

research community and over 40 national and international scientific, conservation, and academic organizations. I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing our support for the preservation of coral reefs by voting "yes" on House Concurrent Resolution 8. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 8, the Coral Reef Protection Resolution of 1997.

Interestingly enough, Alaska has the distinction of being the northernmost point in the Pacific which supports coral growth. A variety of corals live in the Gulf of Alaska, along the Aleutian chain, and in the Bering Sea. However, due to cold water temperatures, these corals are unable to create extensive reef structures.

House Concurrent Resolution 8 is non-controversial and has broad bipartisan support. It deserves favorable consideration in both Chambers of Congress, and I urge you to vote "aye" on this important measure.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that we are considering House Concurrent Resolution 8 today. The global crisis in coral reef health is an important issue that has received little recent attention in Congress. I commend the Fisheries Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. SAXTON, for introducing the resolution, of which I am an original cosponsor.

Coral reefs are one of nature's wonders. While they provide important physical habitat for ecologically and economically important species, the reef itself is also a living structure. And, as a living structure, thousands—perhaps millions—of individual coral animals are dying and others are taking their place on the reef at any one time.

The problem is that now human activities have shifted that balance and coral reefs are dying off at an alarming rate worldwide. Corals are very sensitive to water pollution, sedimentation, damage from boat groundings, and even simple physical contact by divers. Coral reefs are, in a sense, the canary in the coal mine of the oceans.

A great deal of injury is being inflicted on coral reefs, mainly in southeast Asia, through easily preventable, largely illegal fishing techniques. Cyanide and other poisons are being used to stun and capture fish for the aquarium trade and for the live food fish trade. These chemicals kill nearby coral, and divers scrambling to get fish out of nooks and crannies in the reef often inflict further damage on the reef.

Most of the aquarium fish captured in this way end up in hobbyists' tanks in the United States. So this is not just a foreign problem; we have to take some responsibility for our consumer actions that are driving these practices.

I have introduced legislation myself, House Resolution 87, to address the specific problem of unsustainable coral reef fisheries. I understand that the Fisheries Subcommittee will hold a hearing on that resolution next month, and I hope that it will be marked up shortly thereafter.

Both of these resolutions share a common purpose. They are intended to bring the global plight of coral reefs before Congress, raise the level of awareness of policy makers, and ask us to do more. The scientific and environmental communities have declared 1997 the International Year of the Reef. What better

time for us to pay attention to the many problems plaguing coral reefs, and seek practical solutions to those threats? If we don't do something soon, there may not be any reefs left to save.

I urge the House to support the resolution and I hope we will continue in the coming months to take action to address the coral reef crisis.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for House Concurrent Resolution 8, the Protect Coral Reef Ecosystems resolution.

I am particularly moved to speak on this subject because, my State, Florida, is the only State in the continental United States with natural coral reef communities.

This resolution seeks to preserve this natural marine resource by providing comprehensive protection from natural and manmade destruction.

This measure articulates Congress' recognition of the importance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems.

The bill also encourages research, education, and management efforts by Federal agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and private industry to further this effort.

Although most people know that coral reefs are one of our most precious and fragile marine resources, the benefits derived from coral reefs are probably less known.

Coral reefs are valuable sources of biomedical chemicals. The use of coral reefs as a source of new chemicals for anticancer treatments is especially promising.

The life of coral reefs are at once fragile and dynamic. It takes 100 years to grow one inch of coral reef—and decades to rehabilitate damaged reefs. This kind of sustained instability is further justification for strong protective measures.

We are now certain that the loss of these natural wonders has implications for other organisms. Without coral reefs, many lesser organisms would disappear. Likewise the abundance of other valuable marine species would also be substantially affected.

The world's coral reefs are subject to a myriad of threats including natural damage caused by humans and extreme weather conditions, as well as damage resulting from tourism activities, commercial harvests, vessel groundings, and pollution.

Even though underwater national parks have been established by Congress in the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Keys, it is still critical that we move decisively to protect this vital natural resource.

The protection of coral reefs is good for tourism, biomedical research, pharmaceutical production, and good for the future of our children.

I urge support for this measure.

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

Mr. SAXTON. 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 New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 8, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution recognizing the significance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. 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 matter on the concurrent resolution just agreed to.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1031

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1031.

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

There was no objection.

AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 39) to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 39

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ACT.

Section 2306 of the African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4245) is amended by striking "fiscal years" and all that follows through "1998" and inserting "fiscal years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] and the gentleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of this bill. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 39 was introduced by our full committee chairman, the gentleman from

Alaska, DON YOUNG, and was cosponsored by our distinguished Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia, NEWT GINGRICH.

The fundamental goal of H.R. 39 is quite simple: It is simply to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to allocate Federal money from the African elephant conservation fund until September 30, 2002.

At our subcommittee hearing in March we heard from witnesses regarding the various grant projects their organizations have sponsored to assist in the conservation of the African elephant. The results of these projects were discussed, and how additional funds authorized by H.R. 39 would be spent in the future.

H.R. 39, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is noncontroversial. It is a conservation measure. It will help to save the flagship species of the African Continent. I ask all Members to join in supporting the bill.

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

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

(Mr. ABERCROMBIE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I, too, with the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON], rise to support H.R. 39, the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 1997.

I might take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to ask the Chamber to reflect on the fact that not only does Mr. SAXTON support this resolution but the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. GINGRICH, the gentleman from Alaska, Mr. YOUNG, myself and the gentleman from California, Mr. MILLER, all support it. I do not know if we are ever going to achieve that position again.

We may want to pause for a moment of silence at this point, reverence for the question of bipartisanship. It surely can take place and it does take place over the African elephant. I think we could probably extend that to the donkey and the elephant in the United States, but I am not sure about the former as opposed to the latter.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, it is the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act, and it is literally deadly serious business we are about on this floor today.

I support the African Elephant Conservation Act and its purpose in perpetuating healthy populations of African elephants. I am concerned that other U.S. funded programs that may impact the African elephant may not be working towards this purpose as expressed by the act. I hope that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Agency for International Development will work cooperatively towards the ends of African elephant conservation.

I appreciate the importance of the Speaker, the chairman and the sub-

committee chair, the importance which the Speaker and the chairman and the subcommittee chair place on conserving African elephants, and I most certainly commend them for moving expeditiously to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, especially that the young people of this country would pay particular attention, given the fact that we have before us the situation with the panda at the Washington Zoo now undergoing an operation with species throughout the United States and the rest of the world in zoos finding themselves under extreme stress and duress. With populations of animals such as the elephant experiencing similar calamities and difficulties throughout the world, I think that it is incumbent upon us to help other nations and other people find ways to have conservation and preservation efforts be made manifest in more than just the abstract.

We do not want to find ourselves reduced to finding reruns of National Geographic specials or Discovery Channel programs constituting or, for that matter, observing animal acts in Las Vegas as the sole preservation effort that is made by this species with regard to the rest of the species on the planet.

This particular act, this reauthorization act, is a serious effort made on a bipartisan basis by serious minded Members who want to see to it that we set a standard; with this act we are doing it. If we can take similar measures with other species throughout the world, I look forward to the time when we can say with some confidence that we have made moves and taken steps to see to it that conservation is more than just a word.

I commend the gentleman from New Jersey, [Mr. SAXTON], for bringing this bill forward and am very grateful for the cooperation that he and the staff of the committee have extended on this bill and for all the Members who have expressed support.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I would like to thank the gentleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] for the bipartisanship with which we have been able to handle these two bills and the staff on both sides.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, it appears to me like we are moving rapidly towards some other bipartisan agreements on some other bills that have to do with wildlife management on the domestic side.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SAXTON. I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, under the question of wildlife management, perhaps we can get the Committee on the Budget members in and make an amendment to this resolution.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, we could certainly call on them for their cooperation.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman think he could get unanimous consent on that?

Mr. SAXTON. The gentleman will be interested to know that we just held the second in a series of five hearings that had to do with how we were funding our wildlife refuge system. And we could use some help, I might say, from the Committee on the Budget with regard to some of those issues.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act (H.R. 39). This important piece of legislation will continue America's commitment to worldwide elephant conservation. I would also like to congratulate Chairman YOUNG for bringing this important legislation forward.

H.R. 39 will reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act through the year 2002. The continuation of this important and successful program will preserve America's leadership to conserve and restore African elephant herds in their native habitat. The future survival of African elephants depends upon America's leadership, and our small but crucial amount of financial support.

The AECA has been responsible for rescuing African elephants from the path to extinction. As we all know during the 1970's and 1980's, African elephant populations declined from around 1.5 million to 600,000 animals. Drought, shrinking habitat, and expanding human populations had some part in the decline of the population. But by the mid-1980's, rampant and efficient poaching of elephants for the world ivory trade was found most directly responsible for elephants' endangerment.

The passage of the AECA reversed that downward trend of elephant populations. A large part of the success of the AECA comes from the effectiveness of the African Elephant Conservation Fund. This Fund, which is administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, has provided nearly \$7 million during 9 years to elephant conservation projects throughout Africa, through 66 grants to 50 projects in 17 countries. Each of these projects has received matching support from organizations like Safari Club International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the African Safari Club of Washington, DC, and others. Less than one half of this has been Federal funding. Our Federal commitment leverages and coordinates private sector support for elephant conservation.

The focus of the conservation fund was originally on antipoaching efforts. However, in the last few years, the projects have focused on elephant population research, efforts to mitigate elephant/human conflict, investigations of the ivory trade, cataloging of ivory stockpiles, and identifying new techniques for elephant management.

In addition the fund helps local villages, who often live in fear of elephants, to coexist and benefit from the long term conservation of elephants. This is an important step. As rural farmers in Africa begin to accumulate economic gains brought by the wildlife around them, they will find it in their best interest to conserve that same wildlife. In the long run, this will reduce the high cost of conservation and save elephants from extinction.

Mr. Speaker, the African Elephant Conservation Fund has been a tremendous success. I encourage all my colleagues to vote

H.R. 39 and support this important and successful program.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, as the sponsor of H.R. 39, I rise in strong support of this important conservation legislation to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Fund. I am pleased that I have been joined in this effort by Speaker NEWT GINGRICH and our colleague from California, DUKE CUNNINGHAM.

For the past 9 years, this fund has been the only continuous source of new money for elephant conservation efforts. While the act authorizes up to \$5 million per year, in reality the Congress has annually appropriated less than \$900,000 to save and conserve this flagship species of the African Continent.

This money has been used to finance some 50 conservation projects in 17 range states throughout Africa. These projects have been sponsored by a diverse group of conservation organizations including the African Wildlife Foundation, Safari Club International, Southern Africa Wildlife Trust, and the World Wildlife Fund. These funds have been used to purchase antipoaching equipment for wildlife rangers, to establish a database on elephants, to develop effective conservation plans, to undertake various elephant population surveys, and to move elephants from certain drought regions.

While the world community has been successful in halting the widespread slaughter of this magnificent animal, the fight to save the African elephant is far from over. It is essential that we extend the Secretary of the Interior's authority to allocate money for the African elephant beyond its statutory deadline, and that is the goal of H.R. 39. In fact, my bill would reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Fund until September 30, 2002.

Last month, the subcommittee conducted a hearing on H.R. 39. Testimony was obtained from witnesses representing the administration, the Humane Society of the United States, Safari Club International, and the World Wildlife Fund. There was unanimous support for this bill, and the administration's representative accurately stated that "this is not a hand out, but a helping hand."

This is a sound piece of legislation, and this small investment will help to ensure that our largest land mammal, the African elephant, does not disappear from this planet. It will also allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund a number of additional elephant conservation projects in the future.

I urge an "aye" vote on this important conservation measure.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 39 which continues funding for the African Elephant Conservation Act through the year 2002. Enacted in October 1988 in response to the alarming decline of African elephants, the act has made a significant contribution to the preservation of this threatened species. This legislation will allow these efforts to continue.

The African Elephant Conservation Act has funded effective programs throughout 17 different African countries. Efficiently using small, strategically important grants, the act: enhances elephant conservation management programs; supports antipoaching training and operations; and develops sound scientific data on elephant populations. The act promotes range-wide efforts, as well as cooperative projects that provide for matching funds from a variety of other sources. All of these pro-

grams work toward the act's purpose of perpetuating healthy populations of African elephants.

Despite the achievements seen so far, I am concerned about the coordination and management of U.S. funded elephant conservation efforts. Programs that impact African elephant populations are funded by both this act and the United States Agency for International Development, and it is not clear whether these efforts are mutually supportive. They should be. Furthermore, it is essential that innovative programs and management decisions are well grounded in science and sound management practices, and are effective in increasing elephant populations. We must ensure that all United States funded programs work toward the same ends—the conservation of African elephants.

I appreciate the importance the Speaker, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. SAXTON place on conserving African elephants, and I commend them for moving expeditiously to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act. Their support of this legislation reflects the strong desire by the American public to preserve African elephants. By passing this legislation, and by continuing to monitor all U.S. efforts supporting elephant conservation, we can fulfill this desire.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 39.

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. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 39, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

SOUTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1997

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 449) to provide for the orderly disposal of certain Federal lands in Clark County, NV, and to provide for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in the State of Nevada, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 449

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The Bureau of Land Management has extensive land ownership in small and large parcels interspersed with or adjacent to private land in the Las Vegas Valley, Nevada, making many of these parcels difficult to manage and more appropriate for disposal.

(2) In order to promote responsible and orderly development in the Las Vegas Valley, certain of those Federal lands should be sold by the Federal Government based on recommendations made by local government and the public.

(3) The Las Vegas metropolitan area is the fastest growing urban area in the United States, which is causing significant impacts upon the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, and the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, which surround the Las Vegas Valley.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to provide for the orderly disposal of certain Federal lands in Clark County, Nevada, and to provide for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in the State of Nevada.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) The term "unit of local government" means Clark County, the City of Las Vegas, the City of North Las Vegas, or the City of Henderson; all in the State of Nevada.

(3) The term "Agreement" means the agreement entitled "The Interim Cooperative Management Agreement Between The United States Department of the Interior—Bureau of Land Management and Clark County", dated November 4, 1992.

(4) The term "special account" means the account in the Treasury of the United States established under section 4(e)(1)(C).

(5) The term "Recreation and Public Purposes Act" means the Act entitled "An Act to authorize acquisition or use of public lands by States, counties, or municipalities for recreational purposes", approved June 14, 1926 (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.).

(6) The term "regional governmental entity" means the Southern Nevada Water Authority, the Regional Flood Control District, and the Clark County Sanitation District.

SEC. 4. DISPOSAL AND EXCHANGE.

(a) DISPOSAL.—Notwithstanding the land use planning requirements contained in sections 202 and 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1711 and 1712), the Secretary, in accordance with this Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and other applicable law, and subject to valid existing rights, is authorized to dispose of lands within the boundary of the area under the jurisdiction of the Direction of the Bureau of Land Management in Clark County, Nevada, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Las Vegas Valley, Nevada, Land Disposal Map", dated April 10, 1997. Such map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Director and the Las Vegas District of the Bureau of Land Management.

(b) RESERVATION FOR LOCAL PUBLIC PURPOSES.—

(1) RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSE ACT CONVEYANCES.—Not less than 30 days before the offering of lands for sale or exchange pursuant to subsection (a), the State of Nevada or the unit of local government in whose jurisdiction the lands are located may