

(5) many people view the expedition that settled on the Island in 1604 as the beginning of the Acadian culture in North America;

(6) in October, 1998, the National Park Service completed a general management plan to manage and interpret the Saint Croix Island International Historic Site;

(7) the plan addresses a variety of management alternatives, and concludes that the best management strategy entails developing an interpretive trail and ranger station at Red Beach, Maine, and a regional heritage center in downtown Calais, Maine, in cooperation with Federal, State, and local agencies;

(8) a 1982 memorandum of understanding, signed by the Department of the Interior and the Canadian Department for the Environment, outlines a cooperative program to commemorate the international heritage of the Saint Croix Island site and specifically to prepare for the 400th anniversary of the settlement in 2004; and

(9) only 4 years remain before the 400th anniversary of the settlement at Saint Croix Island, an occasion that should be appropriately commemorated.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take all necessary and appropriate steps to work with Federal, State, and local agencies, historical societies, and nonprofit organizations to facilitate the development of a regional heritage center in downtown Calais, Maine before the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Saint Croix Island.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ISLAND.**—The term "Island" means Saint Croix Island, located in the Saint Croix River, between Canada and the State of Maine.

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 4. SAINT CROIX ISLAND REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTER.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide assistance in planning, constructing, and operating a regional heritage center in downtown Calais, Maine, to facilitate the management and interpretation of the Saint Croix Island International Historic Site.

(b) **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.**—To carry out subsection (a), in administering the Saint Croix Island International Historic Site, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements under appropriate terms and conditions with other Federal agencies, State and local agencies and nonprofit organizations—

(1) to provide exhibits, interpretive services (including employing individuals to provide such services), and technical assistance;

(2) to conduct activities that facilitate the dissemination of information relating to the Saint Croix Island International Historic Site;

(3) to provide financial assistance for the construction of the regional heritage center in exchange for space in the center that is sufficient to interpret the Saint Croix Island International Historic Site; and

(4) to assist with the operation and maintenance of the regional heritage center.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) **DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act (including the design and construction of the regional heritage center) \$2,000,000.

(2) **EXPENDITURE.**—Paragraph (1) authorizes funds to be appropriated on the condition that any expenditure of those funds shall be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by funds from non-Federal sources.

(b) **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.**—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to maintain and operate interpretive exhibits in the regional heritage center.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Pursuant to House Resolution 663, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 2485, the St. Croix Island Heritage Act. This bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in planning and constructing a Regional Heritage Center in Calais, Maine.

St. Croix Island is located in the St. Croix River between Maine and Canada. It is the only international historic site in the national park system. In 1604, the French landed on the island and began construction of a settlement, which became the first permanent settlement in the New World. In October 1998, the National Park Service completed a general management plan to manage and interpret the St. Croix Island international historic site. In the year 2004, the U.S. and Canada will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the settlement of the St. Croix Island. This bill will facilitate the development of a Regional Heritage Center in downtown Calais, Maine, to be a central focus point for this celebration.

The bill authorizes \$2 million for the planning and construction of the heritage center and requires a dollar-for-dollar match by non-Federal sources. I believe that this bill has merit, and I support its passage.

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 2485 is a noncontroversial bill that authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to assist in the construction of a Regional Heritage Center on St. Croix Island. St. Croix Island is located in the middle of the St. Croix River, which forms the boundary between the United States and Canada. The proposed heritage center will be built as part of the upcoming 400th anniversary of the settlement of St. Croix Island.

The National Park Service administers the St. Croix Island international historic site on the island. The proposed heritage center is consistent with Park Service plans for interpretation of the historic site and the island.

The Secretary is authorized to contribute \$2 million toward the construction of the heritage center, provided that each Federal dollar is matched by funds from non-Federal sources.

A House companion measure was introduced by the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI).

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Republican leadership hastily sandwiched a minimum wage increase into its tax bill, that was so poorly written it repealed the minimum wage for six months. Today, they are using the bill before us to correct this major error. Perhaps, if they had only chosen to work in a bipartisan way to craft their tax bill, a sloppy mistake like this could have been avoided. The Republican leadership chose, instead, to push through a bill that was all their own, that is destined for a veto because it is full of bad policy and tax benefits for their special interest friends. The tax bill is being used by the Republican leadership to claim they are for increasing the minimum wage, when they are really not. They knew that by tying it to a doomed tax bill, it could not become law. The Democrats in this Congress, on the other hand, strongly support a \$1 increase in the minimum wage and would take effective action to make it happen. We rejected the Republican's scheme, which now requires a quick fix in order to maintain the illusion they sought to create. Let's do the right thing for American Workers and pass a real minimum wage increase now!

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

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

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

The Senate bill is considered as having been read for amendment.

Pursuant to House Resolution 663, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the third reading of the Senate bill.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken tomorrow.

PRIBILOF ISLANDS TRANSITION ACT

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1653) to approve a governing international fishery agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1653

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

TITLE I—PRIBILOF ISLANDS

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be referred to as the "Pribilof Islands Transition Act".

SEC. 102. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this title is to complete the orderly withdrawal of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from the civil administration of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

SEC. 103. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIBILOF ISLANDS UNDER FUR SEAL ACT OF 1966.

Public Law 89-702 (16 U.S.C. 1151 et seq.), popularly known and referred to in this title as the Fur Seal Act of 1966, is amended by amending section 206 (16 U.S.C. 1166) to read as follows:

“SEC. 206. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

“(a) GRANT AUTHORITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall provide financial assistance to any city government, village corporation, or tribal council of St. George, Alaska, or St. Paul, Alaska.

“(2) USE FOR MATCHING.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law relating to matching funds, funds provided by the Secretary as assistance under this subsection may be used by the entity as non-Federal matching funds under any Federal program that requires such matching funds.

“(3) RESTRICTION ON USE.—The Secretary may not use financial assistance authorized by this Act—

“(A) to settle any debt owed to the United States;

“(B) for administrative or overhead expenses; or

“(C) for contributions sought or required from any person for costs or fees to clean up any matter that was caused or contributed to by such person on or after March 15, 2000.

“(4) FUNDING INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES.—In providing assistance under this subsection the Secretary shall transfer any funds appropriated to carry out this section to the Secretary of the Interior, who shall obligate such funds through instruments and procedures that are equivalent to the instruments and procedures required to be used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs pursuant to title IV of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.).

“(5) PRO RATA DISTRIBUTION OF ASSISTANCE.—In any fiscal year for which less than all of the funds authorized under subsection (c)(1) are appropriated, such funds shall be distributed under this subsection on a pro rata basis among the entities referred to in subsection (c)(1) in the same proportions in which amounts are authorized by that subsection for grants to those entities.

“(b) SOLID WASTE ASSISTANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall provide assistance to the State of Alaska for designing, locating, constructing, redeveloping, permitting, or certifying solid waste management facilities on the Pribilof Islands to be operated under permits issued to the City of St. George and the City of St. Paul, Alaska, by the State of Alaska under section 46.03.100 of the Alaska Statutes.

“(2) TRANSFER.—The Secretary shall transfer any appropriations received under paragraph (1) to the State of Alaska for the benefit of rural and Native villages in Alaska for obligation under section 303 of Public Law 104-182, except that subsection (b) of that section shall not apply to those funds.

“(3) LIMITATION.—In order to be eligible to receive financial assistance under this subsection, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, each of the Cities of St. Paul and St. George shall enter into a written agreement with the State of Alaska under which such City shall identify by its legal boundaries the tract or

tracts of land that such City has selected as the site for its solid waste management facility and any supporting infrastructure.

“(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005—

“(1) for assistance under subsection (a) a total not to exceed—

“(A) \$9,000,000, for grants to the City of St. Paul;

“(B) \$6,300,000, for grants to the Tanadgusix Corporation;

“(C) \$1,500,000, for grants to the St. Paul Tribal Council;

“(D) \$6,000,000, for grants to the City of St. George;

“(E) \$4,200,000, for grants to the St. George Tanaq Corporation; and

“(F) \$1,000,000, for grants to the St. George Tribal Council; and

“(2) for assistance under subsection (b), for fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 a total not to exceed—

“(A) \$6,500,000 for the City of St. Paul; and

“(B) \$3,500,000 for the City of St. George.

“(d) LIMITATION ON USE OF ASSISTANCE FOR LOBBYING ACTIVITIES.—None of the funds authorized by this section may be available for any activity a purpose of which is to influence legislation pending before the Congress, except that this subsection shall not prevent officers or employees of the United States or of its departments, agencies, or commissions from communicating to Members of Congress, through proper channels, requests for legislation or appropriations that they consider necessary for the efficient conduct of public business.

“(e) IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY.—Neither the United States nor any of its agencies, officers, or employees shall have any liability under this Act or any other law associated with or resulting from the designing, locating, contracting for, redeveloping, permitting, certifying, operating, or maintaining any solid waste management facility on the Pribilof Islands as a consequence of—

“(1) having provided assistance to the State of Alaska under subsection (b); or

“(2) providing funds for, or planning, constructing, or operating, any interim solid waste management facilities that may be required by the State of Alaska before permanent solid waste management facilities constructed with assistance provided under subsection (b) are complete and operational.

“(f) REPORT ON EXPENDITURES.—Each entity which receives assistance authorized under subsection (c) shall submit an audited statement listing the expenditure of that assistance to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, on the last day of fiscal years 2002, 2004, and 2006.

“(g) CONGRESSIONAL INTENT.—Amounts authorized under subsection (c) are intended by Congress to be provided in addition to the base funding appropriated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in fiscal year 2000.”.

SEC. 104. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY.

Section 205 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

“(c) Not later than 3 months after the date of the enactment of the Pribilof Islands Transition Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(1) a description of all property specified in the document referred to in subsection (a)

that has been conveyed under that subsection;

“(2) a description of all Federal property specified in the document referred to in subsection (a) that is going to be conveyed under that subsection; and

“(3) an identification of all Federal property on the Pribilof Islands that will be retained by the Federal Government to meet its responsibilities under this Act, the Convention, and any other applicable law.”; and

(2) by striking subsection (g).

SEC. 105. TERMINATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES.

(a) FUTURE OBLIGATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall not be considered to have any obligation to promote or otherwise provide for the development of any form of an economy not dependent on sealing on the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, including any obligation under section 206 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1166) or section 3(c)(1)(A) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note).

(2) SAVINGS.—This subsection shall not affect any cause of action under section 206 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1166) or section 3(c)(1)(A) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note)—

(A) that arose before the date of the enactment of this title; and

(B) for which a judicial action is filed before the expiration of the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this title.

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this title shall be construed to imply that—

(A) any obligation to promote or otherwise provide for the development in the Pribilof Islands of any form of an economy not dependent on sealing was or was not established by section 206 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1166), section 3(c)(1)(A) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note), or any other provision of law; or

(B) any cause of action could or could not arise with respect to such an obligation.

(4) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3(c)(1) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) is amended by striking subparagraph (A) and redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (D) in order as subparagraphs (A) through (C).

(b) PROPERTY CONVEYANCE AND CLEANUP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), there are terminated all obligations of the Secretary of Commerce and the United States to—

(A) convey property under section 205 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165); and

(B) carry out cleanup activities, including assessment, response, remediation, and monitoring, except for postremedial measures such as monitoring and operation and maintenance activities, related to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration administration of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, under section 3 of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) and the Pribilof Islands Environmental Restoration Agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Alaska, signed January 26, 1996.

(2) APPLICATION.—Paragraph (1) shall apply on and after the date on which the Secretary of Commerce certifies that—

(A) the State of Alaska has provided written confirmation that no further corrective action is required at the sites and operable units covered by the Pribilof Islands Environmental Restoration Agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Alaska, signed January 26, 1996, with the exception of postremedial measures, such as monitoring and operation and maintenance activities;

(B) the cleanup required under section 3(a) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) is complete;

(C) the properties specified in the document referred to in subsection (a) of section 205 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165(a)) can be unconditionally offered for conveyance under that section; and

(D) all amounts appropriated under section 206(c)(1) of the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended by this title, have been obligated.

(3) **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CLEANUP COSTS.**—(A) On and after the date on which section 3(b)(5) of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) is repealed pursuant to subsection (c), the Secretary of Commerce may not seek or require financial contribution by or from any local governmental entity of the Pribilof Islands, any official of such an entity, or the owner of land on the Pribilof Islands, for cleanup costs incurred pursuant to section 3(a) of Public Law 104-91 (as in effect before such repeal), except as provided in subparagraph (B).

(B) Subparagraph (A) shall not limit the authority of the Secretary of Commerce to seek or require financial contribution from any person for costs or fees to clean up any matter that was caused or contributed to by such person on or after March 15, 2000.

(4) **CERTAIN RESERVED RIGHTS NOT CONDITIONS.**—For purposes of paragraph (2)(C), the following requirements shall not be considered to be conditions on conveyance of property:

(A) Any requirement that a potential transferee must allow the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration continued access to the property to conduct environmental monitoring following remediation activities.

(B) Any requirement that a potential transferee must allow the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration access to the property to continue the operation, and eventual closure, of treatment facilities.

(C) Any requirement that a potential transferee must comply with institutional controls to ensure that an environmental cleanup remains protective of human health or the environment that do not unreasonably affect the use of the property.

(D) Valid existing rights in the property, including rights granted by contract, permit, right-of-way, or easement.

(E) The terms of the documents described in subsection (d)(2).

(c) **REPEALS.**—Effective on the date on which the Secretary of Commerce makes the certification described in subsection (b)(2), the following provisions are repealed:

(1) Section 205 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1165).

(2) Section 3 of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note).

(d) **SAVINGS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this title shall affect any obligation of the Secretary of Commerce, or of any Federal department or agency, under or with respect to any document described in paragraph (2) or with respect to any lands subject to such a document.

(2) **DOCUMENTS DESCRIBED.**—The documents referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:

(A) The Transfer of Property on the Pribilof Islands: Description, Terms, and Conditions, dated February 10, 1984, between the Secretary of Commerce and various Pribilof Island entities.

(B) The Settlement Agreement between Tanadgusix Corporation and the City of St. Paul, dated January 11, 1988, and approved by the Secretary of Commerce on February 23, 1988.

(C) The Memorandum of Understanding between Tanadgusix Corporation, Tanaq Corporation, and the Secretary of Commerce, dated December 22, 1976.

(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the definitions set forth in section 101 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1151) shall apply to this section.

(2) **NATIVES OF THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS.**—For purposes of this section, the term “Natives of the Pribilof Islands” includes the Tanadgusix Corporation, the St. George Tanaq Corporation, and the city governments and tribal councils of St. Paul and St. George, Alaska.

SEC. 106. TECHNICAL AND CLARIFYING AMENDMENTS.

(a) Section 3 of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) and the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1151 et seq.) are amended by—

(1) striking “(d)” and all that follows through the heading for subsection (d) of section 3 of Public Law 104-91 and inserting “**SEC. 212.**”; and

(2) moving and redesignating such subsection so as to appear as section 212 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966.

(b) Section 201 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1161) is amended by striking “on such Islands” and insert “on such property”.

(c) The Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1151 et seq.) is amended by inserting before title I the following:

“**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

“This Act may be cited as the ‘Fur Seal Act of 1966.’”

SEC. 107. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 3 of Public Law 104-91 (16 U.S.C. 1165 note) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (f) and inserting the following:

“(f) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 for the purposes of carrying out this section.

“(2) **LIMITATION.**—None of the funds authorized by this subsection may be expended for the purpose of cleaning up or remediating any landfills, wastes, dumps, debris, storage tanks, property, hazardous or unsafe conditions, or contaminants, including petroleum products and their derivatives, left by the Department of Defense or any of its components on lands on the Pribilof Islands, Alaska.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(g) **LOW-INTEREST LOAN PROGRAM.**—

“(1) **CAPITALIZATION OF REVOLVING FUND.**—Of amounts authorized under subsection (f) for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005, the Secretary may provide to the State of Alaska up to \$2,000,000 per fiscal year to capitalize a revolving fund to be used by the State for loans under this subsection.

“(2) **LOW-INTEREST LOANS.**—The Secretary shall require that any revolving fund established with amounts provided under this subsection shall be used only to provide low-interest loans to Natives of the Pribilof Islands to assess, respond to, remediate, and monitor contamination from lead paint, asbestos, and petroleum from underground storage tanks.

“(3) **NATIVES OF THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS DEFINED.**—The definitions set forth in section 101 of the Fur Seal Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 1151) shall apply to this section, except that the term ‘Natives of the Pribilof Islands’ includes the Tanadgusix and Tanaq Corporations.

“(4) **REVERSION OF FUNDS.**—Before the Secretary may provide any funds to the State of Alaska under this section, the State of Alaska and the Secretary must agree in writing that, on the last day of fiscal year 2011, and of each fiscal year thereafter until the full amount provided to the State of Alaska by the Secretary under this section has been repaid to the United States, the State of Alaska shall transfer to the Treasury of the United States monies remaining in the re-

volving fund, including principal and interest paid into the revolving fund as repayment of loans.”

TITLE II—CORAL REEF CONSERVATION

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000”.

SEC. 202. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this title are—

(1) to preserve, sustain, and restore the condition of coral reef ecosystems;

(2) to promote the wise management and sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems to benefit local communities and the Nation;

(3) to develop sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems and the threats to such ecosystems;

(4) to assist in the preservation of coral reefs by supporting conservation programs, including projects that involve affected local communities and nongovernmental organizations;

(5) to provide financial resources for those programs and projects; and

(6) to establish a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

SEC. 203. NATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTION STRATEGY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and publish in the Federal Register a national coral reef action strategy, consistent with the purposes of this title. The Administrator shall periodically review and revise the strategy as necessary. In developing this national strategy, the Secretary may consult with the Coral Reef Task Force established under Executive Order 13089 (June 11, 1998).

(b) **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.**—The action strategy shall include a statement of goals and objectives as well as an implementation plan, including a description of the funds obligated each fiscal year to advance coral reef conservation. The action strategy and implementation plan shall include discussion of—

(1) coastal uses and management;

(2) water and air quality;

(3) mapping and information management;

(4) research, monitoring, and assessment;

(5) international and regional issues;

(6) outreach and education;

(7) local strategies developed by the States or Federal agencies, including regional fishery management councils; and

(8) conservation, including how the use of marine protected areas to serve as replenishment zones will be developed consistent with local practices and traditions.

SEC. 204. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

(a) **GRANTS.**—The Secretary, through the Administrator and subject to the availability of funds, shall provide grants of financial assistance for projects for the conservation of coral reefs (hereafter in this title referred to as “coral conservation projects”), for proposals approved by the Administrator in accordance with this section.

(b) **MATCHING REQUIREMENTS.**—

(1) **50 PERCENT.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), Federal funds for any coral conservation project under this section may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of such project. For purposes of this paragraph, the non-Federal share of project costs may be provided by in-kind contributions and other noncash support.

(2) **WAIVER.**—The Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement

under paragraph (1) if the Administrator determines that no reasonable means are available through which applicant can meet the matching requirement and the probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

(c) **ELIGIBILITY.**—Any natural resource management authority of a State or other government authority with jurisdiction over coral reefs or whose activities directly or indirectly affect coral reefs, or coral reef ecosystems, or educational or nongovernmental institutions with demonstrated expertise in the conservation of coral reefs, may submit to the Administrator a coral conservation proposal under subsection (e).

(d) **GEOGRAPHIC AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.**—The Administrator shall ensure that funding for grants awarded under subsection (b) during a fiscal year are distributed in the following manner:

(1) No less than 40 percent of funds available shall be awarded for coral conservation projects in the Pacific Ocean within the maritime areas and zones subject to the jurisdiction or control of the United States.

(2) No less than 40 percent of the funds available shall be awarded for coral conservation projects in the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea within the maritime areas and zones subject to the jurisdiction or control of the United States.

(3) Remaining funds shall be awarded for projects that address emerging priorities or threats, including international priorities or threats, identified by the Administrator. When identifying emerging threats or priorities, the Administrator may consult with the Coral Reef Task Force.

(e) **PROJECT PROPOSALS.**—Each proposal for a grant under this section shall include the following:

(1) The name of the individual or entity responsible for conducting the project.

(2) A description of the qualifications of the individuals who will conduct the project.

(3) A succinct statement of the purposes of the project.

(4) An estimate of the funds and time required to complete the project.

(5) Evidence of support for the project by appropriate representatives of States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted.

(6) Information regarding the source and amount of matching funding available to the applicant.

(7) A description of how the project meets one or more of the criteria in subsection (g).

(8) Any other information the Administrator considers to be necessary for evaluating the eligibility of the project for funding under this title.

(f) **PROJECT REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Administrator shall review each coral conservation project proposal to determine if it meets the criteria set forth in subsection (g).

(2) **REVIEW; APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.**—Not later than 6 months after receiving a project proposal under this section, the Administrator shall—

(A) request and consider written comments on the proposal from each Federal agency, State government, or other government jurisdiction, including the relevant regional fishery management councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), or any National Marine Sanctuary, with jurisdiction or management authority over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted, including the extent to which the project is consistent with locally-established priorities;

(B) provide for the merit-based peer review of the proposal and require standardized documentation of that peer review;

(C) after considering any written comments and recommendations based on the reviews under subparagraphs (A) and (B), approve or disapprove the proposal; and

(D) provide written notification of that approval or disapproval to the person who submitted the proposal, and each of those States and other government jurisdictions that provided comments under subparagraph (A).

(g) **CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.**—The Administrator may not approve a project proposal under this section unless the project is consistent with the coral reef action strategy under section 203 and will enhance the conservation of coral reefs by—

(1) implementing coral conservation programs which promote sustainable development and ensure effective, long-term conservation of coral reefs;

(2) addressing the conflicts arising from the use of environments near coral reefs or from the use of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products;

(3) enhancing compliance with laws that prohibit or regulate the taking of coral products or species associated with coral reefs or regulate the use and management of coral reef ecosystems;

(4) developing sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems or the threats to such ecosystems, including factors that cause coral disease;

(5) promoting and assisting to implement cooperative coral reef conservation projects that involve affected local communities, nongovernmental organizations, or others in the private sector;

(6) increasing public knowledge and awareness of coral reef ecosystems and issues regarding their long term conservation;

(7) mapping the location and distribution of coral reefs;

(8) developing and implementing techniques to monitor and assess the status and condition of coral reefs;

(9) developing and implementing cost-effective methods to restore degraded coral reef ecosystems; or

(10) promoting ecologically sound navigation and anchorages near coral reefs.

(h) **PROJECT REPORTING.**—Each grantee under this section shall provide periodic reports as required by the Administrator. Each report shall include all information required by the Administrator for evaluating the progress and success of the project.

(i) **CORAL REEF TASK FORCE.**—The Administrator may consult with the Coral Reef Task Force to obtain guidance in establishing coral conservation project priorities under this section.

(j) **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES.**—Within 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall promulgate necessary guidelines for implementing this section. In developing those guidelines, the Administrator shall consult with State, regional, and local entities involved in setting priorities for conservation of coral reefs and provide for appropriate public notice and opportunity for comment.

SEC. 205. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION FUND.

(a) **FUND.**—The Administrator may enter into an agreement with a nonprofit organization that promotes coral reef conservation authorizing such organization to receive, hold, and administer funds received pursuant to this section. The organization shall invest, reinvest, and otherwise administer the funds and maintain such funds and any interest or revenues earned in a separate interest bearing account, hereafter referred to as the Fund, established by such organization solely to support partnerships between the

public and private sectors that further the purposes of this Act and are consistent with the national coral reef action strategy under section 203.

(b) **AUTHORIZATION TO SOLICIT DONATIONS.**—Pursuant to an agreement entered into under subsection (a) of this section, an organization may accept, receive, solicit, hold, administer, and use any gift to further the purposes of this title. Any moneys received as a gift shall be deposited and maintained in the Fund established by the organization under subsection (a).

(c) **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE.**—The Administrator shall conduct a continuing review of the grant program administered by an organization under this section. Each review shall include a written assessment concerning the extent to which that organization has implemented the goals and requirements of this section and the national coral reef action strategy under section 203.

(d) **ADMINISTRATION.**—Under an agreement entered into pursuant to subsection (a), the Administrator may transfer funds appropriated to carry out this title to an organization. Amounts received by an organization under this subsection may be used for matching, in whole or in part, contributions (whether in money, services, or property) made to the organization by private persons and State and local government agencies.

SEC. 206. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.

The Administrator may make grants to any State, local, or territorial government agency with jurisdiction over coral reefs for emergencies to address unforeseen or disaster-related circumstance pertaining to coral reefs or coral reef ecosystems.

SEC. 207. NATIONAL PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may conduct activities to conserve coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems, that are consistent with this title, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

(b) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**—Activities authorized under subsection (a) include—

(1) mapping, monitoring, assessment, restoration, and scientific research that benefit the understanding, sustainable use, and long-term conservation of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems;

(2) enhancing public awareness, education, understanding, and appreciation of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems;

(3) providing assistance to States in removing abandoned fishing gear, marine debris, and abandoned vessels from coral reefs to conserve living marine resources; and

(4) cooperative conservation and management of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems with local, regional, or international programs and partners.

SEC. 208. EFFECTIVENESS REPORTS.

(a) **GRANT PROGRAM.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report that documents the effectiveness of the grant program under section 204 in meeting the purposes of this title. The report shall include a State-by-State summary of Federal and non-Federal contributions toward the costs of each project.

(b) **NATIONAL PROGRAM.**—Not later than 2 years after the date on which the Administrator publishes the national coral reef strategy under section 203 and every 2 years thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science,

and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing all activities undertaken to implement that strategy, under section 203, including a description of the funds obligated each fiscal year to advance coral reef conservation.

SEC. 209. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this title \$16,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004, which may remain available until expended.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—Of the amounts appropriated under subsection (a), not more than the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 10 percent of the amounts appropriated, may be used for program administration or for overhead costs incurred by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the Department of Commerce and assessed as an administrative charge.

(c) CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAM.—From the amounts appropriated under subsection (a), there shall be made available to the Secretary \$8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 for coral reef conservation activities under section 204.

(d) NATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTIVITIES.—From the amounts appropriated under subsection (a), there shall be made available to the Secretary \$8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 for activities under section 207.

SEC. 210. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(2) CONSERVATION.—The term “conservation” means the use of methods and procedures necessary to preserve or sustain corals and associated species as diverse, viable, and self-perpetuating coral reef ecosystems, including all activities associated with resource management, such as assessment, conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use, and management of habitat; mapping; habitat monitoring; assistance in the development of management strategies for marine protected areas and marine resources consistent with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.); law enforcement; conflict resolution initiatives; community outreach and education; and that promote safe and ecologically sound navigation.

(3) CORAL.—The term “coral” means species of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals), Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera (organpipe corals and others), Alcyonacea (soft corals), and Coenothecalia (blue coral), of the class Anthozoa; and

(B) all species of the order Hydrocorallina (fire corals and hydrocorals) of the class Hydrozoa.

(4) CORAL REEF.—The term “coral reef” means any reefs or shoals composed primarily of corals.

(5) CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM.—The term “coral reef ecosystem” means coral and other species of reef organisms (including reef plants) associated with coral reefs, and the nonliving environmental factors that directly affect coral reefs, that together function as an ecological unit in nature.

(6) CORAL PRODUCTS.—The term “coral products” means any living or dead specimens, parts, or derivatives, or any product containing specimens, parts, or derivatives, of any species referred to in paragraph (3).

(7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce.

(8) STATE.—The term “State” means any State of the United States that contains a coral reef ecosystem within its seaward boundaries, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States, or separate sovereign in free association with the United States, that contains a coral reef ecosystem within its seaward boundaries.

TITLE III—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 301. GREAT LAKES FISHERY ACT OF 1956.

Section 3(a) of the Great Lakes Fishery Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 932(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) Individuals serving as such Commissioners shall not be considered to be Federal employees while performing such service, except for purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.”.

SEC. 302. TUNA CONVENTIONS ACT OF 1950.

Section 3 of the Tuna Conventions Act of 1950 (16 U.S.C. 952) is amended by inserting before “Of such Commissioners—” the following: “Individuals serving as such Commissioners shall not be considered to be Federal employees while performing such service, except for purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.”.

SEC. 303. ATLANTIC TUNAS CONVENTION ACT OF 1975.

Section 3(a)(1) of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act of 1975 (16 U.S.C. 971a(a)(1)) is amended by inserting before “The Commissioners” the following: “Individuals serving as such Commissioners shall not be considered to be Federal employees while performing such service, except for purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.”.

SEC. 304. NORTH PACIFIC ANADROMOUS STOCKS ACT OF 1992.

(a) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—Public Law 102-587 is amended by striking title VIII (106 Stat. 5098 et seq.).

(b) TREATMENT COMMISSIONERS.—Section 804(a) of the North Pacific Anadromous Stocks Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 5003(a)) is amended by inserting before “Of the Commissioners—” the following: “Individuals serving as such Commissioners shall not be considered to be Federal employees while performing such service, except for purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.”.

SEC. 305. HIGH SEAS FISHING COMPLIANCE ACT OF 1995.

Section 103(4) of the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act of 1995 (16 U.S.C. 5502(4)) is amended by inserting “or subject to the jurisdiction of the United States” after “United States”.

SEC. 306. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES.

Notwithstanding section 3302 (b) and (c) of title 31, United States Code, all amounts received by the United States in settlement of, or judgment for, damage claims arising from the October 9, 1992, allision of the vessel ZACHARY into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel DISCOVERER, and from the disposal of marine assets, and all amounts received by the United States from the disposal of marine assets of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—

(1) shall be retained as an offsetting collection in the Operations, Research and Facilities account of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(2) shall be deposited into that account upon receipt by the United States Government; and

(3) shall be available only for obligation for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration hydrographic and fisheries vessel operations.

SEC. 307. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES ACT.

(a) CROSS REFERENCE CORRECTION.—Section 304(f)(2) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1434(f)(2)) is amended by striking “paragraph (2)” and inserting “subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1)”.

(b) SHORT TITLE CORRECTION.—Section 317 of such Act (16 U.S.C. 1445 note) is amended by striking “The” and inserting “the”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (a) shall take effect January 1, 2001.

TITLE IV—STUDY OF EASTERN GRAY WHALE POPULATION

SEC. 401. STUDY OF THE EASTERN GRAY WHALE POPULATION.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary of Commerce shall initiate a study of the environmental and biological factors responsible for the significant increase in mortality events of the eastern gray whale population, and the other potential impacts these factors may be having on the eastern gray whale population.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF WESTERN POPULATION INFORMATION.—The Secretary should ensure that, to the greatest extent practicable, information from current and future studies of the western gray whale population is considered in the study under this section, so as to better understand the dynamics of each population and to test different hypotheses that may lead to an increased understanding of the mechanism driving their respective population dynamics.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to other amounts authorized under this title, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section—

(1) \$290,000 for fiscal year 2001; and

(2) \$500,000 for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2004.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 501. TREATMENT OF VESSEL AS AN ELIGIBLE VESSEL.

Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) through (3) of sections 208(a) of the American Fisheries Act (title II of division C of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277; 112 Stat. 2681-624)), the catcher vessel HAZEL LORRAINE (United States Official Number 592211) and the catcher vessel PROVIDIAN (United States Official Number 1062183) shall be considered to be vessels that are eligible to harvest the directed fishing allowance under section 206(b)(1) of that Act pursuant to a Federal fishing permit in the same manner as, and subject to the same requirements and limitations on that harvesting as apply to, catcher vessels that are eligible to harvest that directed fishing allowance under section 208(a) of that Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1653, as amended, the Pribilof Islands Transition Act, was passed by the

House in June 2000 with 400 aye votes. Unfortunately, the other body has not yet acted on it.

The Pribilof Islands, St. Paul and St. George, are located in the Bering Sea and serve as the breeding ground of the North Pacific fur seal. The islands were settled when Russian fur seal traders forcibly kidnapped, relocated and enslaved Native Alaskan Aleuts to conduct fur seal harvests.

This bill compensates local communities for expenses they incurred when the Federal Government, formerly the sole landowner and employer on the islands, withdrew its jobs and municipal services. It also authorizes funds to complete the environmental cleanup of the mess the Federal Government left on the islands during its 120-year reign. Finally, the bill establishes what NOAA must do before its responsibilities on the islands are terminated.

This bill makes good on our promises to a group of Native Americans who served as virtual slaves to this country's government for 120 years. I urge support of this legislation. It is long overdue.

This measure also includes coral reef conservation provisions previously passed by the Senate. Coral reefs are threatened by a variety of natural impacts and human activities including coral disease, hurricanes, destructive fishing practices, pollution, and changing ocean conditions. Despite these threats, coral reefs support the economies of many local communities and are essential habitat for many of this nation's recreational and commercial fisheries.

This legislation establishes new Federal-State-local partnerships to work on conservation and restoration programs. It authorizes Federal matching grants to protect and restore these valuable natural resources. It also authorizes NOAA to conduct mapping, monitoring, assessment, education, conservation, and management activities relating to coral reefs.

Title IV would authorize a study, subject to appropriations, to determine the environmental and biological factors causing the recent die-offs and strandings of gray whales from the eastern Pacific stock. In addition, the study should include information from studies of the western Pacific stock of gray whales to the extent practicable. This study will give marine mammal scientists information on a number of issues regarding gray whales including, among other things, whether the eastern Pacific stock has reached the carrying capacity of the eastern Pacific Ocean. The language authorizes \$290,000 for Fiscal Year 2001 and \$500,000 for each of Fiscal years 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Title V would make two additional catcher vessels eligible to participate in the Bering Sea pollock fishery cooperatives authorized under the American Fisheries Act.

I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on this measure.

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, although I must tell the gentleman that I am going to ask for a vote on this legislation because I am concerned about how these bills are being presented at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this package of ocean and fishery related bills.

This package includes the coral reef conservation legislation passed by the other body. The environmental health and condition of our Nation's coral reef resources are in a state of serious decline due to a combination of factors including polluted run-off and marine debris.

Consequently, it is critical for the Congress to establish a comprehensive program at the Federal level to support scientific research, mapping, monitoring and restoration activities on the State and local level.

I note that this package also includes a provision to direct the National Marine Fisheries Service to initiate a new scientific study concerning the eastern population of Pacific gray whales.

For reasons that are poorly understood, hundreds of Pacific gray whales have washed up on the California coast over the past two years—either in an emaciated condition, or dead. The increased frequency and number of strandings has generated great concern among marine mammal biologists in California, and up and down the Pacific coast.

We need to better understand why these strandings are happening, and I urge NOAA to initiate this important study as quickly as possible.

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

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, this measure also includes, and I would like to point out, the coral reef conservation provisions similar to the legislation I introduced, H.R. 3919. This bill is extremely important in this regard, as coral reefs are threatened by a variety of natural impacts and human activities, including coral disease, hurricanes, destructive fisheries practices, pollution and changing ocean conditions. Despite these threats, coral reefs support the economies of many local communities and are essential habitat for many of this Nation's recreational and commercial fisheries.

This legislation establishes new Federal-State-local partnerships to work on conservation and restoration programs. It authorizes Federal matching grants to protect and restore these valuable natural resources. It also authorizes NOAA to conduct mapping, monitoring, assessment, education, conservation and management activities relating to coral reefs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote on this measure.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which is vital for the health and future of America's coral reef resources. The estimated 4,200,000 acres of U.S. coral reef resources in the U.S. Exclusive Economic

Zone (EEZ) are at high risk and in dire need of enhanced protection, research and management. This bill creates a much needed comprehensive mechanism to protect the Nation's coral reefs, as well as support the activities of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and other stakeholders. Coral reefs truly are the "rainforests of the oceans." There have been many concerted efforts by the Administration, Congress, states, and local communities to protect and safely manage corals. Since the Coral Reef Task Force released its National Action Plan in March, Federal, state, territorial, and local partners have moved forward to improve our protection of these valuable and fragile areas through effective stewardship of coral reefs. This bill would provide needed authorization for coral conservation project funding and enhance needed partnerships to protect reefs. Designing an effective bill has taken ten long years, and I am pleased to see the efforts of Chairman YOUNG, Mr. MILLER, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, and our Senate colleagues paying off in such grand fashion for a true success for our environment and marine resources.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1653, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. 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 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

COMMENDING MEN AND WOMEN WHO FOUGHT WILDFIRES IN 2000

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 434) commending the men and women who fought the year 2000 wildfires for their heroic efforts in protecting human lives and safety and limiting property losses.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 434

Whereas the 2000 wildfire season in the United States was the largest and most severe in the last 50 years and consisted of more than 85,000 wildfires;

Whereas almost 7,000,000 acres of public lands and adjacent State and private lands were subjected to these wildfires;

Whereas over 30,000 professional and volunteer firefighters participated in fighting and controlling these wildfires;

Whereas the Hotshot firefighting crews were instrumental in providing the expertise and training necessary to restrict the severity of these wildfires;