all the members of the committee and Members not on the committee who worked very hard to bring this legislation forward. It is historic. It is important. It is necessary. And it is an essential step. I urge us to vote "yes" on H.R. 1957.

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for the Senate amendment to H.R. 1957, the Great American Outdoors Act. This legislation will establish permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and establish a National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund supporting deferred maintenance projects on federal lands. The funding authorized by this legislation will assist many states, including my home state of Rhode Island, in improving state parks and beaches, and preserving open spaces and wildlife habitats. Additionally, funding for deferred maintenance projects within the National Park System will help ensure that resources remain available to Rhode Island in the future for required improvements and developments for sites like the Roger Williams National Memorial and the Blackstone Valley National Historic Park.

While I support this legislation, I am hopeful that the Natural Resources Committee, as well

as the House Appropriations Committee, will work to improve funding outcomes for coastal states under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Per-capita, coastal states receive approximately forty cents on the dollar compared to funding received by inland states. Rhode Island's coastal economy generates more than \$2 billion annually, and supports more than 41,000 jobs, while New England as a whole supports nearly a quarter of a million jobs through its coastal economy. As a result of geography, coastal states face a number of challenges which many inland states do not face, including beach erosion, migrating fish stocks which impact commercial fisheries, and vulnerability to tropical storms and other weather-related disasters. All of these challenges are further exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

Congress needs to be able to support critical programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund and also ensure that coastal communities are able to receive necessary funds to preserve their coastlines, protect wildlife, and support workers who rely on jobs supported by ocean economies. I look forward to working with Chairman GRIJALVA to discuss ways in which we may be able to achieve this going forward.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act, which, among other things, would address the National Park Service's (NPS) deferred maintenance backlog, a problem that disproportionately affects the National Capital Region and, especially, the District of Columbia. Twenty percent of the District consists of parkland, almost 90 percent of which is under the jurisdiction of NPS.

National parks are some of America's greatest treasures, yet NPS, the agency that maintains our federal parks, has a \$12 billion maintenance backlog. One-sixth of all projects in the backlog are in the National Capital Region, with \$1.3 billion in D.C. itself. The National Mall and Memorial Parks have the highest number of deferred maintenance projects in the nation, with more than \$840 million in needed repairs still outstanding, according to Pew Charitable Trusts. The most significant deferred maintenance projects involve refurbishing memorials and making necessary repairs for supporting infrastructure. Although these parks are located in D.C., they are of national significance. The National Mall and Memorial Parks accommodate more than 36 million visits each year and roughly 30,000 people use their 15 softball fields, eight volleyball courts, two rugby fields and the Washington Monument grounds for sporting events nearly year-round. This heavy use has caused a \$13 million repair backlog for the Mall grounds.

In addition to the National Mall and Memorial Parks, NPS owns most of D.C.'s neighborhood parks, including 156 small green spaces and many circles, squares and fountains throughout D.C. Also included in the backlog are historic sites such as Ford's Theatre, the FDR Memorial, East and West Potomac Parks, the Carter Barron Amphitheatre and the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument. I support passage of the Great American Outdoors Act so that NPS can properly maintain all of our incredible national parks.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Senate Amendment to H.R. 1957. The Great

American Outdoors Act is landmark legislation that will clear the maintenance backlog at our National Parks, protect our country's ecosystems, and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The permanent funding of the LWCF has been one of my longtime goals. When I was Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I introduced the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) with my dear friend, the late Chairman John Dingell by my side. Today marks the culmination of our work, and I am proud to have accomplished this with the help of John's wife, Congresswoman DEBBIE DINGELL. My enthusiasm for permanent LWCF funding is as strong now as it was then. In recognition of this day, Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following op-ed that I authored in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner on July 4, 2000 in support of CARA.

[From the Fairbanks (Alaska) Daily News-Miner, July 4, 2000]

LEGISLATION BESTOWS LASTING ALASKA RETURNS
(By Don Young)

There's been a lot of interesting speculation about my legislation called the Conservation and Reinvestment Act. Numerous stories and editorials have been written about what this landmark bill would do and why I led the effort to pass such a major conservation package.

Even News-Miner columnist Fred Pratt has devoted a significant amount of attention to CARA and my participation in this process. In his most recent column, he speculated that I wrote the bill to benefit Alaska Native corporations. This was a new and novel theory, but unfortunately, not accurate.

The truth is actually very simple—CARA is good for all Alaskans.

In Alaska and throughout the nation, CARA will increase funding for federal and state conservation and recreation programs, urban parks, historic preservation, and wildlife conservation. The bill also resolves a major inequity regarding the disposition of funds generated from Outer Continental Shelf activities.

Currently, states receive 50 percent of the revenues for onshore oil production but nothing from the federal waters six miles and beyond a state's coast. CARA corrects this problem by creating new programs that benefit coastal states with the OCS revenues, which have averaged between \$4 to \$5 billion annually. Under CARA, \$2.8 billion of this funding will go toward important recreation, wildlife and conservation programs each year.

In addition, CARA creates new private property protections which go beyond existing law.

Alaska will receive about \$2.5 billion during the 15-year period included in CARA for these programs. Each year, Alaska would receive: \$87 million for coastal conservation programs; \$38.5 million for state and federal land conservation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund; \$17.5 million for wildlife conservation; \$9.8 million in PILT payments; \$9 million for federal and Native land restoration; and about \$1.5 million for historic preservation and endangered species programs.

In previous years, the LWCF has helped fund several popular Alaska projects including Alaskaland in Fairbanks, the Coastal Trail in Anchorage and Eagle Crest in Juneau. The increased funding for the state programs under the LWCF will allow for local communities to determine how these funds are spent in their own communities based upon their local priorities, rather than federal dictates.

Despite inaccurate claims by fringe groups like the American Land Rights Association, CARA also includes new private property protections that go beyond existing law. No new federal land can be acquired under CARA without the specific approval of Congress. The federal government can only purchase land from willing sellers—condemnation is not allowed under CARA unless it is specifically approved by Congress. CARA also created new requirements to protect land owners who do not want to sell their land from new regulations.

Additionally, the administration must seek to use land exchanges and conservation easements as alternatives to acquisition. These new protections were included to enhance private property rights in all 50 states.

Despite the noisy opposition by some fringe groups, CARA is supported by thousands of organizations and officials throughout the nation. Last month, CARA was overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. House by a 315 to 102 vote with a majority of both Republicans and Democrats voting for passage of the bill. CARA is supported by all 50 governors, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties. CARA has also been endorsed by more than 4,500 organizations including numerous conservation, hunting, fishing, and recreation groups like the National Rifle Association, and other organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Realtors.

Alaskans know that over the past 27 years, I have lead the effort for the authorization of the trans-Alaska pipeline, oil development in Prudhoe Bay and the Coastal Plain, a strong mining industry, and numerous other economic programs in every region of the state.

During this same period, I have also authored numerous important conservation bills including the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act and a comprehensive improvement of America's national wildlife refuge system.

In addition, I have authored and supported dozens of bills to promote hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation in our state and the entire nation.

Fred Pratt is correct. CARA and its expanded conservation, wildlife and recreation programs is consistent with my 27-year congressional record of working for Alaskans.

Don Young has served as Alaska's sole representative in Congress since 1973.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1053, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PERMISSION TO EXTEND DEBATE
TIME ON H.R. 7573, REPLACING
BUST OF ROGER BROOKE TANEY
WITH BUST OF THURGOOD MARSHALL

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that debate