

results. I ask Members to support it passage.

Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, there are no further figleaves at the moment on this side, although I must say to the gentleman I find it difficult to picture either Venus or Neptune so attired. Maybe we are immune here.

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

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of a fig leaf-free Congress, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for being here today to manage this bill and for the very important role that he played in supporting this bill to get it here.

I would also like to say to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. STUDDS], I thank him for his very fine cooperation on this and many other bills we have worked on together during his tenure here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2160, the Cooperative Fisheries Management Act. This legislation will reauthorize two important fishery Acts: the Inter-jurisdictional Fisheries Act and the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act.

These two acts have done an exceptional job of getting the States, the Federal Government, non-Federal interests and, in some cases, foreign nations to cooperate in the management of transboundary fishery resources.

Both of these acts use grant money to fund research done by the States, interstate commissions, or other interested parties. This allows us to gain a greater understanding of the resource and improve our management techniques.

By reauthorizing these acts, we are demonstrating our commitment to the survival and longevity of these unique fishery resources. Without cooperative management, these resources will likely become depleted, and some species could become extinct. I think it is important to note that we have reduced authorization levels for both of these programs by almost 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation and I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on H.R. 2160.

□ 1630

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maine [Mr. LONGLEY].

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on behalf of the act. I think the bill authorizes two important fisheries management laws, the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 and the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act. These laws promote, through grant programs, coordination between State and Federal agencies in the management of migrating species of fish.

H.R. 2160, in addition, will allow for the expenditure of already appro-

priated disaster relief money in the Northwest, the Gulf of Mexico, and for a vessel buyout program in New England.

Mr. Speaker, I end my remarks by urging Members to support this bill, but with a particular reference to the very difficult time that many of the fishermen from Maine are having dealing with the depletion of the species and the need to restore our stocks. There is a limited amount that the Federal Government can do, but we are trying to do what we can to provide some relief to the fishermen that are under such distress.

So, again, I compliment my colleagues from Massachusetts on both sides of the aisle for their efforts in support of this legislation.

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that I have no further requests for time, and I note the return of a bipartisan comity down here, and I am tempted to call up a number of other bills but I will resist.

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

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say, in closing, I would like to applaud my colleague from Massachusetts as ranking member of the subcommittee, also in his previous role as chairman of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, a very, very strong advocate of this program and many other programs, both to protect the environment and to assist fishing families. We certainly appreciate the spirit in which he has offered many pro-environmental and pro-fishing pieces of legislation, and we will certainly miss that contribution to the House Chamber when he retires at the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to applaud the effort of our colleague from New Jersey, the chairman of the subcommittee, for the leadership he has shown in bringing this important legislation to the floor. Again, on behalf of the environment, on behalf of States managing coastal areas, I urge all Members to vote for this legislation.

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2160, the Cooperative Fisheries Management Act. Oregon's fishermen and women who have been devastated by plummeting salmon populations will benefit greatly from this bill.

The bill accomplishes three important goals. First, the bill will allow emergency Federal assistance for fishery disasters to be provided directly to the fishers affected. Second, the measure eliminates the current cap which limits the amount of disaster assistance a fisher may receive. And finally, the bill will eliminate the \$100,000 limit on assistance to any individual.

While not a cure for the complex problem of restoring the world-class salmon runs of the Pacific Northwest, this bill will help alleviate some of the hardships felt by displaced fishers. In short, H.R. 2160 helps cut out the road blocks and redtape in the fishing disaster relief program.

In August 1995, we were fortunate enough to receive a multimillion dollar assistance package for Northwest salmon fishers who had been hard-hit by the collapse of fishery resources from the effects of El Nino and drought. Passage of this legislation will ensure that we can distribute these funds in a more efficient manner and gain the most relief per dollar for struggling Northwest fishing communities.

I greatly appreciate the leadership of Chairman YOUNG and Representative STUDDS on this legislation and their willingness to honor the requests of Pacific Northwest legislators like myself to move this bill quickly so that fishers in our districts can benefit immediately from its provisions.

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TORKILDSEN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2160, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

WAIHEE MARSH INCLUSION IN OAHU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1772) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain interests in the Waihee Marsh for inclusion in the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1772

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE INTERESTS FOR INCLUSION IN THE OAHU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX.

(a) AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE.—The Secretary of the Interior may acquire, for inclusion in the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the area known as the Waihee Marsh, located on the northeast coast of the Island of Oahu, Hawaii, consisting of approximately 36 acres (as determined by the Secretary) along both sides of Kamehameha Highway.

(b) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED INTERESTS.—Lands and interests acquired by the United States under this section shall be managed by the Secretary of the Interior as part of the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] and the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. STUDDS] will each be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

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

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak about H.R. 1772, the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex Act, introduced by Congresswoman PATSY MINK. H.R. 1772 would facilitate an agreement to allow the Secretary of the Interior to add 36 acres of wetlands to the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

These wetlands are home to several threatened and endangered species including the Hawaiian stilt, Hawaiian coot, and Hawaiian duck. The wetlands also capture and retain stormwater runoff.

This bill provides protection for the fragile Hawaiian ecosystem and I urge all Members to support it.

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

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

This bill, as the gentleman said, is both without controversy and with merit, which is something we should see around here more often.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield such time as she may consume to its author, the gentlewoman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK].

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for recognizing my presence here today and acknowledging my great State of Hawaii. I want to thank both gentlemen from Massachusetts for according me the opportunity to speak today in support of a very important bill.

It is connected with the whole concept of preserving our environment, and particularly our coastal areas. This bill is a very important component in Hawaii's battle against the endangered species crisis, and I think most people in the House recognize that Hawaii represents the State with the most endangered and threatened species. So it is not simply a matter of pleasure in having this one bill reported today, but the recognition of the total devastation of our unique species that really is in the forefront today through the passage of this bill.

The decline in the critical habitat in my State has escalated over the last 100 years, during massive development and other kinds of activity. So currently we have 222 endangered and threatened species, birds, mammals, plants, and so forth, which represent 23.2 percent of the total national list of all endangered species. So I think that gives Members an idea that this small place on this Earth has suffered this tragedy of the loss of so many unique species.

Today, through the passage of this bill, we hope that one small acreage of only 36 acres in an important area of the Island of Oahu can be preserved and set aside as a wetland for a number of important reasons.

The status of our wetland ecosystems in Hawaii has also degraded to a point where it has declined by 30 percent in

the last 100 years or so, leaving only 15,000 acres of wetland. So the Fish and Wildlife Service has become very concerned about this loss, and although 36 acres is not very much, when we realize that the Fish and Wildlife has only 2,000 acres under its management, we understand how the addition of 36 acres is very important.

The Waihee Marsh wetlands is split already by a major highway that cuts both the ocean fronting portion together with the lands that are inland, and this of course makes it very difficult for preservation. Urban development around the area also has threatened to dispose of this very important wetlands. So this intervention of this bill today and allowing the Secretary of the Interior to establish this unit of 36 acres, together with the existing Oahu National Wildlife Refuge System, is a very important step and we hope that the Secretary of Interior will see fit to do so.

The Fish and Wildlife has long recommended this acquisition. The lands under question are now owned by a private individual, a Florida developer, who has indicated his willingness to sell the property if it is possible for him to obtain like properties in the same vicinity. He alleges that he has intended to be a good neighbor and to be in agriculture.

So the Trust for Public Land that has been an important entity in the State in helping the Federal, State, and local governments to acquire important properties has written a letter, which, Mr. Speaker, I will insert at the end of my statement.

The Trust for Public Land has indicated that they are interested in acquiring the parcel expeditiously and perhaps after doing so to make a contribution of the parcels to the Federal Government. That is to be worked out later. But the interest of the public trust is very important and with their rapid all cash acquisition of the properties promised, we feel that this valuable asset is ready for inclusion into the wildlife system.

So I am very much encouraged by this bill coming to the floor today and, with the support of the Members of this body, we hope that this acquisition will be made possible. It is an important wetland not only for the purposes of the endangered species, but it is in fact the drainage system for the whole area and, through the wetlands, is sort of a sponge for the sediments and other kinds of floodwaters going through this particular valley. It happens to preserve the quality of Kane'ohe Bay, which is adjoining and a very important asset for all of us.

So with the enactment of this bill, Mr. Speaker, the conservation of this marsh will be applauded by all segments of my community and all government agencies and all political and social, environmental interests. So I commend the committee for giving this House the opportunity to pass this bill and hope that the Members will give it a unanimous accord.

I would like to thank Chairman DON YOUNG and Ranking Member GEORGE MILLER of the Resources Committee, as well as Chair JIM SAXTON and Ranking Member GERRY STUDDS of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Wildlife and Oceans for moving forward my bill H.R. 1772 which is before us today.

My bill, H.R. 1772, represents an important component in Hawaii's battle against its current endangered species crisis. H.R. 1772 aims to preserve the 36-acre Waihee Marsh wetland in Kahaluu, on the Island of Oahu, which the Department of Interior has testified provides habitat to endangered and threatened species including the Hawaiian Stilt, Hawaiian coot, Hawaiian duck, and several migratory birds.

A decline in critical habitat in the State of Hawaii due to escalated development and agricultural activity has led to the listing of 222 endangered and threatened bird, mammal, plant and snail species, 23.2 percent of the national total of 956 listed species. This is despite the fact that Hawaii represents a mere 0.2 percent of the United States in land area. The biggest tragedy is that many species native to the Hawaiian Islands are unique in the world and can never be found anywhere else once populations in Hawaii become extinct.

The last hundred years of human activity in Hawaii has resulted in deterioration of all major ecosystems, according to the Hawaii Heritage Program. Land development and the introduction or the intrusion of non-native vegetation has forced most native ecosystems up into the mountain ranges away from the coastal areas—also from the Waihee Marsh on the northeastern windward coast.

The status of Hawaii's wetland ecosystems in particular is grim, as my State's coastal wetland habitat declined 31 percent between 1880 and 1980, leaving only 15,474 acres of wetland, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service [FWS] in 1990; the wetlands loss in the areas surrounding Waihee Marsh was between 80 and 90 percent. Only 2,000 of the remaining 15,474 areas are currently managed by FWS.

The Waihee Marsh wetland to be protected by H.R. 1772 was split apart by a major highway. The wetland was further threatened in previous years as the subject of several urban development proposals successfully blocked by the Kahaluu Neighborhood Board No. 29, which strongly supports retention of the area's rural character and Federal acquisition.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service identified Waihee Marsh in its 1993 revised Hawaiian Waterbirds Recovery Plan as essential habitat for the recovery of endangered waterbirds. FWS in 1990 identified Waihee Marsh as a priority wetland acquisition site in its Regional Wetlands Concept Plan: Emergency Wetlands Resource Act. FWS reiterated the wetland's significance in its December 15, 1994 Report on the Potential Rehabilitation and Management of the Waihee Wetland.

On July 13, 1994, the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed a resolution requesting action by Hawaii's Congressional Delegation to provide for the acquisition of the Waihee Marsh.

On November 18, 1994, a major parcel of Waihee Marsh was sold to a Florida developer who sought to divide the wetland once again by building an access road directly through the middle of the wetland; however, efforts by State and county government convinced the

landowner to build the road at the parcel's border.

Approached by the Trust for Public Land [TPL] in August, 1995, the landowner expressed interest in selling the parcel, should another parcel of comparable value be made available. TPL this month wrote to the landowner to express willingness to work toward a rapid, all-cash acquisition of the property to preserve the land's valuable natural resources.

Clearly, the range of efforts to conserve Waihee Marsh are wide in scope.

My bill seeks to allow the Secretary of the Interior to acquire and add the Waihee Marsh to the existing Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex managed out of Haleiwa on Oahu. Establishment of a new on-site management office would not be necessary because Haleiwa staff would visit the wetland on a rotating basis, along with the Pearl Harbor and James Campbell National Wildlife Refuges on Oahu and the Kakahaia National Wildlife Refuge on the Island of Molokai.

This palustrine wetland contains bird habitat mainly in its interior, which is subject to prolonged ponding during rainy seasons and overgrown at the edges with introduced vegetation that serves as a buffer for the inner wetlands. Waihee Marsh is also framed by embankments to protect the wetland from surrounding man-made developments.

In addition to having conservation value, the wetland provides flood control for nearby areas of Waihee and Kaalaea. It also captures and retains stormwater runoff to preserve coral ecosystems and water quality of the adjacent Kaneohe Bay.

Passage of my bill will allow FWS to fulfill several management priorities it has recognized, which would restore and maintain Waihee Marsh as a healthy, naturally-functioning wetland: First, dredging of sediments to improve water quality and recreate suitable waterbird habitat, second, predator control to humanely trap cats, mongooses and rats; prevent entry of dogs by fences, and prevent predator access to nesting sites, third, removal of introduced plant species which have overgrown parts of the wetland, and fourth, general habitat improvement to create and maintain a mosaic of waterbird habitats such as shallow mudflats, deeper open water areas, dense vegetative areas and other natural wetland features.

FWS has also found possibilities of educational benefits through establishment of outlooks along the adjacent Kamehameha Highway and student field-trips. Because Waihee Marsh was once farmed by Native Hawaiians, the analysis of archaeological and cultural sites would contribute to the study of Hawaii's indigenous people.

I strongly urge the enactment of H.R. 1772. Conservation of Waihee Marsh has unanimous support from the community, Federal, State, and local government, and environmental interests, and would play an important role in Hawaii's efforts to combat its endangered species crisis.

THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND,
San Francisco, CA, April 22, 1996.

Hon. PATSY MINK,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington,
DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN MINK: I am writing to commend you on your efforts through H.R. 1772 to secure the protection of the important wetland habitat of Waihee Marsh on Oahu.

As you know well, the 36-acre Waihee Marsh area contains some of the last remaining unprotected habitat for the federally listed Hawaiian moorhen and provides critical feeding grounds and nesting cover for a wide diversity of other migratory and residential species. Additionally, the marsh, which is subject to periodic flooding, also provides essential filtration of waters flowing to the coral reefs and estuarine areas of nearby Kaneohe Bay. Public management of this property therefore would not only preserve and enhance the resources of the marsh itself, but will also contribute substantially to the restoration of this larger ecosystem, a major environmental goal towards which your recent work with us (and the federal/state/local investment of over \$6 million) to protect the 2.5 miles of Kaneohe Bay shoreline of the Marks Estate also plays a major role. With the progress to date in this effort, and the current threat of incompatible activity and development at Waihee Marsh, the time is right for consideration of H.R. 1772.

As you also know, the Trust for Public Land is prepared to take an active role, to the extent we can, in assisting in the acquisition of these private lands if such assistance is necessary. In any event, we appreciate the commitment and leadership you have shown in this effort, and look forward to the ultimate preservation of this vital wetland area.

Sincerely,

ALAN FRONT,
Vice President.

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, I second the remarks of the gentlewoman from Hawaii, all of Hawaii except for Honolulu.

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

Mr. SEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentlewoman on the fine job she has done in putting this bill together and in helping us to bring it to the floor.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for H.R. 1772, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain interests in the Waihee Marsh for inclusion in the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge, introduced by my colleague from Hawaii, Representative PATSY MINK.

The Waihee Marsh, also called the Kahalu'u wetland, is located on the windward side of Oahu. Acquisition of Waihee Marsh is vital to the integrity of the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge [Refuge]. The purpose of the refuge is to protect and manage a network of wetlands throughout Oahu for the recovery of endangered waterbirds, migratory birds, and other values of natural wetlands. Specifically, Waihee Marsh is identified as a priority wetland site in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's regional wetlands concept plan: Emergency Wetlands Resource Act [USFWS 1990]. Throughout Hawaii there has been a substantial cumulative loss of wetlands.

I would like to point out to my colleagues in the House that the natural environment of Hawaii is one of our planet's most significant treasures. The islands are home to more unique species than any place of similar size on the Earth. Yet, Hawaii has the most alarming concentration of species teetering on the brink of extinction. While Hawaii makes up only 0.2 percent of the land area we account for nearly 75 percent of the Nation's historically documented plant and bird extinctions of the United States. Currently, more than one-

fourth of the 959 animals and plants on the U.S. endangered and threatened species list come from Hawaii.

Under H.R. 1772 Waihee Marsh would be rehabilitated and managed for the recovery and support of endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, such as the endangered Hawaiian Stilt, Hawaiian coot, Hawaiian moorhen and Hawaiian duck, which are all protected under the Endangered Species Act. Also, wetlands in Hawaii provide habitat for several species of migratory shorebirds and waterfowl which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

I want to mention to my colleagues that the importance of Waihee Marsh is not limited to plants and animals. This has been an issue that has been worked from the grassroots. I commend all the hard work put in by the local communities. The Waihee Marsh is important for the surrounding communities because it naturally serves as a flood control holding area and the vegetation contributes to the control of shoreline erosion for nearby residential areas. Also, the marsh serves as a filter to protect water quality and coral reef communities in Kaneohe Bay.

Mr. Speaker, this is a worthwhile piece of legislation that deserves the full support of all my colleagues.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1772, introduced by our colleague from Hawaii, PATSY MINK, to add some 36 acres of wetlands to the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge complex.

It is my understanding that these wetlands are essential habitat for a number of native Hawaiian birds and migratory waterfowl.

While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has apparently been interested in acquiring the entire Waihee Marsh wetlands for a number of years, the purchase costs have been prohibitive.

This bill will simply tell the Secretary of the Interior that he may obtain these lands for inclusion in the refuge without providing any money to buy them.

While I intend to support H.R. 1772, I do so with the stipulation that if these wetlands are purchased by the Federal Government, all private property owners must be willing sellers and they must be fully compensated for their land interests.

I urge an "aye" vote on H.R. 1772.

Mr. SEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SEXTON] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1772, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. SEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

AMAGANSETT NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill