

encephalopathy, variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, and related diseases in the United States and in other countries.

(C) CONSULTATION.—

(1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—In preparing the preliminary report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

- (A) the Secretary of the Treasury
- (B) the Secretary of Commerce;
- (C) the Secretary of State;
- (D) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (E) the Secretary of Defense;
- (F) the United States Trade Representative;
- (G) the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and
- (H) representatives of other appropriate Federal agencies;

(2) FINAL REPORT.—In preparing the final report under subsection (b), the Secretary shall consult with—

- (A) the individuals listed in paragraph (1);
- (B) private and nonprofit sector experts in infectious disease, research, prevention, and control;
- (C) international, State, and local governmental animal health officials;
- (D) private, nonprofit, and public sector livestock experts;
- (E) representatives of blood collection and distribution entities; and
- (F) representatives of consumer and patient organizations and other interested members of the public.

Mr. STENHOLM. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill that deals with two, separate, animal health issues facing our nation. While Foot and Mouth Disease and BSE, commonly called "Mad Cow" disease, are not related, they are both concerns to agricultural producers and citizens of this Nation. We are thankful that our efforts have successfully prevented the introduction of either of these diseases into the United States and we all want to work to maintain our disease-free status.

I am hopeful that reports and the coordination encouraged by this bill will help to keep us free from both these diseases. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has done an excellent job thus far, but I hope that increased thought and coordination will help to make our efforts even better.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EVERETT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 700, the Senate bill just considered and passed.

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

There was no objection.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). Pursuant to House Resolution 135 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 581.

□ 1423

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 581) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to use funds appropriated for the wildland fire management in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to facilitate the interagency cooperation required under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 in connection with wildland fire management, with Mrs. MORELLA in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) and the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I introduced H.R. 581 to assist the U.S. Forest Service in expediting the transfer of funds from the Service to other Federal agencies for critical and necessary interagency consultation activities in connection with wildland fire management.

H.R. 581 is simply a technical fix to clarify that funds appropriated in the 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for wildland fire management may be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to reimburse those agencies for the fuel load reduction consultation activities required by section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Madam Chairman, the fiscal 2001 Interior Appropriations Act appropriated \$2.9 billion towards the National Fire Plan in response to the devastating 1999 and 2000 fire seasons. The \$2.9 billion which was appropriated, which included \$1.6 billion designated as emergency contingent funding, is administered by the Department of Interior and the Forest Service. Included in the plan are funds specifically directed for reducing fuel load. However, before fuel loads can be reduced, the Forest Service must meet existing laws, including the Endangered Species Act.

Among the goals of the National Fire Plan are: to build firefighting readiness, to be better prepared to fight wildland fires; to reduce hazardous fuels, to invest in projects to reduce the fire risk; to restore fire-impacted sites, to restore landscapes damaged by fire; to protect communities, to concentrate efforts in the wildland-urban interface; and to assure accountability and track accomplishments of the plan.

Decades of excluding fire from our forests and past management practices

have drastically changed the ecological condition of western forests and rangelands and dramatically affected fire behavior. A century ago when low-intensity, high-frequency fires were commonplace, many forests were less dense and had larger, more fire-resistant trees. Over the last century, the number of trees has increased dramatically and composition of our forests has changed from primarily fire-resistant tree species to more species that are nonresistant to fire.

Madam Chairman, the fire ecologists point out the paradox in which we now find ourselves in terms of fire suppression: The more effective we become at fire suppression, the more fuels accumulate and ultimately create conditions for the occurrence of more intense fires, such as those we in the West have experienced the last 2 years.

To illustrate my point, here is a statistic to think about: In the early 1930s, the annual acreage burned by wildfires in the lower 48 States was about 40 million acres a year. By the late 1950s, we were effectively controlling fires at less than 5 million acres per year. Through the 1970s and much of the 1980s, the annual acreage burned by wildfires in the lower 48 States stayed at about the same levels, but in 1988 and again in the late 1990s we had severe seasons, burning close to 10 million acres each year.

Experts predict that future fire seasons will be similar to last year's devastation.

Reversing the effects of a century of aggressive fire suppression and past management practices will take time and money targeted to high-priority areas to protect people, communities, readily-accessible municipal watersheds, and habitat for threatened and endangered species. The most at-risk areas are those wildland-urban interface zones represented by areas with increased residential development in fire-prone areas adjacent to Federal land.

With continuing drought in the western and southern United States, we are facing the threat of another possibly horrendous and catastrophic wildfire season. It is important that H.R. 581 proceed expeditiously to launch the multiagency fire prevention initiative needed to ward off another devastating wildfire season.

The funds made available in this bill to the Fish and Wildlife Services and the National Marine Fisheries Services will enable the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to proceed with their fire management program, as intended by the 2001 Appropriations Act. The bill will not affect other aspects of the National Fire Plan.

Lastly, Madam Chairman, H.R. 581, I do not believe, is controversial. It is nonpartisan and it is supported by the administration. It is also reported by unanimous consent from the Committee on Resources. So I would urge an aye vote on H.R. 581.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, H.R. 581 was introduced, as we heard, by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) from the Committee on Resources and our esteemed chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands.

The legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to use funds appropriated for wildland fire management in the fiscal year 2001 Interior Appropriations Act to reimburse the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out the responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act in connection with wildland fire management activities.

□ 1430

The legislation is necessary because without such reimbursement authority, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service would be required to carry out their endangered species responsibilities related to wildland fire management activities using their existing resources. The effect of this would be potentially to delay important fire management projects.

Although no hearings were held on this measure, the Committee on Resources favorably recommended the bill to the House by voice vote. The technical change made by the legislation will help facilitate completion of environmental compliance for wildland fire projects in a timely manner. I think that is something we can and should support seeing happen.

Making sure that wildland fire management activities are done in an environmentally sound manner is a key element of the national wildland fire plan. It is a policy that will yield long-term benefits for both humans and nature.

Madam Chairman, H.R. 581 is a non-controversial measure supported by all interested parties. I appreciate the leadership of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) on this matter, as well as that shown by the bill cosponsors, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL). I support the bill as well, and favor its adoption by the House today.

Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL).

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 581. This bill allows us to use wildland fire funds to deal with endangered species issues, and it does so in a very responsible way.

This is a win-win for everyone. It is a responsible piece of environmental legislation. The National Fire Plan will

move forward on an expedited basis, thereby protecting our communities and their watersheds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have the essential tools and resources to resolve issues related to overall ecosystem health.

I want to applaud the gentleman from Colorado (Chairman HEFLEY) and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), for their hard work and leadership on this issue. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Madam Chairman, the Wildland Fire Management Act, H.R. 581, provides the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture legal authority to use wildland fire management funds for reimbursement of costs associated with Endangered Species Act compliance.

The strategy of the National Fire Plan is to identify ecosystem health issues in a manner that protects our communities. I support the National Fire Plan and believe it is a significant step in addressing a complex problem.

To support the implementation of the National Fire Plan, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture attempted to transfer funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service in support of administering the Endangered Species Act.

On December 26, 2000, however, the USDA Office of the General Council (OGC) rendered a formal opinion eliminating the use of the Economy Act as the vehicle for transferring to other agencies funds that were originally appropriated in FY 2001 to the Forest Service for ESA consultation in implementing the National Fire Plan. Thus, the wildland fire management agencies were forced to identify other alternatives to meet ESA requirements.

Moreover, on January 10, 2001, the deputy chiefs of the USDA Forest Service wrote to their field units about the importance of implementing the National Fire Plan. In the letter, they recommended the Plan be a top priority because consultation for activities such as fuels management is critical to achieving success on the ground and to the establishment of a long-term program. The letter outlined several options to keep the agency moving forward. However, there is still concern that a lack of funding for ESA consultations will slow down the approval of all wildland fire projects.

The intent of H.R. 581 is to allow the federal agencies to do their job, implement the National Fire Plan, and keep the agencies moving forward. This bill is consistent with the National Fire Plan's goal of assigning the highest priority for hazardous fuels reduction to communities at risk, readily accessible municipal watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, and other important local features, where conditions favor uncharacteristically intense fires.

In conclusion, the National Fire Plan is a step in the right direction. The fires of 2000 underscored the importance of pursuing an aggressive program that addresses the fuels problem by encouraging collaboration between local communities, state governments, and Tribal, and federal agencies. In fact, the Report to the President In Response to the Wildfires of 2000, issued by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, stated that funding would be available to support Endangered Species Act consultation work by the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. H.R. 581 ensures that a mechanism is in place to do just that. I therefore strongly urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Chairman, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for yielding me time.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of this important legislation introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY). I commend the gentleman for his leadership in this regard. I also note with pride that he and I last year introduced a piece of legislation specifically targeted at the State of Colorado to deal with the red zone situation that we face there, the urban wildland interface, and my pride is because much of what is in the National Fire Plan includes some the ideas and sections of our legislation from last year.

The legislation provides that the United States Forest Service can use National Fire Plan monies to undertake Endangered Species Act studies. In the end, this will ensure that projects comply with the Endangered Species Act so we can reduce fuel loads, return our forests to a healthier condition and minimize the potential for catastrophic fire this year and in years to come.

So, in short, I urge the House to promptly pass this legislation to forestall problems and to keep the fire plan both on track and on a sound legal and environmental footing.

Madam Chairman, I thank again the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

Madam Chairman, an original cosponsor, I rise in support of this bill and I congratulate my colleague from Colorado, Mr. HEFLEY, for his leadership in introducing it.

This is an important bill, Mr. Speaker, but it is not complicated or controversial. It was passed by the Resources Committee by a unanimous voice vote and could well have been considered under suspension rather than being brought up under a rule.

As has already been explained, the bill deals with funds provided to the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to implement the new national fire plan established and funded in last year's Interior appropriations bill.

The bill makes clear that fire plan funds can be transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The purpose of that is to enable those agencies to make sure the requirements of the Endangered Species Act are met in connection with fuel-reduction and other projects that are part of the fire plan.

This is completely consistent with the intent of the legislation establishing the fire plan. But the Agriculture Department's lawyers think the current wording of the legislation does not permit the transfer of funds from the Forest Service to the other agencies for that purpose.

So, the bill does not establish a new policy—it merely makes clear what was intended when the fire plan was enacted last year.

We definitely need to press forward with the important work of reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the areas where our communities border on forest lands.

But it is just as important that this be done in a way that fully complies with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and all the other environmental laws—and this bill will help make sure that occurs.

This is very significant for everyone in Colorado and in other western States.

Across Colorado—and across the west—rapid population growth means that more and more communities are pressing against and into our forest lands.

That means our state has a large “urban interface”—what in Colorado we refer to as the “red zone.” That is the area where forest fires present the greatest dangers to people’s lives and homes.

The fire plan focuses on that “urban interface,” and that is where it will be implemented through projects to reduce the danger by reducing the buildup of brush and other fuels that has resulted from policies that suppressed the normal role of fire in the ecosystem.

Of course, this danger of forest fires in the “red zone” is not new. But last year we got a wake-up call about it—and so did the rest of the county. That was what led to enactment of the fire-plan legislation.

It also was what had earlier led me to introduce a bill to address the problem in Colorado.

That bill was cosponsored by my colleague, Mr. HEFLEY, and by Representatives DEGETTE and TANCREDO as well.

Our bill had many similarities to the legislation that set up the national fire plan. But it would have applied only to Colorado—and it had some other significant differences, too.

For one thing, our bill emphasized public involvement by providing for setting up a committee—representing a broad spectrum of interests—to establish priorities for use of funds.

And our bill specifically provided that fuel-reduction projects would have to meet some essential guidelines.

Like the fire-plan legislation, our bill required compliance with the Endangered Species Act and other environmental laws.

It also specified that projects could not be performed in Congressionally-designated wilderness areas and that roadless areas would have to be protected.

And, notably, our bill included a specific limit on the size of trees that could be removed as part of a fuel-reduction project.

That idea—a cutting limit based on tree size—drew many comments from people holding differing views about the use of mechanical thinning to reduce fire risks.

Some people do not support removal of trees as big as our bill would have allowed, or perhaps of trees of any size. Others see any specific limit as both arbitrary and too restrictive.

I respect the sincerity of both those points of view. However, I think our bill struck an appropriate balance and represented a legitimate starting point for legislative action.

The bill recognized that where the risk of catastrophic wildfires comes from overly-dense vegetation, it is because of the build-up of small-sized materials.

It also reflected the fact that cutting larger trees often can lead to more severe fires, for a variety of reasons, and can also have other adverse effects.

The limit in our bill also reflected the fact that cutting larger trees is controversial—especially when the larger trees may have commercial value.

It is simple fact that some will see the inclusion of larger trees as evidence that a project ostensibly aimed at reducing the risk of fire is really intended to be a commercial undertaking, by the Forest Service and by industry.

This could lead to challenges that would unnecessarily complicate necessary projects that were otherwise not controversial.

In short, both on the scientific merits and for reasons of public acceptability, I thought—and I still think—that there should be limits on the scope of these projects, of the kind that would have been set by our bill.

That is why last year, after enactment of the legislation setting up the national fire plan, I initiated a letter—ultimately also signed by 25 other Members of the House—to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior urging that the fire plan be implemented under appropriate safeguards and conditions.

I later received a response from the Deputy Chief of the Forest Service for State and Private Forestry, stating that the Agriculture Department shares the concerns expressed in our letter and outlining how those concerns will be addressed in the implementation of the national fire plan.

At the end of my remarks, I will attach both of these letters for inclusion in the RECORD.

In conclusion, Madam Chairman, in Colorado’s “red zone” and other areas covered by the national fire plan, there are very real risks to people, property and the environment—some of them resulting from past fire-management policies.

It is important that we respond to those risks—and that is why I support the national fire plan.

But it is also important that the need to respond to those risks is not misused as a convenient rationale for projects that do not meet proper standards.

That’s why the fire-plan projects should reflect public involvement. That’s why the projects need to be based on sound science. And that’s why the projects need to be completely consistent with applicable environmental laws.

Enacting this bill will be an important step in that direction—because, as I said, the purpose of this bill is to make sure the projects comply with the Endangered Species Act.

So, I urge the House to promptly pass this legislation, to forestall problems and to keep the fire plan both on track and on a sound legal and environmental footing.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, October 20, 2000.

HON. DAN GLICKMAN,

Secretary of Agriculture, Jamie L. Whitten Building, Washington, DC.

HON. BRUCE BABBITT,

Secretary of the Interior, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY GLICKMAN AND SECRETARY BABBITT: As you know, the fiscal 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act provides important funding for work to restore federal lands damaged by large-scale forest fires and to lessen the risk of such

fires in the future by reducing accumulations of fuels.

We support these objectives. However, in the past there have been efforts to use the “fuel reduction” label to justify environmentally-unsound timber sales and it is very important that pursuit of restoration and fuel reduction does not weaken sound land management or the protection of the environment. So, we urge you to make sure that these activities will be subject to appropriate safeguards and conditions.

Recent events have shown the importance of a scientifically sound fuels reduction program targeted to protect communities in the wildland/urban interface. However, the relevant language in the Interior appropriations bill does not spell out adequate environmental safeguards to protect wilderness, roadless areas, old growth forests, endangered species habitat, or riparian areas. Wilderness areas should be off-limits to fuels reduction by mechanical means, and appropriate conditions should be imposed to assure that mechanical fuel-reduction projects will not adversely affect old growth forests, roadless areas, endangered species habitat, or riparian areas.

In addition, we believe direction is needed to ensure that fuels reduction projects focus on the fine and surface fuels that create the greatest fire risks. We urge that the agencies be directed to develop ecologically-sound treatment criteria with an emphasis on underbrush and small-diameter trees.

The Interior bill also includes language providing the Administration with an option to develop expedited NEPA procedures within the next 60 days. We are strongly opposed to any weakening of the current NEPA procedures and public involvement in decision-making for fuels reduction projects. We respectfully urge the Administration to not exercise this authority to expedite NEPA procedures.

We also believe the funding increase for fuels reduction should be carefully targeted to protect communities at risk from wildfire. The need for fuel reduction is greatest in those areas where homes exist within or about forested areas—the wildland/urban interface or “red zones,” and in particular in the areas closest to homes and communities. In many cases that means within 200 feet of homes or communities. We urge the Administration to prioritize emergency fuels reduction funds to support projects to reduce risks in these narrowly defined areas to the maximum extent practicable. In addition, we urge the Administration to support the Firewise program and other cooperative efforts for community protection in the wildland/urban interface.

There is a significant increase in funding for preparedness activities. We urge the Administration to make the completion of fire management plans the top priority for these funds. Currently only 5 percent of the National Forests have completed fire management plans which were mandated by the Fire Management Policy of 1995.

The Forest Service and BLM undoubtedly will be pressured to expedite fuel-reduction efforts by taking old projects, including timber sales, off the shelf regardless of whether they are environmentally sound fuels reduction projects. We urge that before funds under this program be allocated for any “old project,” the projects first be reevaluated to make sure that they are consistent with the focus on fuels reduction rather than other objectives.

We have noted with some concern that the report to the President in response to this year’s fires seems to identify “recovering some of the economic value of forest stands” as one reason for including removal of burned trees in restoration and fuel-reduction efforts. We think that salvage logging

based in part on economic considerations should remain separate from fuels reduction.

We are also concerned that funds intended to address hazardous fuels issues in western forests will be diverted to eastern forests which do not have the same ecological needs. For example, conditions in the relatively moist Southern Appalachian forests naturally limit the spread of fire. Fuel reduction bears little relevance to the decline of native forest types, which is a major threat confronting the Southern Appalachians. We urge that emergency fuels reduction funds be used in the Forest Regions that are subject to the greatest risks—principally those in western States.

On a related point, the Interior bill authorizes the Forest Service to enter into an additional 25 “end-result” stewardship contracts. The “goods-for-services” authority allows the Forest Service to trade National Forest trees for contracted services and, if not subject to appropriate restrictions, could encourage large-scale logging in conjunction with restoration projects. We urge that in the fuels-reduction program the Forest Service be directed to place priority on use of appropriated funds rather than issuance of additional stewardship contracts under the fuels-reduction program and that all agencies be required to ensure that the protections discussed above are followed in any “goods-for-services” contracts to assure that these projects remain exclusively focused on fuels reduction purposes.

Finally, we appreciate that the Administration opposed and was able to remove from the Interior bill language to set excessive targets for timber sales. However, the statement of managers in the conference report still urges the Forest Service to prepare for sale 3.6 billion board feet of timber. This would represent a significant increase in timber sales above the current level of 2.1 billion board feet, and this timber targets language is backed up by a significant increase in funding for logging. The bill contains a \$40 million increase in logging subsidies, including \$5 million earmarked specifically for the Tongass National Forest. We are very concerned that this \$40 million in additional logging subsidies could result in unsound timber sales on the National Forests. We urge that instead this unrequested increase in funding be used to mitigate environmental degradation by spending it on forest restoration through road decommissioning and obliteration.

If the fuels-reduction program is to bring real benefit, it must be implemented in a way that avoids the controversies, appeals, and litigation associated with significant increases in logging that degrade water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. We look forward to working with the Administration to avoid such results.

Sincerely,

Mark Udall, James Leach, George Miller, Cynthia McKinney, Lloyd Doggett, John Lewis, Frank Pallone, Jr., Barbara Lee, Fortney (Pete) Stark, Grace F. Napolitano, Edolphus Towns, Sam Gejdenson, Sander Levin, Bob Filner, Rush Holt, Earl Blumenauer, Bill Pascrell, Jr., Nancy Pelosi, Anna G. Eshoo, Maurice Hinchey, Sherrod Brown, Henry A. Waxman, Diana DeGette, Howard L. Berman, Ellen O. Tauscher, Michael R. McNulty.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOREST SERVICE,

Washington, DC, February 6, 2001.

Hon. MARK UDALL,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN UDALL: thank you for your October 20, 2000, letter from you and

your colleagues, to former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman regarding the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) shares your concerns about the implementation of the fuels reduction program. As directed in the Interior Appropriations Act, funds provided to reduce hazardous fuels will be focused in and around communities at risk. In these areas, protecting life and property from catastrophic wildfire will be the primary objective of the treatments. In complying with existing environmental laws, we will work closely with the treatments. In complying with existing environmental laws, we will work closely with the local communities to design and implement these treatments. I assure you that environmentally appropriate safeguards will be maintained throughout the planning and implementation efforts to restore lands damaged by recent wildland fires and to mitigate future wildland fire risks through fuel reduction projects.

The USDA Forest Service has developed the Cohesive Strategy, Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems—A Cohesive Strategy. A suite of Federal laws and regulations guide management of fire-related activities on those lands. They include the Organic Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), among others, that will ensure clean air, clean water, and biodiversity in fire-adapted ecosystems. Long-term sustainability is a consistent theme embodied within these laws. The Forest Service's efforts to reduce hazardous fuels compliment long-term sustainability and will fully comply with these laws and regulations. All Forest Service activities will be in full compliance with procedures established by the Council on Environmental Quality for implementation of NEPA.

The National Fire Plan is in response to Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment, A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000, which was submitted on September 8, 2000. The Plan discusses the Forest Service's strategy to remove excessive fuel through vegetative treatments and prescribed fire in order to protect communities at risk, help prevent insect and disease damage, and generally improve overall ecosystem health and sustainability. It also discusses how the Forest Service's locally-led, integrated teams should coordinate environmental reviews and consultations, facilitate and encourage public participation, and monitor and evaluate project implementation.

The 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Policy and Program Review reinforces the Forest Service's efforts to utilize the best available science that incorporates the role of fire in land, resource and fire management planning. Recently, the Agency requested a review of the 1995 Policy. The review found the basic policy sound. The review group made 11 recommendations, which were accepted by the Agency, on ecosystem sustainability, restoration, science, communication, and evaluation. As the Forest Service continues to implement this Policy, planning efforts will ensure that full environmental safeguards, as required by laws and policies, are more than adequate to address all concerns raised in your letter.

Thank you again for your thoughtful letter and expressing your concerns. Identical letters will be sent to your colleagues. I appreciate your continued support for our forest health and restoration program. Please do

not hesitate to contact me at (202) 205-1657, if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. RAINS,
Deputy Chief,
State and Private Forestry.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Chairman, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I do have an amendment at the desk. At the conclusion of debate, I will just offer that amendment.

Madam Chairman, this is basically a buy-American amendment. I realize much of this money is to be transferred, but some of it will end up trickling down to make a purchase or an expendable consumption.

I want to commend this chairman and the ranking gentlewoman handling this bill and thank them for accommodating my amendment.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Wildland Fire Management Act, which would make a small technical correction that would free up resources for fighting wildfires.

When you drive from the northern end of my district in Florida to the southern end, you pass through an area that still bears the scars of wildfires from only a few years ago. Those fires devastated families, businesses, and farms. And, while we can rebuild our facilities and buy new belongings, there's a toll exacted on the people whose lives are disrupted that can never be quantified or reimbursed.

Right now there are wildfires raging nearby in Florida, and there is a serious drought across the state. The concern my constituents feel is palpable. And, it is precisely because we in Florida's Fourth District understand the destruction that wildfires can cause that I support the swift passage of this legislation, which merely makes a technical correction necessary to keep the fire management tools for which Congress has already appropriated funding from drying up.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 581.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Chairman, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The text of H.R. 581 is as follows:

H.R. 581

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

SECTION 1. USE OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT FUNDS TO FACILITATE COMPLIANCE WITH ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may use funds appropriated for wildland fire management in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106-291; 114 Stat. 922), to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and

the National Marine Fisheries Service for the costs of carrying out their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) to consult and conference, as required by section 7 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 1536), in connection with wildland fire management activities.

The CHAIRMAN. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment that he has printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

Are there any amendments to the bill?

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. TRAFICANT

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. TRAFICANT:

Add at the end of the following new section:
SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS; REQUIREMENT REGARDING NOTICE.

(a) PURCHASE OF AMERICAN-MADE EQUIPMENT AND PRODUCTS.—In the case of any equipment or products that may be authorized to be purchased using funds provided under section 1, it is the sense of the Congress that entities receiving the funds should, in expending the funds, purchase only American-made equipment and products.

(b) NOTICE TO RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS.—In expending funds provided under section 1, the head of each Federal agency receiving such funds shall provide to each recipient of the funds a notice describing the statement made in subsection (a) by the Congress.

(c) NOTICE OF REPORT.—Any entity which receives funds under section 1 shall report any expenditures on foreign-made items to the Congress within 180 days of the expenditure.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I would like to commend the chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking gentlewoman on our side for their work on the bill. It is a good bill. Some of this money may trickle down to be used for the purchasing of some equipment and certainly some services.

Just briefly, I would like to say our last month's trade deficit was \$33 billion. Our trade deficit projected for this year will exceed \$300 billion. China is now taking \$100 billion a year out of our economy. Madam Chairman, even our trade deficit bears a label "made in China."

This is a very simple amendment that says any use of these funds, we recommend where possible, services and goods, if purchased, give the American worker and the American companies a tumble.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TRAFICANT. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. HEFLEY. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chairman, I am supportive of this amendment. I would like to commend the gentleman from Ohio for keeping our feet to the fire when it comes to this buy-American theme that the gentleman has been the leader in Congress on. I think in the appro-

priations bill where the money is appropriated, the gentleman has gotten the amendment in last year there, so we have it there. We have it in the authorization side. I think both are good, and I support the amendment.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TRAFICANT. I yield to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Chairman, we have no objection to the amendment as well.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Madam Chairman, I move the question on the amendment, and yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there further amendments?

If not, under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MICA) having assumed the chair, Mrs. MORELLA, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 581) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to use funds appropriated for wildland fire management in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, to reimburse the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to facilitate the interagency cooperation required under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 in connection with wildland fire management, pursuant to House Resolution 135, she reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HEFLEY. 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. 581 and H. Con. Res. 83.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain one-minute speeches.

CUBAN MUNICIPIOS

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, fleeing the repressive communist regime that took the political and military power in Cuba on January 1, 1959, Cuban nationals started to arrive in the U.S. for freedom and democracy. The Cuban diaspora had to face the hardships of their new lives.

But despite their difficulties, the exiled Cuban-Americans succeeded in preserving their cultural heritage. They never failed to dedicate time to promote liberty for the land they had left behind. They initiated ways to help their homeland regain its freedom.

In the early 1960s, the Cuban exile community regrouped by "Municipios," or cities from which they originated. The Municipios formed the Municipios de Cuba en el Exilio, the Cuban Municipalities in Exile, that became the largest Cuban organization outside of the island.

Undertaking numerous actions to advance the cause of democracy, freedom and human rights in Cuba, the Municipios also participate actively in projects aimed at improving mutual understanding in South Florida and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all of the Municipio members for helping to advance the cause of freedom and democracy in my native Cuba.

GARY YOUMANS, NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

(Mr. ISSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gary Youmans, a constituent of mine from Fallbrook, California. Mr. Youmans has been named National Financial Services Advocate of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

This prestigious award recognizes Mr. Youmans for his continued service to small businesses and his effort to encourage the flow of investment capital to small ventures.

I would like to take a moment to describe some of the many contributions that Mr. Youmans has made to advance the interests of small businesses.

In 1991, Mr. Youmans started with Community National Bank and, in 8 years, established an SBA loan department ranked in the top 25 banks nationwide in overall lending. For over 20 years, he has been involved with SCORE, a volunteer business consulting counseling program. He is also a founding director and original board member of the National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders, an organization created to represent the interests of the small businesses lending community, who utilize SBA and