

AMENDMENT NO. 3294, AS
MODIFIED, TO S. 2260

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator HOLLINGS, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 3294, previously agreed to, be modified with the language now at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3294), as modified, is as follows:

On page 96, strike lines 3 through 16.

AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1998

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 39, Calendar No. 435.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 39) to reauthorize the African Elephant Conservation Act.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is considering H.R. 39, the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act. The bill was introduced by Congressmen YOUNG on January 7, 1997, favorably reported by the House Resources Committee on April 21, 1997, passed by the House the same day, and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Senator JEFFORDS introduced a companion bill, S. 627, on April 22, 1997. The Committee held a hearing on both bills on November 4, 1997, and favorably reported them on May 21, 1998. Today we take up the House passed bill to expedite Congressional action on this important legislation.

The bill reauthorizes the African Elephant Conservation Act for four years, through 2002, at the current authorization level of \$5 million annually. The current law was enacted in 1989, in response to a sharp decline in many populations of African elephants due primarily to poaching for ivory. Population estimates vary widely across its range, but the total population is estimated to have declined by as much as 50 percent, from 1.3 million elephants in the late 1970's, to less than 700,000 in 1987. The species continues to decline, with a population of about 540,000 elephants in 1996.

The Act established a process for implementing strict ivory import controls, and established a dedicated fund for cooperative conservation projects in African countries. The Act has been tremendously effective in assisting in conservation efforts worldwide. Under the authority of the Act, President Bush established a moratorium on all ivory imports into the United States, which served as the impetus for the worldwide ban on trade in elephant parts and products, approved by the

Parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) one year later.

Through the Act, the Fish and Wildlife Service has funded 60 projects in 19 countries since 1990. The law has generated approximately \$22 million for elephant conservation programs, of which \$6.8 million has been provided by the U.S. Government, with \$15.8 million from other sources. Indeed, the success of this law has led to similar laws for Asian elephants, rhinos and tigers.

Again, I am pleased that the Senate is considering this legislation, and I hope that the President will sign it into law soon. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. SHELBY. I ask unanimous consent the bill be considered read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 39) was considered read the third time and passed.

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES TO THE STATE AND PEOPLE OF FLORIDA FOR LOSSES SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF WILD LAND FIRES

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 298 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

H. Con. Res. 298, expressing deepest condolences to the State and people of Florida for the losses suffered as a result of the wild land fires occurring in June and July 1998, expressing support to the State and people of Florida as they overcome the effects of the fires, and commending the heroic efforts of firefighters from across the Nation in battling the fires.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I rise today to again address the ongoing situation in my home state of Florida. As I mentioned earlier this month on the Senate floor, devastating wildfires have ravaged Florida, impacting all of our 67 counties since May 24, 1998. Since this crisis began, more than 2,000 separate fires to date have been identified and more than 500,000 acres have been burned.

The massive campaign which has been undertaken to contain these fires is encouraging. Firefighters from across the country have been part of

this effort. On behalf of the state of Florida and its people, I would like to thank all of the states, communities, and families that have committed resources to these efforts.

Today, I join with the Florida Congressional delegation in support of H. Con. Res. 298. This resolution expresses our condolences to the people of the state of Florida who have suffered throughout this ordeal; and commends the important and heroic efforts of the firefighters, as well as the numerous federal, state, and community entities aiding in the struggle to contain and extinguish the fires.

I appreciate the work of my Senate colleagues who have enabled us to bring this resolution to the floor quickly. I hope this swift action by Congress will help bring attention to the continuing efforts of government and community leaders, and will help lift the spirits of those closely engaged in this battle. I thank the chair and I yield the floor.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 298, expressing our deepest condolences and support to the State and people of Florida for the losses they have suffered as a result of wild land fires that occurred throughout June and July of this year.

Many of my colleagues will remember that Andrew roared ashore in the middle of the night and vented its fury on the people of South Florida. The storm severely disrupted the lives of thousands of families. This August, Floridians will remember Hurricane Andrew with another natural disaster on their minds. Since May 24, a deadly combination of intense heat and prolonged drought sparked more than 2,200 forest fires in Florida's 67 counties.

Even for a state that is experienced in dealing with natural disasters, these fires have been spawned during what may be one of the worst years in Florida meteorological history. In late January and early February—in the midst of our state's dry season—several Northern Florida counties were deluged by massive floods. Not long after, parts of Central Florida were devastated by thunderstorms and tornadoes that are more typical in the summer months.

The fire crisis is the latest example of our state's climactic reversal of fortune in 1998. Florida's hot summer temperatures are typically accompanied by afternoon thunderstorms and tropical weather. This year's heat and drought, and the lush undergrowth and foliage that sprung up in the wake of Florida's unusually wet winter, combined to fuel the fires that have put the state under a cloud of smoke and chased nearly 112,000 residents from their homes—7,040 of them into emergency shelters.

Florida has sustained almost \$300 million in private damage, and state and local governments have spent over \$100 million in responding to the fires. In a step never before taken in Florida's long history with violent weather,