

the beauty and recreational opportunities at Rocky Mountain National Park. The legislation simply allows the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement to operate and maintain a visitor center at the Fall River entrance to the park. The bill gives the Secretary of Interior the authority to collect and expend donated funds and expend appropriated funds for the operation and maintenance of the visitor center, which will be located outside the boundary of Rocky Mountain National Park. I introduced this legislation on January 23, 1995, and Senator HANK BROWN introduced a companion bill in the Senate on February 7, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, this is a unique project that deserves our attention and utmost consideration. For some time now there has been tremendous support to construct a visitor center at the Fall River entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park. With 1 million tourists entering the park at this entrance every year, the need to provide an orientation and interpretation facility is well known. As you can imagine, park visitation through this entrance is expected to increase in coming years, not decrease.

The need and desire for a visitor center at the Fall River site is not new. It was first documented in a plan prepared by the Park Service in 1976, and again in 1989. However, due to budget pressures and fiscal constraints this plan was never set into motion.

It was not until early 1993 that the prospect for constructing a new visitor center actually became possible. It was then that Mr. Bill Carle, owner of H.W. Stewart, Inc., approached the park superintendent with his idea for the creation of the Fall River Visitor Center.

Under the Fall River proposal, the visitor center would be built with private funds on land that will remain privately owned. The National Park Service, with assistance from the Shirley S. Scrogin Charitable Trust, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and the Rocky Mountain National Park Associates, would operate and maintain the visitor center. The park will use existing staff and operational funds to operate the center. Besides covering the cost of construction, the Shirley S. Scrogin Trust would also contribute funds annually for the maintenance of the center. The Rocky Mountain Nature Association, a friends of the park group, will provide a book sales operation and staff support for the center. Revenue generated from book sales will assist in defraying costs associated with the visitor center's operation. The Rocky Mountain National Park Associates, another friends of the park group, will assume the financial expenses for exhibit planning, design, and construction.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Budget Committee, I can attest to the difficulty the committee faces all the time when trying to stay within the budget requirements and utilize

taxpayer's money judiciously. We are constantly looking for ways to reduce spending, cut duplicative programs, and put Congress on a path toward fiscal responsibility. I believe H.R. 629 fulfills these goals and will yield savings for the Federal Government, as well as produce rewards.

I am sure you understand the financial constraints that face our National Park Service today. Due to the scarcity of dollars, it is doubtful that Rocky Mountain National Park will be appropriated—at any time in the near future—the funds necessary to construct a new visitor center from start to finish. Thus, the opportunity before us today is unique and one that we must not let fall through the cracks. The idea of a private-public partnership is one that I know many in Congress and the administration support. It makes sense from both a fiscal and practical point of view.

As I have tried to note, the benefits of this proposal are numerous: Visitors who come to Rocky Mountain National Park can enjoy the new visitor center; the Park Service will be allowed to collect fees at the Fall River entrance; and the developer will be able to reopen his businesses that were lost during a fire.

In summary, this proposal brings together the best qualities in both the public and private sectors. It combines the strengths and visions of both entities and provides a blueprint for similar joint ventures in the future. Whenever Congress has the opportunity to provide the public with the services it needs, while at the same time saving taxpayer's money, it must seize that opportunity. By passing this legislation today, we will have taken the first important step on the road to similar public-private partnerships in the future.

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Colorado has quite accurately reflected the content of H.R. 629. It had bipartisan support coming out of the committee. We continue to support it.

Mr. Speaker, if enacted this legislation would allow the National Park Service to enter into cooperative agreements with private and not-for-profit entities in order to construct, maintain, and operate a visitors center on private land outside park boundaries of the Rocky Mountain National Park. This would be the first ever such public/private venture to address a park need.

Rocky Mountain National Park is the No. 1 tourist attraction in the State of Colorado with an annual visitation of almost 3 million people. Currently, almost 1 million of those visitors enter the park through the Fall River entrance and do so without benefit of a National Park Service facility. Such a facility would greatly

enhance the stay of the park visitor by providing information on camping, trails, park rules, safety tips, and historical data on the terrain and wildlife.

There has been much local input on this proposal and I believe all parties have addressed the foreseeable issues. I look forward to the outcome of this joint venture as I believe it may be a model for similar agreements in the future.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 629 is a noncontroversial bill which will authorize the National Park Service to spend Federal funds to operate a new visitor center. The center will be developed with private funds and located on private lands just outside the entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park. The bill is consistent with Park Service plans, supported by the administration and will be funded from existing funds.

Mr. Speaker, Rocky Mountain National Park is the No. 1 tourist attraction in the State of Colorado and a new visitor center will serve to educate the visitors about the park and its resources, while encouraging a partnership with the private sector. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. ALLARD] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 629.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 629, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1995

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend spend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1743) to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to extend the authorizations of appropriations through fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1743

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Section 102 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10301) is amended—