

as being fully developed, trying to maximize the returns on public lands, while developers, on the other hand, feeling the land would continue to be sagebrush without their development, appraise the land as desert.

H.R. 449 will change the appraisal process by auctioning off land to the highest bidder. This will ensure the taxpayers of America get the highest probable price for our public lands, and will allow developers to acquire needed lands for community expansion and development.

My colleague the gentleman from Nevada, [Mr. ENSIGN], was helpful in working with me to get report language that assures all Federal proceeds from the land sales would be spent first in Clark County and then priority would be placed on lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

H.R. 449 requires a funding split from land sales, 85 percent going to the Federal Government for the purchase of environmentally sensitive land in Nevada and the remaining 15 percent going to the State of Nevada.

The Federal Government's 85 percent, which is used to purchase environmentally sensitive areas, caused me and my constituents great concern. Many times in previous land exchanges, large amounts of land in Northern Nevada were bought and exchanged for small parcels of land in Southern Nevada. This process has destroyed the tax base of many cities and counties and essentially gave the Federal Government more land ownership in Nevada.

No longer were ranches farmed, taxes paid or workers hired. Needless to say, land exchanges and sales have been tough for many local governments in Nevada.

That is why Congressman ENSIGN's diligent effort has allowed Northern Nevada to protect its tax base and stop the Federal Government from continually owning more and more of Nevada. The land in the Lake Tahoe Basin is very pristine, and it is in need of protection to guarantee the quality of the lake and the surrounding forests.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1997 accomplishes two very important goals in Nevada. First, it allows land in the Las Vegas area to be developed to accommodate the ever growing number of people moving to that area. And second, it will serve to protect and improve many environmentally sensitive areas in Clark County and the Lake Tahoe Basin while protecting the tax base in Northern Nevada.

Finally, this bill is good for the American taxpayer because it protects them in the land sale and exchange process.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to compliment my colleagues on this bill and encourage all Members to support H.R. 449.

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

Mr. Speaker, we understand Las Vegas and Clark County are under tremendous growth pressure, and we can sympathize with their situation. I think we can all agree that the BLM should work with the local community regarding land sales and exchanges the agency is undertaking in the area. We want to see this done in a fair and reasonable way, one that protects the national interests in these public lands and is mindful of local needs and concerns.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we will accept the bill and ask that it move forward today.

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 Utah [Mr. HANSEN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 449, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HANSEN. 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. 449, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK TRUST FUND AMENDMENTS ACT OF 1997

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 688) to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to require at least 85 percent of funds appropriated to the Environmental Protection Agency from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund to be distributed to States for cooperative agreements for undertaking corrective action and for enforcement of subtitle I of such act, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 688

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 "Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Amendments Act of 1997".

TITLE I—DISTRIBUTIONS FROM LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK TRUST FUND

SEC. 101. LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS.

(a) TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION.—Section 9004 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6991c) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(f) TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTION TO STATES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—(A) The Administrator shall distribute to States at least 85 percent of the funds appropriated to the Environmental Protection Agency from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund (in this subsection referred to as the 'Trust Fund') each fiscal year for the reasonable costs under cooperative agreements entered into with the Administrator for the following:

"(i) States' actions under section 9003(h)(7)(A).

"(ii) Necessary administrative expenses directly related to corrective action and compensation programs under subsection (c)(1).

"(iii) Enforcement of a State or local program approved under this section or enforcement of this subtitle or similar State or local provisions by a State or local government.

"(iv) State and local corrective actions pursuant to regulations promulgated under section 9003(c)(4).

"(v) Corrective action and compensation programs under subsection (c)(1) for releases from underground storage tanks regulated under this subtitle in any instance, as determined by the State, in which the financial resources of an owner or operator, excluding resources provided by programs under subsection (c)(1), are not adequate to pay for the cost of a corrective action without significantly impairing the ability of the owner or operator to continue in business.

"(B) Funds provided by the Administrator under subparagraph (A) may not be used by States for purposes of providing financial assistance to an owner or operator in meeting the requirements respecting underground storage tanks contained in section 280.21 of title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this subsection) or similar requirements in State programs approved under this section or similar State or local provisions.

"(2) ALLOCATION.—

"(A) PROCESS.—In the case of a State that the Administrator has entered into a cooperative agreement with under section 9003(h)(7)(A), the Administrator shall distribute funds from the Trust Fund to the State using the allocation process developed by the Administrator for such cooperative agreements.

"(B) REVISIONS TO PROCESS.—The Administrator may revise such allocation process only after—

"(i) consulting with State agencies responsible for overseeing corrective action for releases from underground storage tanks and with representatives of owners and operators; and

"(ii) taking into consideration, at a minimum, the total revenue received from each State into the Trust Fund, the number of confirmed releases from leaking underground storage tanks in each State, the number of notified petroleum storage tanks in each State, and the percent of the population of each State using groundwater for any beneficial purpose.

"(3) RECIPIENTS.—Distributions from the Trust Fund under this subsection shall be made directly to the State agency entering into a cooperative agreement or enforcing the State program.

"(4) COST RECOVERY PROHIBITION.—Funds provided to States from the Trust Fund to owners or operators for programs under subsection (c)(1) for releases from underground storage tanks are not subject to cost recovery by the Administrator under section 9003(h)(6)."

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Subtitle I of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6991 et seq.) is amended as follows: