

SEC. 204. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES.

(a) *FISCAL YEAR 1999 APPROPRIATIONS.*—Of the amounts made available by appropriations for fiscal year 1999 for the Bureau of Reclamation, \$1,000,000 shall be used for the purpose of commencing the MR&I feasibility study under section 202 and the regional study under section 203, of which—

(1) \$500,000 shall be used for the MR&I study under section 202; and

(2) \$500,000 shall be used for the regional study under section 203.

(b) *FEASIBILITY STUDIES.*—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior, for the Bureau of Reclamation, for the purpose of conducting the MR&I feasibility study under section 202 and the regional study under section 203, \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2000, of which—

(1) \$500,000 shall be used for the MR&I feasibility study under section 202; and

(2) \$2,500,000 shall be used for the regional study under section 203.

(c) *WITHOUT FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION.*—All money appropriated pursuant to authorizations under this title shall be available without fiscal year limitation.

(d) *AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN MONEYS.*—The amounts made available for use under subsection (a) shall be deemed to have been available for use as of the date on which those funds were appropriated. The amounts authorized to be appropriated in subsection (b) shall be available for use immediately upon appropriation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

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

Madam Speaker, the Rocky Boy's water rights settlement process has been important for a number of reasons. The gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), the State of Montana, and the tribe have spent a good deal of time working through the issues in a constructive fashion, taking steps to minimize the impact on other affected water users. Furthermore, there has been minimal emphasis on some of the outmoded bases for calculating Federal Reserve Indian water right claims. This process has allowed the parties to look to newer, more flexible negotiations that find solutions which provide tribes with real opportunities without making demands that may destroy the economic livelihood of existing water users.

Additionally, this process has brought new solutions and introduced private sector expertise into the tribe's efforts to utilize these water supplies once the settlement is authorized. By approaching these Indian water right settlements in more creative ways, Congress and the Federal Government can narrow the divergent expectations of the parties as they enter negotiations and attempt to correct problems that have existed for decades. It is important for Congress to modernize the process and bases for settling these claims. It is taking far too long to arrive at a settlement. Often tribes receive water and money under cir-

cumstances that do not ultimately help them realize the benefits of the broader economy. It is the intention that this settlement will help the tribe reach their goal of self-determination. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. I commend my good friend, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), for his hard, hard work on this legislation. It balances all the interests so very carefully, and I commend him for bringing it to this point.

This legislation provides for a comprehensive settlement of the water rights claims of the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation in Montana. Under the terms of this legislation, Congress would approve and authorize participation in a water rights compact entered into by the tribe and the State of Montana. The compact recognizes the tribe's rights to approximately 10,000 acre feet of water on the reservation, and provides for specific water development projects and funding to benefit the tribe.

The future water rights of the tribe are also provided for in this bill. The Chippewa Cree Tribe, the State of Montana, and representatives from the Department of Interior have worked very, very hard for many years to secure agreement on this water rights settlement.

Again, the work of the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) has brought this to a culmination. H.R. 795 provides an opportunity to ratify the first Indian water settlement since the early 1990s, and I urge my colleagues to support enactment of this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), the distinguished author of the legislation.

(Mr. HILL of Montana asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL of Montana. Madam Speaker, as the sponsor of this bill, I rise in strong support of H.R. 795, the Chippewa Cree Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act, which is a companion to a bill in the Senate, 438. I especially want to thank the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) and his staff Bob Faber and Josh Johnson for their tireless efforts to work with all the parties involved that has allowed us to move this important piece of legislation.

This bill is the culmination of many years of technical and legal work and many years of negotiations involving the Chippewa Cree Tribe, the State of

Montana and representatives of the United States Departments of Interior and Justice. The bill will ratify a settlement that quantifies the water rights of the tribe and provides for the development in a manner that would be consistent with their neighbors, the needs of the local communities and farmers and ranchers. It provides Federal funds for construction of water supply facilities and for tribal economic development and defines the Federal Government's role in implementing that settlement. This settlement bill has the full support of the tribe, the State of Montana, the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior and the water users who farm and ranch on streams shared with the reservation.

This bill will effectuate a settlement that is a textbook example of how State, tribal and Federal governments can work together to resolve that difference in a way that meets the concerns of all. It is also a settlement that reflects the effectiveness of tribal and nontribal water users in working together in goodwill and in good faith with respect to each other's needs and concerns.

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It is not an overstatement to say that the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation Indian Reserved Water Rights Settlement and Water Supply Enhancement Act is a historic agreement. This is truly a great occasion for all those who have worked so hard to get us to this point.

In closing, again, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman DOLITTLE), the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG), and the House leadership for scheduling the bill today. I also want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for his cosponsorship and helping to move this bill forward and urge its adoption.

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

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote; I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 795, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA AMENDMENTS

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2140) to improve protection and management of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2140

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia is a nationally significant resource;

(2) the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area has been adversely affected by land use changes occurring inside and outside the recreation area;

(3) the population of the metropolitan Atlanta area continues to expand northward, leaving dwindling opportunities to protect the scenic, recreational, natural, and historical values of the 2,000-foot-wide corridor adjacent to each bank of the Chattahoochee River and its impoundments in the 48-mile segment known as the "area of national concern";

(4) the State of Georgia has enacted the Metropolitan River Protection Act to ensure protection of the corridor located within 2,000 feet of each bank of the Chattahoochee River, or the corridor located within the 100-year floodplain, whichever is larger;

(5) the corridor located within the 100-year floodplain includes the area of national concern;

(6) since establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, visitor use of the recreation area has shifted dramatically from waterborne to water-related and land-based activities;

(7) the State of Georgia and political subdivisions of the State along the Chattahoochee River have indicated willingness to join in a cooperative effort with the United States to link existing units of the recreation area through a series of linear corridors to be established within the area of national concern and elsewhere on the river; and

(8) if Congress appropriates funds in support of the cooperative effort described in paragraph (7), funding from the State, political subdivisions of the State, private foundations, corporate entities, private individuals, and other sources will be available to fund more than half the estimated cost of the cooperative effort.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to increase the level of protection of the open spaces within the area of national concern along the Chattahoochee River and to enhance visitor enjoyment of the open spaces by adding land-based linear corridors to link existing units of the recreation area;

(2) to ensure that the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area is managed to standardize acquisition, planning, design, construction, and operation of the linear corridors; and

(3) to authorize the appropriation of Federal funds to cover a portion of the costs of the Federal, State, local, and private cooperative effort to add additional areas to the recreation area so as to establish a series of linear corridors linking existing units of the recreation area and to protect other open spaces of the Chattahoochee River corridor.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ACT.

(a) BOUNDARIES.—Section 101 of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes", approved August 15, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460ii), is amended—

(1) in the third sentence, by inserting after "numbered CHAT-20,003, and dated September 1984," the following: "and on the maps entitled 'Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Interim Boundary Map #1', 'Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Interim Boundary Map #2', and 'Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Interim Boundary Map #3', and dated August 6, 1998,";

(2) by striking the fourth sentence and inserting the following: "No sooner than 180 days after the date of enactment of this sentence, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the 'Secretary') may modify the boundaries of the recreation area to include other land within the Chattahoochee River corridor by submitting a revised map or other boundary description to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate and the Committee on Resources of the United States House of Representatives. The revised map or other boundary description shall be prepared by the Secretary after consultation with affected landowners, the State of Georgia, and affected political subdivisions of the State. The revised boundaries shall take effect 180 days after the date of submission unless, within the 180-day period, Congress enacts a joint resolution disapproving the revised boundaries.";

(3) in the next-to-last sentence, by striking "may not exceed approximately 6,800 acres." and inserting "may not exceed 10,000 acres.".

(b) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—Section 102 of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes", approved August 15, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460ii-1), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting "from willing sellers" after "purchase"; and

(2) by striking subsection (f).

(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—Section 103 of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes", approved August 15, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460ii-2), is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Georgia, political subdivisions of the State, and other entities to ensure standardized acquisition, planning, design, construction, and operation of the recreation area."

(d) FUNDING.—Section 105 of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes", approved August 15, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460ii-4), is amended—

(1) by striking "SEC. 105. (a)" and inserting the following:

"SEC. 105. FUNDING SOURCES AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.

"(a) FUNDING.—

"(1) LIMITATION ON USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.—"

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking "\$79,400,000" and inserting "\$115,000,000";

(B) by striking "this Act" and inserting "this title"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) DONATIONS.—The Secretary may accept a donation of funds or land or an interest in land to carry out this title.

"(3) RELATION TO OTHER FUNDING SOURCES.—Funds made available under paragraph (1) are in addition to funding and the donation of land and interests in land by the State of Georgia, local government authorities, private foundations, corporate entities, and individuals for purposes of this title."; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(B) by striking "(c) Within" and inserting the following:

"(c) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

"(1) INITIAL PLAN.—Within";

(C) in paragraph (1) (as designated by subparagraph (B)), by striking "transmit to" and all that follows through "Representatives" and inserting "transmit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives"; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) REVISED PLAN.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Within 3 years after the date funds are made available, the Secretary shall submit to the committees specified in paragraph (1) a revised general management plan to provide for the protection, enhancement, enjoyment, development, and use of the recreation area.

"(B) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—In preparing the revised plan, the Secretary shall encourage the participation of the State of Georgia and affected political subdivisions of the State, private landowners, interested citizens, public officials, groups, agencies, educational institutions, and other entities."

(e) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—Title I of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize the establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes", approved August 15, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 460ii et seq.), is amended—

(1) in sections 102(d) and 103(a), by striking "of this Act" and inserting "of this title";

(2) in section 104(b)—

(A) by striking "of this Act" and inserting "of this title";

(B) by striking "under this Act" and inserting "under this title";

(C) by striking "by this Act" and inserting "by this title"; and

(D) by striking "in this Act" and inserting "in this title";

(3) in section 104(d)(2), by striking "under this Act" and inserting "under this title";

(4) in section 105(c)(1)(A), as redesignated by subsection (d)(3), by striking "of this Act" and inserting "of this title";

(5) in section 106(a), by striking "in this Act" and inserting "in this title"; and

(6) in section 106(d), by striking "under this Act" and inserting "under this title".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2140, introduced by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) is to be commended for crafting a bill which amends the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Act by modifying the boundaries of the area and to provide for the lands, waters, and scenic resources, and to provide protection for these within the recreation area.

Visitor enjoyment and protection of the river would be enhanced by adding land-based links between current units of the national recreation area. This bill also assures the recreation area is managed by forming cooperative agreements with State, local, and other entities.

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area attracts thousands of visitors year-round. The recreation area has seen a substantial increase in use, becoming one of the most visited national recreation areas in the country.

H.R. 2140 will also enhance the protection for the scenic and recreational values of the Chattahoochee River corridor from developmental pressures.

I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, H.R. 2140 modifies the boundaries of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area with the intention of providing for the inclusion of land within 2,000 feet of each bank of the Chattahoochee River on a 48-mile segment in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia.

At the hearing on H.R. 2140 on July 20, 1999, the National Park Service testified in support of the legislation as introduced, with one technical change. As amended by the Committee on Resources, one substantive change and a number of technical and conforming changes have been made to the bill. The one substantive change is the new requirement that land could only be acquired on a willing-seller basis.

As the National Park Service noted in its testimony, there are cases of potentially severe and irreparable damage to resources that can only be prevented through the use of eminent domain. Given that rapid development and urbanization of the area, threats to these resources are a real danger.

The National Park Service also noted that, although eminent domain authority at Chattahoochee currently exists, it has never been used, and the National Park Service hopes it never will be. By tying the National Park Service's hands on acquisitions, we could open up the area to developers and speculators who can name their price with no recourse.

However, Madam Speaker, overall, H.R. 2140 is a good bill, and I would hate to see the bill hung up on this point. I understand that the Senate companion legislation has language on this point that the administration supports. Hopefully, this can be resolved so action on the measure can be completed and a bill sent to the President that has the support of all parties.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill, H.R. 2140. This legislation would modify the boundaries of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area to protect and preserve the endangered Chattahoochee River and provide additional recreation opportunities for the citizens of Georgia and our nation. The river and its corridor lands are a vital source of water for the City of Atlanta, and more broadly for all of north Georgia. The area hosts diverse wildlife, significant natural communities and irreplaceable historic resources in the midst of one of America's most vibrant urban areas. It also affords a recreational haven for the millions of visitors each year to the dozen or so non-contiguous parkland areas that together comprise the Chattahoochee Recreation Area.

Congress established the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in 1978 to preserve and protect the natural, scenic, recreational, historic, and other values of a 48-

mile segment of one of our nation's great urban rivers. Six years later, in 1984, as development around and within the recreation area increased, Congress acted to facilitate State and local government efforts to protect the area by declaring the 2,000-foot-wide corridor adjacent to each bank of the Chattahoochee as an area of national concern. Now, due to the rapid pace of commercial and residential development in the Chattahoochee River corridor, I believe it is absolutely essential that we pass this legislation in order to provide additional protection for this important resource. I have sought to continue former Speaker Gingrich's efforts to preserve the Chattahoochee River by funding the Chattahoochee Greenways Project, which will keep land on the banks of the river from further development and help clean up the waterway.

This legislation is essential because over the years there has been a shift from largely water-based to land-based use of the park by visitors to the area, thereby contributing to a need for a larger land base for recreation. H.R. 2140 would expand the recreation area and protecting most of the remaining open spaces along the river corridor. The goal of the legislation is to create as much of an uninterrupted stretch of land as possible along the river banks in order to meet increased demand for recreational opportunities by communities along the river.

This legislation also promotes private-public partnerships since Congress appropriated \$25 million for land acquisition along the Chattahoochee last year and this will be matched by private funds. Remarkable cooperative efforts are currently underway to protect key lands in the corridor of Georgia's Chattahoochee River from Buford Dam to the Florida border. Thanks to the tireless efforts and leadership of the Trust for Public Land, the State of Georgia, private foundations, corporate entities, private individuals, and others have already given or pledged tens of millions of dollars to secure properties of public significance within the current authorized boundaries of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and to preserve the river for future generations of Georgians to enjoy.

I would like to thank Representative NATHAN DEAL for introducing this important legislation and his efforts to protect one of Georgia's most indispensable natural resources. I am grateful for past efforts of Governor Zell Miller, Lt. Governor Pierre Howard, and for the efforts of other members of the Georgia delegation and Congress at large in support of this important legislation. I believe Congress must act fast to enact this legislation in order to protect the Chattahoochee River from any further development and environmental damage.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Madam Speaker, for the consideration on the floor today of an issue important to the State of Georgia and myself. H.R. 2140 is legislation I introduced earlier this year to improve the protection and management of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was established August 15, 1978, and boundary adjustments were made in October 1984. The recreation area is along a 48-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River within four counties, north and northeast of Atlanta, Georgia. The area immediately adjacent to the park is being heavily developed, and Forsyth County (which I represent) is the fastest grow-

ing county in the United States. The park currently contains about 9,238 acres of which approximately 4,500 are Federally owned. Presently, the park includes thirteen separate land units. Popular recreational activities in the park include fishing, hiking, picnicking, canoeing, rafting, tubing, and boating. It also contains a number of natural habitats, 19th century historic sites and ruins, as well as Native American archaeological sites. Annual visitation is about 3.5 million visitors.

My legislation would modify the boundaries of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area and authorize the creation of a greenway buffer between the river and private development to prevent further pollution, provide flood and erosion control, and maintain water quality for safe drinking water and for the fish and wildlife dependent on the river system. In addition, this legislation promotes private-public partnerships by authorizing \$25 million in federal funds for land acquisition for the recreation area. The \$25 million will be matched by private funds. The State of Georgia, private foundations, corporate entities, private individual, and others have already given or pledged tens of millions of dollars to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee river for future generations of Georgians to enjoy. At the same time, it includes an "any willing seller" provision to protect private property rights of landowners.

Last year, in anticipation of passage of this legislation, Congress made available \$25 million for land acquisition in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. That funding is serving to leverage state, local government, and private funding to further augment land purchases in the recreation area. However, legislative authority expanding the boundaries is needed before the additional land can be purchased. We can help preserve one of Georgia's most vital natural resources by enacting H.R. 2140.

Similar legislation was introduced in the House and Senate during the 105th Congress. As most of you know, the House passed the legislation in October 1998, however the Senate did not act on the measure.

During this Congress, Senator COVERDELL introduced the companion bill to H.R. 2140 (S. 109), and the bill was reported on June 7, 1999 by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. I believe it is crucial for the House to act quickly on this legislation in order to protect the Chattahoochee River from further development and environmental damage.

Again, thank you Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Resources Committee members and staff for all the help they provided with H.R. 2140. I would also like to thank Representative ISAKSON for his assistance in protecting one of Georgia's most vital, natural resources.

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

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2140, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS
CONSERVATION COUNCIL EXPAN-
SION ACT OF 1999

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2821) to amend the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to provide for appointment of 2 additional members of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2821

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 American Wetlands Conservation Council Expansion Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL.

(a) **ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.**—Section 4(a)(1) of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4403(a)(1)) is amended by striking "nine" and inserting "eleven".

(b) **APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.**—Section 4(a)(1)(D) of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4403(a)(1)(D)) is amended by striking "three" and inserting "five".

(c) **INITIAL TERMS.**—Of the members of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council first appointed under the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b)—

(1) one shall be appointed to an initial term of 1 year; and

(2) one shall be appointed to an initial term of 2 years,

as specified by the Secretary of the Interior at the time of appointment.

(d) **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS.**—Except as provided in subsection (e), this section shall not affect section 304 of the Wetlands and Wildlife Enhancement Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2958; 16 U.S.C. 4403 note).

(e) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 304 of the Wetlands and Wildlife Enhancement Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2958; 16 U.S.C. 4403 note) is amended by striking "shall consist of" and inserting "shall include".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House H.R. 2821, introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON).

The fundamental goal of this legislation is to diversify and expand the effectiveness of the North American Wetlands Council by increasing from three to five the number of nongovernmental

representatives that may serve on that body.

Under current law, there are nine members, including the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who serve on the Wetlands Council. Their job is to review and recommend worthwhile conservation projects to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

To date, the commission has approved 714 projects to protect, restore, and enhance critical wetland habitat in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. This represents a financial commitment of \$310.8 million that has been matched by more than 900 nongovernmental partners, for a total investment of \$798.5 million. These funds have been used to conserve over 33 million acres of wetlands which directly benefit millions of migratory birds.

By expanding the membership of the Wetlands Council, two additional conservation groups would be given a seat at the table, and they would bring with them their commitment to accelerate the growth of this extremely successful program.

H.R. 2821 is a noncontroversial and bipartisan bill that has been authored by the two House Members who serve with distinction on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

I urge an "aye" vote on this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, the council established under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act has made tremendous positive impact in helping to restore and conserve wetlands across the North American continent. Projects supported by the council help to preserve wetlands and provide crucial forage and resting habitats for migratory birds, not only in our Nation, but also in Canada and Mexico.

H.R. 2821 would simply add two additional nongovernmental seats to the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, thereby increasing the size of the council from 9 to 11 members in total. There would be no increase in the current number of two permanent seats in the council, which are reserved for the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the executive secretary of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

It is my understanding from the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) that this increase in nongovernmental seats is considered an appropriate step in order to provide new opportunities for public participation on the council by a broader number of charitable and nongovernmental organizations. Furthermore, it is my understanding that the administration does not oppose this increase in seats.

As such, the bill appears to be straightforward and noncontroversial.

Since the only intention of this bill is to increase the number of opportunities for nonprofit participation in the council, I strongly support this legislation.

By all measures, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council has proven itself to be a very effective and strong advocate for wetlands conservation and restoration. I believe most, if not all, Members of this House can agree that the modest increase in nonprofit seats proposed by this legislation would be a positive enhancement to this extremely successful council. I urge all members to vote "aye" on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), one of the principal sponsors of the legislation.

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) for yielding me this time, and let me thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for his help in getting this bill to the floor today.

I rise to pay a very appropriate thanks to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), author of this legislation.

I have had the pleasure for the past several sessions of the Congress representing the Republican side of the aisle on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, where the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) has had a tremendous career in providing leadership to this body for preserving fly-away space for the migratory birds in North America.

Madam Speaker, there is no other program that I can think of that enjoys such bipartisan support in voluntarily protecting land for birds and for wildlife and habitat.

We in this body tend to get in disagreements from time to time over the issue of takings and over the issue of forcing property owners to make their land available for the public. Well, this program is the exact opposite.

The father of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), if I am not mistaken, was the initiator of this entire program decades ago. This program, started by the father of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), and supported by the late Silvey Oconte, who were both tireless advocates for conservation issues in America, has provided the ability of our Government to protect over 34 million acres of land, 34 million acres of land, without taking anyone's property without their consent, but by simply entering into agreements where we bring conservation groups together so they can use the leverage to provide other funds, matched in such cases by State and local governments, to protect this land for migratory birds.