Madam Speaker, I wanted to respond to my distinguished chairman. It is true that we do have a lot of bipartisanship on our committee, and I appreciate the gentleman for making that point, and I am certainly doing everything on my part to ensure that that continues on. However, I will make the point we did have a hearing on H.R. 3538, the measure sponsored by Mr. SIMPSON.

We have not had a hearing, however, on H.R. 4474 which is before us today sponsored by Mr. MINNICK. I just wanted to point that out because we try to be in regular order as much as we possibly can, and I think that is worth pointing out.

So I would hope that this legislation does pass the House with strong bipartisan support. Maybe it will be able to send the signal that we can indeed work in a bipartisan way if only we change sponsorships of certain bills; but that remains to be seen, Madam Speaker, but I look forward to that time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4474, the Idaho Wilderness Water Resources Protection Act.

This bipartisan, non-controversial legislation is a technical fix intended to enable the Forest Service to authorize and permit existing historical water diversions within Idaho wilderness.

Last year, one of my constituents came to me for help with a problem. The Middle Fork Lodge has a water diversion within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Area that has existed since before the wilderness area was established and is protected under statute.

The diversion was beginning to leak and is in desperate need of repairs to ensure that it does not threaten the environment and watershed, but when the Forest Service began the process of issuing the Lodge a permit to allow them to make the necessary repairs, we discovered that the Forest Service did not have the authority to issue the required permit.

As we looked into this issue, we discovered that the Forest Service lacks this authority throughout both the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, where there are a number of these diversions. These diversions are primarily used to support irrigation and minor hydropower generation for use on non-Federal lands.

The damage to the water diversion at the Middle Fork Lodge is severe enough that the Forest Service had to do temporary emergency repairs last fall, but without authority to issue them the necessary special use permit, they will be unable to do the work needed to permanently fix the problem.

While the urgent situation at the Middle Fork Lodge brought this issue to my attention, it is obvious to me that this problem is larger than just one diversion. At some point in the future, all 20 of these existing diversions will need maintenance or repair work done to ensure their integrity.

H.R. 4474 authorizes the Forest Service to issue special use permits for 20 qualifying historic water systems in these wilderness areas. I believe it is important to get ahead of this problem and ensure that the Forest Service has the tools necessary to manage these lands.

For these reasons I have worked with my colleague, WALT MINNICK, to introduce H.R. 4474. This legislation allows the Forest Service to issue the required special use permits to owners of these historic water systems and sets out specific criteria for doing so.

Providing this authority will ensure that existing water diversions can be properly maintained and repaired when necessary and preserves beneficial use for private property owners who hold water rights under State law.

I have deeply appreciated the cooperation of the Forest Service in addressing this problem. Not only have they communicated with me the need to find a system-wide solution to this issue, but at my request they have worked with me on this legislation to ensure that it only impacts specific targeted historical diversions—those with valid water rights that cannot feasibly be relocated outside of the wilderness area.

H.R. 4474 is bipartisan and non-controversial. It is intended as a simple, reasonable solution to a problem that I think we can all agree should be solved as quickly as possible. I was encouraged that the bill passed out of Committee without objection, and I am hopeful that today we can pass it without delay so that the necessary maintenance to these diversions may be completed before the damage is beyond repair.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield back my time.

Mr. RAHALL. I yield back the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1038, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## CASTLE NUGENT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ESTABLISHMENT ACT OF 2010

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1038, I call up the bill (H.R. 3726) to establish the Castle Nugent National Historic Site at St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1038, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the bill is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3726

*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 ''Castle Nugent National Historic Site Establishment Act of 2010''.*

***SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.***

*In this Act:*

*(1) HISTORIC SITE.—The term ''historic site'' means the Castle Nugent National Historic Site established in section 3.*

*(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.*

***SEC. 3. CASTLE NUGENT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.***

*(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established as a unit of the National Park System the Castle Nugent National Historic Site on the Island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, in order to preserve, protect, and interpret, for the benefit of present and future generations, a Caribbean cultural landscape that spans more than 300 years of agricultural use, significant archeological resources, mangrove forests, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches, an extensive barrier coral reef system, and other outstanding natural features.*

*(b) BOUNDARIES.—The historic site consists of the approximately 2,900 acres of land extending from Lowrys Hill and Laprey Valley to the Caribbean Sea and from Manchenil Bay to Great Pond, along with associated submerged lands to the three-mile territorial limit, as generally depicted on the map titled ''Castle Nugent National Historic Site Proposed Boundary Map'', numbered T22/100,447, and dated October 2009.*

*(c) MAP AVAILABILITY.—The map referred to in subsection (b) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.*

*(d) ACQUISITION OF LAND.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary is authorized to acquire lands and interests in lands within the boundaries of the historic site by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.*

*(2) U.S. VIRGIN ISLAND LANDS.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire lands and interests in lands owned by the U.S. Virgin Islands or any political subdivision thereof only by donation or exchange.*

***SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION.***

*(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the historic site in accordance with this Act and with laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—*

*(1) the National Park Service Organic Act (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.); and*

*(2) the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).*

*(b) SHARED RESOURCES.—To the greatest extent practicable, the Secretary shall use the resources of other sites administered by the National Park Service on the Island of St. Croix to administer the historic site.*

*(c) CONTINUED USE.—In order to maintain an important feature of the cultural landscape of the historic site, the Secretary may lease to the University of the Virgin Islands certain lands within the boundary of the historic site for the purpose of continuing the university's operation breeding Senepol cattle, a breed developed on St. Croix. A lease under this subsection shall contain such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate, including those necessary to protect the values of the historic site.*

*(d) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Not later than three years after funds are made available for this subsection, the Secretary shall prepare a general management plan for the historic site.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 3726.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in strong support of the pending measure introduced by my very good friend and a valued member of our Committee on Natural Resources, the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, Dr. DONNA CHRISTENSEN.

The pending legislation establishes the Castle Nugent National Historic Site on the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Castle Nugent area possesses a wide range of historic resources, including the remnants of small Danish cotton, sugar, indigo, and cattle plantations. Pre-Columbian archaeological sites also exist on the property. The cattle ranch there is one of the oldest in the West Indies.

The diverse and undisturbed natural resources of the site include the most substantial black mangrove stand left in the Virgin Islands, sea turtle nesting areas, large and healthy coral reefs, and a lagoon that is home to many different species of birds and wildlife.

Congress authorized a special resource study for this area in 2006. The National Park Service has completed all of the work for that study and found that the area meets all of the applicable criteria for significance, suitability, and feasibility for designation as a National Park Service unit.

The proposed park would include 2,900 acres of privately owned ranch lands as well as 8,600 acres of submerged lands owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands. The family which owns the majority of the site has fought off aggressive developers for years, seeking instead to have their land preserved for future generations to enjoy.

This legislation includes no direct spending, and any land acquisition would be subject to appropriations. This is an excellent piece of legislation, and I commend once again Dr. CHRISTENSEN for her tireless efforts to preserve the unique and stunning resources that are located in her beautiful district.

Thanks to the recent Public Broadcasting System series by Ken Burns chronicling the amazing history of our National Park System, many Americans are asking themselves and asking this Congress what can we do to build upon the incredible legacy left to us by those who invented the idea of national parks. The answer to that question is simple: work to identify and study significant, unique areas of natural and historic significance and then make certain they are protected.

The answer is to support the pending legislation, H.R. 3726.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I cannot support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it for two reasons.

First, this Congress in prior times enacted a law that authorized and directed the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility study on whether this site should be preserved and, if so, in what manner. Madam Speaker, we don't have that report. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on this study, and yet this House is charging ahead, making a decision without having that study in our hands. I think that is wasteful, and I think it's irresponsible.

It has been said that the report is done, but Congress hasn't gotten a copy of that report. We are told its recommendations will support the approach taken in this bill, yet we don't know that because we have not received the report.

Even if the final report were to recommend establishing a historic site, we would benefit from the information they have gathered to better craft such legislation. This bill is clearly putting the cart before the horse.

The Park Service itself has testified on this Castle Nugent bill before us today, and they stated: ''We would ask that the committee defer action on this legislation until the special resource study is completed, which is consistent with the Department's general policy on legislation establishing a new unit of the National Park System when a study is pending.''

Madam Speaker, if the $500,000 study that Congress passed to initiate is nearly completed, then we should wait to consider this bill until we have that information. That seems to be a rather logical conclusion of the events. There hasn't been a single compelling reason given as to the need to act right now before this study is in hand.

Now, Madam Speaker, the second reason for opposition to this bill is its cost. With 10 percent unemployment nationwide and with millions of Americans without jobs and the fact that we are running record budget deficits and the public debt is skyrocketing, now is not the time to potentially spend up to $50 million of the taxpayers' money to buy nearly 3,000 acres of beachfront property on a Caribbean island. And on top of that, it will probably cost an estimate of $1 million a year to maintain.

Madam Speaker, we can't afford the price tag for a new park in St. Croix, just as many Americans will never be able to afford a visit there. I had my staff, Madam Speaker, actually look up the cost of getting to St. Croix over the Presidents' Day weekend next month. From my home town in Pasco, Washington, it would take two plane changes, over 12 hours of time and around a thousand dollars to visit the island which would be the home of this new park.

For a resident in the wild and wonderful State of West Virginia, just to pick a State, flying out of the Charleston airport, the time to get there is a little less, but the price is still around a thousand dollars.

On top of the cost of buying this beachfront Caribbean property and the yearly cost of maintaining it, we need to be honest about the backlog that we have in caring for land already owned by the Federal Government.

Madam Speaker, there is $9 billion, that is billion with a ''b,'' worth of needed repairs and maintenance on existing park lands. If we aren't caring for what we already have, then Congress shouldn't be making the problem worse by authorizing new park lands.

Our existing treasures should be our focus to ensure families that load up the minivan or SUV to take a summer vacation to a national park have a safe, enjoyable, and accessible visit, like my colleague from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) expressed a moment ago about the Rocky Mountain National Park. I guarantee you that no family from any State will ever load up their minivan and drive to this park in the Caribbean ocean.

This Congress must get serious about controlling spending. The American people are concerned. They're worried and they're angered by the spending that has gone on in Washington, D.C. In the first year of the Obama administration, the largest spending deficit in our Nation's history has been set.

Whether it's the $787 billion stimulus bill that has failed to create the jobs that were promised or the government takeover—potential government takeover of the health care costs that will cost, if it is put in place—the health care bill that is being debated, over a trillion dollars—I think is very, very clear: spending in America's mind is out of control.

For Congress to buckle down, it needs to not only put the brakes on mega-spending bills but it also must start taking a hard look at smaller bills like this one.

Just take a look, Madam Speaker, at some of the bills that have been advanced out of the Natural Resources Committee this year. We passed a bill to create a $700 million welfare program for wild horses; they've approved another bill to increase spending for neotropical birds by millions of dollars; and, today, there is a committee hearing on a bill to spend millions of more dollars overseas to assist apes.

There is a lot of talk that the President may propose a spending freeze in his State of the Union speech tonight. The news media and blogs have been

talking about it for several days; yet this House is positioned to vote on creating a new $50 million park in the middle of the Caribbean ocean just hours before the State of the Union speech tonight. Madam Speaker, those that control this House will send quite a message on spending and their real priorities if it approves this bill before the President even makes it here to give his speech tonight.

So, Madam Speaker, for those two reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

And with that, I reserve my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I am very happy at this point to yield to the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands who has worked so long, so hard, so diligently, and so patiently to bring this bill before us today, Dr. DONNA CHRISTENSEN, such time as she may consume.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Chairman RAHALL, for yielding.

Today I rise once again to speak on behalf of H.R. 3726, a bill that I introduced to establish the Castle Nugent Historic Site on St. Croix, Virgin Islands, for the first time in the 110th Congress.

The introduction of this bill, or the reintroduction, stands as testimony to our country's legacy of preserving our Nation's special places. H.R. 3726 deepens the commitment of our conservation trail blazers such as Henry Thoreau, George Perkins Marsh, and John Muir who worked tirelessly to protect our collective natural history in such a way that it would live on for generations.

□ 1300

As noted by Ken Burns when discussing the need to document the National Park System, the chronicle of America's parks isn't a mere celebration of our Nation's national treasures, but also a story of our people, of the forces that help shape our lands and the influences that will guide our children.

The site to be designated as the Castle Nugent National Historic Site continues to be heralded as one of the last pristine areas in the region. Without hesitation, I can attest to the fact that the Castle Nugent Farm is worthy of preservation, worthy of inclusion in the National Park System and truly worthy of being shared as more than just a ''beachfront property in the Caribbean'' but, instead, as an invaluable chapter in our Nation's official record of the American story. The National Park Service testified as such in November at the subcommittee hearing.

H.R. 3726 calls for the preservation of 2,900 acres, which include a Caribbean dry forest, sea turtle nesting areas, large and healthy fringe coral reefs, and Great Pond Bay, home to numerous species of bird and other wildlife. Today the landscape remains pretty much as it did historically with its rolling hills and open grassy shrub plains sloping into the Caribbean Sea.

In addition to guaranteeing the protection of one of the most ecologically sensitive areas on the island, H.R. 3726 also preserves a rich part of our historical and cultural past by preserving the archeological remains of our indigenous Taino inhabitants as well as a Danish estate house now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Estate Castle Nugent is one of the last working cattle ranches on St. Croix and one of the ranches instrumental in the development and exportation of the unique and sturdy Senepol cattle throughout the Caribbean and, really, throughout the world. H.R. 3726 would ensure the rearing of the Senepol cattle with a provision that guarantees a continued relationship with the University of the Virgin Islands Agricultural Experiment Station to support ongoing scientific research.

The family which owns the majority of this property has been incredibly patient. The pressure to sell their land to developers has been overwhelming and has created some conflict among family members, but they have held out because their first choice has always been that the ranch and its assets be preserved, which I agree is the best for all concerned.

There is no intent to interfere with privately held property. The sole purpose of this bill is to protect and preserve the historic, cultural, and environmental assets and the opportunity for the people of the Virgin Islands and our fellow Americans to continue to enjoy the area and to preserve it for future generations.

And while it might cost almost $1,000 to get there on President's weekend, President's weekend is the most heavily traveled time of the year to any part of the Caribbean, and most times of the year the cost to get to St. Croix is far less.

There is also no final assessment of how much the site would cost. This simply authorizes the Secretary to acquire it. We do not know that the entire 2,900 acres will remain in the park, and we expect to acquire some of what would be the National Historic Site through donations, easements, and possibly also exchanges.

There is no substantive reason to oppose this legislation. This is a beautiful and important natural and cultural resource that is in danger of being lost to the Nation's public forever. If we do not move forward now without waiting for the final process to get the study here, after having heard from the National Park Service that it is indeed determined to have been appropriate for inclusion into the park, if we don't move forward today, there is a real risk that when the study is formally transmitted to Congress supporting the designation, the land will already have been sold and condominium owners will be the only people who ever get to visit the area.

In places such as the U.S. Virgin Islands, there is always a danger of development getting out of control and the balance between development and conservation being lost in favor of development. With development brings the risk of restricting local residents' use of the area far more than park regulations would. There are examples, as well, of developers disregarding the relationship between the people of our community and the areas that they have purchased. Bringing this ranch into the Park Service is the best way to allow those who have purchased part of the property or adjacent property to develop, but to do so in a way that is sensitive to the importance of the land and least restrictive to all of my constituents.

Both the Bush and Obama administrations have supported this designation every step of the way. The current administration has determined that the site meets the criteria set by the National Park Service to determine national significance, suitability, and feasibility. The designation is supported by my constituents, including those who originally questioned the expansion of the park, and, as far as I'm aware, no one is challenging the conclusions of the study.

The people of St. Croix have long enjoyed the picturesque scenery and use of the area for various activities. For years, thousands of Virgin Islanders and visitors have frequented the property to learn about the natural, cultural, historical, archeological, and marine resources found in Estate Castle Nugent. Anyone who visits the property leaves with a deepened appreciation of our community's treasure and our place in American history. Failure to act now will guarantee the area to be developed privately, risking our historic and natural jewels and having them untold and lost to future generations.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Chairman RAHALL and Subcommittee Chair GRIJALVA for their support in ushering this bill through the Resources Committee and back to the floor. I would like to thank the numerous community members and organizations who wrote in support of it.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands, I ask for a ''yes'' vote on H.R. 3726. This is timely and responsible legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the ranking member of the National Parks, Forest and Public Lands Subcommittee, Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me some time.

It is with mixed emotions that I speak on this particular bill. This is not the worst bill our committee has ever produced. We have produced some real stinkers that we have hidden in other pieces of legislation. However, it

is symbolic of the problem that this administration and leaders of this Congress have.

We have a Secretary of the Interior who, every time we wish to use Federal land to actually help improve the lives of Americans or creating jobs, will always yell that we have a process we have to do; we cannot commit a rush to judgment. And now when we have a piece of territory, land that will be taken off the tax rolls in a territory that is in deep financial problems today, this historic cattle ranch is now considered something that we must hustle through the system.

We just voted on a bill to solve problems in the wilderness areas of Idaho, which, if we had taken the time to see what was in there instead of rushing to create the most restrictive environment we can on this land in Idaho, we would not have needed the legislation. That is why this administration and this Department of the Interior have said they want to wait until the study is completed and the process is done.

If one of the arguments in favor of passing this bill is we don't really know how much land we will ultimately have and how much it will ultimately cost, that is a great argument to wait until the study is done and we figure out how much land we really want to have and how much it will ultimately cost.

But it is also symbolic of a deeper problem. This Federal Government already owns 650 million acres of land. One-third of this Nation is owned by the Federal Government. Now think of that. One out of every three acres in this country is owned by the Federal Government. I have had three land transfer bills in the past few years here, and in each case, the land that was controlled by the Federal Government was land they did not need, they did not use, and in every case, they did not even know they had the land until a land title search pointed out that, indeed, it belonged to the Federal Government.

At some time you have to say enough is enough. The States with the biggest problem in funding their education system are found in States that have a predominance of public lands. It is a one-to-one relationship between States that have that problem. In my State of Utah, only 18 percent of the State is in private property. The Governor of Utah controls 18 percent. The rest of the State is under the heavy hand of the Secretary of the Interior, and both my adjective and noun are appropriate.

One of the issues that we simply have here is we will be hearing that we should have a spending freeze on nondefense and nonentitlement programs, and we will hear that tonight. Does it seem logical that we should spend up and then decide to freeze? Does that indeed solve our problem?

As I said before, this particular bill, which will probably cost $50 million, give or take $50 million, this particular bill is not necessarily bad in and of itself, but it is symbolic of the problem that we have, that we do not have a large-scale picture of what this Nation should control, should own, should do, and we are moving in a pell-mell process to try and add more and more acreage to the heavy hand of the Federal Government. And at some time, we should stand up and say enough is enough.

One-third of this country owned by the Federal Government is enough. For that reason, we should at least wait until the Department of the Interior has finished their study and the process and they sign off and we actually know how much land and how much cost we are talking.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to a new member of the House Resources Committee, Mr. CHAFFETZ from Utah.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. With all due respect to the great people of the Virgin Islands and to my colleague, I stand in opposition to this bill. No doubt, the Virgin Islands is one of the most spectacular, beautiful places on the face of the planet. But this bill is about priorities of the United States of America.

We are $12 trillion in debt. We are spending $600 million a day just in interest on that debt. This Congress momentarily is going to have to raise the debt ceiling another $1.8 trillion. We don't have the money to do this.

Currently, the National Park Service has an estimated $9 billion in backlog, $9 billion that they need to help with the national parks to preserve and to upgrade what we already have in our current holdings.

We don't have the money. We don't have the resources. If you look at what the President is probably going to say here in less than 8 hours, he might come in and try to create this air of, oh, we have to be a little fiscally responsible. We should probably freeze a few things.

For the second time in just over a week here, we are going to actually come and look at this bill to acquire at the cost of $40 million to $50 million property with funds that we don't have.

No longer can this government continue to use the government credit card to rack up debt. Those that decide to vote in favor of this bill, although it's just an authorization—I know it's not an appropriation—are saying, sure, yeah, let's go buy some beachfront property.

We don't have the money. Think of all the other things that we could do and should do in prioritizing this country. We have 1,500 people a day that die from cancer, and we're not adequately funding those types of things. We deal with homelessness, and we have Homeland Security issues. But this government continues to acquire private property and put it into the Federal Treasury. I think it's fundamentally wrong.

As was pointed out earlier, there is no report. The National Park Service does not recommend we make this transaction because they haven't even finished the study. Why does this government spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a study if it doesn't matter? Maybe what we should have also done is add an amendment to stop the study and recover as much money in funds as we can. There is absolutely no reason, if the Democrats are going to move forward and push this thing through, to actually do the study. I don't care if it's $2,000. Let's save it. And until this body has that type of attitude, we will continue to have the systemic problems that we have in this government.

Just yesterday, the Governor of the territory stood up before the people and said this: ''However, the global economic crisis has had a great impact on our economy. It has devastated our government funds, where we are running a monthly deficit of $25 million and our tax revenues fell by over 30 percent. This means that we had 234 million fewer dollars to spend than we had just the year before. To put this in perspective, $234 million is almost half of the cost of salaries and benefits of our government workers for a full year.''

Now some will say, well, we should move forward with this. Well, guess what? It's going to take property off of the tax rolls and put the burden on the Federal taxpayer. Why should the people of Iowa or Rhode Island or Utah or California have to continue to pay and supplement the people there on St. Croix for this property? I don't think it's fair. I don't think it's right. The Federal taxpayers will be the ones responsible for reimbursing on the lost property tax, plus the million dollars a year that it's going to take in order to just maintain the facility.

Again, as we said, there are existing parks that need our help, $9 billion in backlog. If this was really such a great thing for the island and they really wanted to do it, my suggestion is to do it locally. Locally they can go and acquire this. It does not require the Federal taxpayers to take on this burden.

I think one of the arguments back to that would say, well, we can't afford it. Well, neither can the Federal taxpayers. Neither can the United States of America. It's time we stand up and say ''no'' to a bill like this.

□ 1315

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), another member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of hearing the esteemed economist, Art Laffer, who is credited with bringing the United States out of a worse recession than we are in right now by overcoming double

digit inflation, double digit unemployment, and double digit interest rates, and he did it by cutting taxes. Of course, we know taxes are going to jump up like crazy a year from now. But what he said is if you want to get this government out of the tremendous trouble we are in, quit buying things, quit buying land and things, and start selling off some of the assets.

That is what a regular family would do when they find themselves in debt. That is what I am doing right now to pay off student loans. We are selling our house and going to downsize. Why can't the government do that? Let's quit spending like crazy. Let's sell off some of our assets, pay down our debt, and let America find jobs again.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time pending any further speakers on the minority side.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I understand the gentleman from West Virginia is the final speaker on that side. With that, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Madam Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this. And if you were listening to the debate here of the several speakers that we had on our side of the aisle, if you noticed, we were not criticizing the merits of this purchase. We are simply saying that there is a procedure that this Congress set up. That procedure was a study. Taxpayer dollars funded that study in order to see if this project actually merits congressional support.

Well, that study, Madam Speaker, is not made public. We have not seen the study. We don't know if it is good or bad. It may be good, as the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) said. In fact, he alluded that he has seen worse pieces of legislation rather than this one. But for goodness sakes, if we are spending taxpayer dollars on a study, then shouldn't we at least find out what the study says? That might lead us in the right direction of spending, as this bill would authorize, up to $50 million without really knowing the ramifications.

So our argument on this side, and I think an argument on this side probably resonates better with the American people due to the fiscal health of our country, I think this resonates very, very well today, especially, as I alluded to in my earlier remarks, since the President is going to come and speak to a joint session of Congress tonight on fiscal responsibility, this is our opportunity on that very day to show some fiscal responsibility by saying ''no'' to this bill and waiting for the study to come back.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, may I inquire of the remaining time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 10½ minutes.

Mr. RAHALL. Thank you. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I would close this debate by making the following observations on the allegations that we have heard on the other side. With respect to the technicality that a new area study has not been sent to the Congress, let me state that at a hearing before the Parks Subcommittee held last November, the National Park Service testified on the record that the draft study is completed and finds that the site meets the NPS criteria for addition to the National Park System.

The official agency testimony goes on for four pages describing the amazing natural, cultural, and historical resources found on the site. For example, that testimony states that, and I quote, ''Enactment of H.R. 3726 would provide the opportunity to preserve and protect this outstanding Caribbean cultural landscape and interpret the cotton era and related agricultural themes that have been instrumental in the development of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands. It would also help protect five pre-Columbian archeological sites, two of which are among the oldest sites on St. Croix.''

I was not able to attend this hearing, but my staff does inform me that at no time did any member of the committee, even for a moment, question the conclusions or opinions that were expressed by the National Park Service. The formal findings contained in the study will be enormously valuable as the NPS moves forward creating a management plan for this area, and in future years as the Congress contemplates appropriating funds for the site.

For now, I am satisfied that the NPS has provided us more than ample information to move forward with the initial designation. The fact that the formal study has not been transmitted to the Congress is a technicality, one that is either significant or not to the other side, the minority, depending upon what day it is. House Republicans have supported designations with incomplete studies. House Republicans have supported designations with no study at all. House Republicans have opposed designations when the study was complete and fully supported designation. So this concern for NPS studies by those on the other side of the aisle is newly discovered. Their record on this is inconsistent and simply not credible.

Like the Republican concern for following the recommendations of NPS studies, this concern for the NPS maintenance backlog is newfound as well. The NPS maintenance backlog is real, no doubt about it, and needs to be addressed. Democrats are serious about addressing it. We continue to work closely with the agency to document the work that needs to be done to prioritize it and provide the funding and the people needed to get the most pressing work done.

But I completely disagree with the Republican claim that the National Park Service, quote, ''can't take care of what it already owns.'' That kind of park bashing may score some points, but it is nothing more than a low blow. Millions of American families visit our national parks every year and come away feeling inspired, energized, and downright patriotic. The National Park Service could use more money, but they are the very best in the world at what they do, and claims to the contrary are false. Our National Park Service takes care of what they already own, to the enormous satisfaction of most Americans, and they can take care of this beautiful area of St. Croix as well.

I would ask the American people to keep an eye on the issue. You watch. When the President submits his budget request for the next fiscal year, it will contain critical funding for the NPS. And Democrats will support that request and pass it. And many of the same Republicans on this floor today expressing deep concern over the NPS maintenance backlog will come to this floor and vote against the funding needed to address it.

In fact, it was Republicans who insisted on drastically underfunding and understaffing this agency that caused the maintenance backlog to increase on their watch. The future health and growth of our NPS system should not be stunted because Republicans mismanaged it when they were in charge of government. Democrats will correct the mistakes of the past, not be held hostage by them. And just like other arguments offered today, the Republican record on this issue is so inconsistent it simply cannot be taken seriously.

Finally, Madam Speaker, H.R. 3726 does not spend one dime, and every Member on this floor knows it. The legislation designates this area as a new unit, but the bill contains no direct spending. Any land acquisition will be subject, of course, to appropriations. Enactment of this legislation is the beginning of the process, not the end. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to preserve a unique and stunning area, and I fully support having this land at least be eligible for land acquisition funding over the next few cycles.

Yes, the former Republican majority went on an irresponsible spending spree that damaged this country and resulted in the largest increase in the deficit since World War II. And yes, fixing the damage caused by those Republican mistakes will be an enormous challenge for all of us going forward. But I believe Democrats can do it. I believe we can get our fiscal house in order, and when we do it, Castle Nugent should be a unit of the National Park System so we can allocate funding to protect it and preserve it for generations to come.

As for unemployment, the unemployment rate on St. Croix was 8.9 percent last November. If this private land is successfully transformed into a popular tourist destination, it will create jobs

and help ease unemployment on the island. It will increase tourism, benefiting airlines, car rentals, travel agents, restaurants, hotels, and might even lead to hiring a few new park rangers. Democrats support creating jobs by building things up—investing in the long-term growth and health of this nation. H.R. 3726 does just that.

I would conclude by pointing out the obvious: We as a Nation have a responsibility to our territorial possessions. And if we shirk from that duty, we would be nothing more than the European empires which once ruled over vast swaths of Africa and the Americas. The U.S. Virgin Islands are a unique and fascinating place. Native people lived on these islands as far back as the Stone Age. And some of the evidence of that can be found on the site protected in this bill.

Christopher Columbus gave the islands early versions of the names we use today, Santa Cruz, San Tomas, and San Juan. And last, as we move forward in this legislation, recognize that these islands were then occupied by foreign nations, England, Holland, France and Denmark, a period that saw the native people enslaved and then driven almost to extinction. Remains of these times can be found on the land protected in this bill as well.

It is not only the history and the culture found in the continental United States that matters, but St. Croix is a part of these United States. And we owe it to those who live there now and those who were there long before this Nation came into being to value this history and to respect its culture. This legislation does that. This legislation deserves our support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1038, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passage of H.R. 4474 and H.R. 3726, and motions to suspend the rules with regard to H.R. 4508 and House Resolution 1020, in each case by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

## IDAHO WILDERNESS WATER FACILITIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of H.R. 4474, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 22]

YEAS—415

Ackerman
Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Austria
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boccieri
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Cao
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chaffetz
Chandler
Childers
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman (CO)
Cohen
Cole
Conaway
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Dahlkemper
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle
Dreier
Driehaus
Duncan
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gallegly
Garamendi
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Gordon (TN)
Granger
Graves
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heinrich
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hunter
Inglis
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Massa
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMahon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Minnick
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olson
Olver
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paul
Paulsen
Payne
Pence
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Quigley
Radanovich
Rahall
Rangel
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schmidt
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Tanner
Taylor
Teague
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—18

Abercrombie
Barrett (SC)
Bishop (GA)
Coble
Crenshaw
Davis (AL)
Deal (GA)
Frank (MA)
Griffith
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Moran (KS)
Ortiz
Schock
Speier
Sutton
Wamp
Waters

□ 1353

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for: