

to adjust the fees for private cabins on national forest lands.

We remain concerned about the impact this legislation may have on cabin owners of modest means, of which there are many. It appears that in order to reduce the fees for owners in the highest bracket, fees on the middle- and lower-value cabins would have to increase.

Many members of the committee do not object to the passage of this legislation at this time, although I wanted to bring up some personal concerns about the inequity of the new fee system. I'd like to work with the chairman and the cabin owners and the other body to achieve an equitable solution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and urge adoption of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3397, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BILLFISH CONSERVATION ACT OF 2012

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2706) to prohibit the sale of billfish, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2706

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 "Billfish Conservation Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States carefully regulates its domestic fisheries for billfish and participates in international fishery management bodies in the Atlantic and Pacific.

(2) Global billfish populations have declined significantly, however, because of overfishing primarily through retention of bycatch by non-United States commercial fishing fleets.

(3) Ending the importation of foreign-caught billfish for sale in the United States aligns with U.S. management measures of billfish and protects the significant economic benefits to the U.S. economy of recreational fishing and marine commerce and the traditional cultural fisheries.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY.

The Congress enacts this Act pursuant to clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

SEC. 4. PROHIBITION ON SALE OF BILLFISH.

(a) PROHIBITION.—No person shall offer for sale, sell, or have custody, control, or possession of for purposes of offering for sale or selling billfish or products containing billfish.

(b) PENALTY.—For purposes of section 308(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1858(a)), a violation of this section shall be treated as an act prohibited by section 307 of that Act (16 U.S.C. 1857).

(c) EXEMPTIONS FOR TRADITIONAL FISHERIES AND MARKETS.—

(1) Subsection (a) does not apply to billfish caught by US fishing vessels and landed in the State of Hawaii or Pacific Insular Areas as defined in section 3(35) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802(35)).

(2) Subsection (a) does not apply to billfish landed by foreign fishing vessels in the Pacific Insular Areas when the foreign caught billfish is exported to non-US markets or retained within Hawaii and the Pacific Insular Areas for local consumption.

(d) BILLFISH DEFINED.—In this section the term "billfish"—

(1) means any fish of the species—

(A) *Makaira nigricans* (blue marlin);
(B) *Kajikia audax* (striped marlin);
(C) *Istiompax indica* (black marlin);
(D) *Istiophorus platypterus* (sailfish);
(E) *Tetrapturus angustirostris* (shortbill spearfish);

(F) *Kajikia albida* (white marlin);

(G) *Tetrapturus georgii* (roundscale spearfish);

(H) *Tetrapturus belone* (Mediterranean spearfish); and

(I) *Tetrapturus pfluegeri* (longbill spearfish); and

(2) does not include the species *Xiphias gladius* (swordfish).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2706, the Billfish Conservation Act, authored by our colleague from Florida (Mr. MILLER).

Under current law, it is illegal to import or sell Atlantic billfish. Despite this, the U.S. is one of the major importers of billfish in the world. While Pacific billfish populations in general are in better shape than Atlantic billfish, threats to both oceans' billfish from foreign fishing fleets remain.

As long as the U.S. allows a market for these fish, their population levels are likely to worsen. To add more protection for both the Atlantic and Pacific billfish, the legislation would make it illegal to sell specific billfish species or possess those billfish for sale, whether they are Atlantic or Pacific.

Now, I note, Mr. Speaker, that concern had been raised at the June hear-

ing that U.S. fishermen in Hawaii and the Pacific insular areas might be disadvantaged by these new rules and that the local consumption of billfish products might be made illegal. The bill was amended during committee consideration to address this concern; and the legislation, as amended, now protects these U.S. fishermen and the existing limited, traditional local consumption of billfish products while still providing additional and increased protection for billfish populations in the United States.

This is good legislation. I support it. And I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2706, the Billfish Conservation Act, seeks to ban imports of foreign-caught marlin, sailfish, and spearfish into the United States. Now, these fish, as we know from prized photographs of our friends and many of our past experiences, are highly valued as recreational game-fish and serve as the top predators in ocean ecosystems—the so-called lions and tigers of the sea.

While this bill is a small step forward and has the support of recreational fishing and commercial interests, we can and should do much more for the conservation of billfish. Specifically, developing and using more selective commercial fishing gear, cracking down on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, and passing legislation, such as the bill recently introduced by our colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), to combat seafood fraud would provide even more protections for these iconic species. However, I and most of my colleagues, I believe, support passage of H.R. 2706; and we hope that it is a precursor to further action on this important issue.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the author of this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the recognition.

I thank the gentleman from Washington, the chairman of the committee, for his recognition and his leadership on this effort, as well as Dr. JOHN FLEMING, the subcommittee chairman, and all the members of the House Natural Resources Committee for their support of this particular piece of legislation.

I also have to thank members of the sportsmen's community, members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, and in particular, Congressmen DUNCAN from South Carolina and WITTMAN, BOREN, MICHAUD, and BONNER, and my counterparts in the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus leadership—that would be Congressmen ROSS, LATTA,

and SHULER—for all their efforts to help advance this legislation in a bipartisan effort.

Today, I join my colleagues in support of H.R. 2706, which is the Billfish Conservation Act of 2012.

As the chairman has already said, the United States is the largest importer of billfish products in the world. Our populations continue to be affected by foreign commercial overfishing, and the importing of billfish only exacerbates the problem that exists today.

Without passage of this bill and strengthening of the current ban of the Atlantic-caught billfish to include the sale and harvest of all billfish—excluding, as has been already said on the floor today, those fisheries in the State of Hawaii and Pacific insular area—the current ban will continue to be undermined through loopholes that have hurt our anglers and the economy.

By eliminating the sale in the continental U.S., passage of this bill will support the billfish population growth, a healthy ocean ecosystem, and improve recreational fishing opportunities. As a result of the increased recreational fishing opportunities, this bill provides a huge economic boost to generate billions of dollars through direct expenditures and marine-related jobs and sales without placing a burden on the U.S. seafood market and its consumers.

I want to urge all my colleagues to support this very important piece of legislation to help conserve a very depleted fish population, preserving our Nation's fishing heritage, and provide for economic growth during a time when our country needs it most.

Mr. HOLT. May I ask the chairman if he has additional speakers?

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I have no more requests for time. If the gentleman yields back, I'm prepared to yield back.

Mr. HOLT. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield back the balance of my time and urge adoption of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2706, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTH TEXAS ZEBRA MUSSEL BARRIER ACT OF 2012

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6007) to exempt from the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain water transfers by the North Texas Municipal Water District and the Greater Texoma Utility Authority, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6007

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 "North Texas Zebra Mussel Barrier Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. COMPLIANCE WITH LACEY ACT.

The Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.) and section 42 of title 18, United States Code, shall not apply with respect to any water transfer by the North Texas Municipal Water District and the Greater Texoma Utility Authority using only closed conveyance systems from the Lake Texoma raw water intake structure to treatment facilities at which all zebra mussels are extirpated and removed from the water transferred.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Chairman RALPH HALL's bill to provide relief to 1.6 million people living in the Dallas/Fort Worth area necessitated because of a bizarre set of circumstances.

In 1989, the North Texas Municipal Water District constructed a pumping station in Lake Texoma, providing up to 125 million gallons per day of safe drinking water to one of the most rapidly growing regions in the country, the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Sometime later, the enactment of a boundary adjustment resulted in a small portion of the pumping station being shifted from Texas to Oklahoma. In 2009, zebra mussels were discovered in the lake. This has caused a significant problem because it is in violation of the Lacey Act to transport zebra mussels across State lines.

So, to resolve this, the Water District has proposed to construct a \$300 million, 46-mile closed pipeline that will transport Lake Texoma water to its treatment facility in Wylie, Texas. All zebra mussels will then be destroyed there, and the entire effort will be accomplished without any cost to Federal taxpayers.

This project was issued a section 404 Clean Water Act permit in May, and it was supported by the U.S. Wildlife Service district office in Arlington, Texas. However, as happens so many times, the Washington, D.C., head-

quarters of Fish and Wildlife is not so supportive and has suggested what it describes as a nonlegislative solution: an agreement with the Justice Department not to prosecute North Texas Municipal Water District for transporting zebra mussels.

Now, just think about this, Mr. Speaker. As someone who believes that we are a Nation of law, I am deeply troubled by the notion that a Federal agency would suggest that it would not seek to prosecute, under the law, those who may violate the law. I just think that's the wrong approach, and this approach is the right approach.

So I urge adoption of H.R. 6007, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6007, the North Texas Zebra Mussel Barrier Act, provides a very specific and necessary—we believe—exemption to the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981.

The Lacey Act is vital to our Nation's interests because it prevents the spread of undesirable, injurious species such as zebra mussels. In fact, zebra mussels may be a textbook example, a poster child for injurious introduced species.

These mussels are the bane of many a power plant or municipal water operator. Millions are spent each year just to keep intake and outflow pipes clear of these creatures. They harm our fisheries by crowding out native species and taking all their food, and they're driving many native mussels to extinction.

H.R. 6007 would allow the North Texas Municipal Water District and the Greater Texoma Utility Authority to transport water that contains zebra mussels from the Oklahoma side of Lake Texoma to Texas. However, all the water would be kept in closed conveyance systems, we are assured; and we are further assured that all water would be fully treated, with all zebra mussels being fully removed before being released into any water body. The biologists, the limnologists, the hydrologists, the water engineers assure us of these things.

I do want to emphasize that zebra mussels are pernicious and insidious. I am loathe, and I think many of my colleagues are loathe, to weaken or seek exemption from the Lacey Act, which controls invasive species. However, Texas needs access to this water, and the aforementioned entities have a comprehensive plan for ensuring, we are told, that these water transfers will not cause zebra mussels to spread.

So for these reasons, and with this understanding, I rise in support of H.R. 6007. I do strongly urge that this bill, which is put forward as a remedy for a very difficult and unique situation, should not be used to set any precedent for granting exemptions to the Lacey Act or in any way weakening our protections against invasive species.