

River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, a refuge whose 200,000 acres extend 261 miles southward from Wabasha, Minnesota to just north of Rock Island, Illinois.

The Upper Mississippi Refuge lies at the heart of an area that serves as a migratory flyway for 40 percent of North America's waterfowl. It provides habitat for some 292 species of birds, 57 species of mammals, 37 species of amphibians and reptiles, and 118 species of fish. Moreover, it is the most widely used of all our National Wildlife Refuges, attracting roughly 3.5 million visitors a year—more than Yellowstone National Park.

Despite this fact, the Upper Mississippi Refuge currently lacks a full-time refuge manager. The nation's busiest refuge does not have a visitor center and there is only one handicapped boat landing along the entire border of the refuge.

I support Mr. SAXTON's National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act of 2000 because it will draw much needed public attention to the rich resources and the serious needs of Region 3 refuges as well as others across the nation. H.R. 4442 endorses Secretary Babbitt's directive to the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a long-term plan to address the priority operations, maintenance, and construction needs of the Refuge System. This legislation goes a long way toward ensuring that the Refuge System will remain strong and vital for many years to come.

I urge my colleagues in the House to vote in favor of H.R. 4442.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, March 14, 2003 will mark a milestone in the history of wildlife in America—the centennial anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

When President Theodore Roosevelt set aside tiny Pelican Island on Florida's East Coast for birds nearly a century ago, he began a conservation legacy that now spans 93 million acres across the United States and its territories.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is America's only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation, representing a steadfast commitment to protecting our wildlife heritage.

This vast network of strategically located habitats protect hundreds of endangered species, serves as stepping stones for millions of migratory birds and conserves our premier fisheries.

Incredibly, one of these stepping stones lies just 26 miles west of New York City's Times Square. The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Morris County, New Jersey, which is just north of my district, was established in 1960.

This 7,500-acre refuge consists of swamp woodland, hardwood ridges and cattail marsh. In the heart of one of the most densely populated areas in the world, the Refuge is home to more than 220 species of birds, as well as white tail deer, mink, beaver, river otter and coyote.

As development and sprawl continue to swallow more and more of our nation's critical wildlife habitat, we need to ensure that refuges like the Great Swamp continue to thrive. I have worked with my colleagues in Congress to protect our irreplaceable ecosystems by re-instituting full state funding in Land and Water Conservation Fund. We are now setting aside proceeds from offshore oil drilling to protect our open spaces.

H.R. 4442, the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Act would greatly help improve the operations, maintenance and expansion of the refuge system to ensure that wildlife gets the protection it deserves. The refuge system currently has a \$1 billion operations backlog and a \$800 million maintenance backlog. H.R. 4442 would require the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and submit to Congress a long term plan to address these deficiencies and outline system expansion.

Maybe most importantly, however, this legislation would establish a commission to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the refuge system. This would be instrumental in broadening public understanding and appreciation of protecting our wildlife heritage.

I strongly urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I urge support for this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4442, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam 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 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL OCEAN DAY

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 415) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Ocean Day to recognize the significant role the ocean plays in the lives of the Nation's people and the important role the Nation's people must play in the continued life of the ocean, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 415

Whereas the oceans cover 71 percent of the Earth's surface and are key to the life support systems for all creatures on this planet;

Whereas the oceans contain a wondrous abundance and diversity of life, from the smallest microorganism to the mammoth blue whale;

Whereas 2/3 of the world's people live within 50 miles of a coast and 1 out of 6 American jobs are in fishing, shipping, or tourism;

Whereas the oceans provide almost limitless opportunities for exploration and discovery, and could supply a key source of life-saving medicines and treatments;

Whereas oceanography has contributed to an understanding of global climate change and the effects of the ocean on climate and weather,

which inevitably has an impact on safety and quality of life;

Whereas efforts are underway to develop a new ocean monitoring system that will give us a better understanding of the critical relationship between oceans and global climate change;

Whereas a deepened understanding of the seas will enable us to track marine mammals, predict deadly storms such as those associated with El Nino, detect illegal fishing, and gain new insights into the complexities of climate change;

Whereas the oceans and coastal areas supply vital sources of food upon which people depend and that could be deteriorated by poor stewardship;

Whereas decades of pollution from industrial waste, sewage, and toxic runoff have taken their toll on the health of the oceans and on the marine life in them;

Whereas recent studies suggest that nearly 60 percent of the world's coral reefs, the "rainforests of the sea", are being degraded or destroyed by human activities and ten percent of the reefs may already be degraded beyond recovery;

Whereas fisheries and the food and products they produce are essential to the world's economy and steps should be taken to ensure that they do not become overexploited;

Whereas in the 21st century, people will look increasingly to the oceans to meet their everyday needs;

Whereas the oceans' resources are limited, and nations must work together to conserve them;

Whereas the oceans are the core of our own humanity, a treasure shared by all nations of the world, and our stewardship of this resource is our responsibility to our children, grandchildren, and all of Earth's inhabitants;

Whereas June 8th was declared Oceans Day at the Earth Summit Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and similar declarations have been made by individual nations;

Whereas the State of Hawaii has designated the first Wednesday of June as Ocean Day, in recognition of the very significant role the ocean plays in the lives of Hawaii's people, as well as Hawaii's culture, history, and traditions; and

Whereas the establishment of a National Ocean Day will raise awareness of the vital role oceans play in human life and that human beings must play in the life of the ocean: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Ocean Day should be established to recognize the significant role the ocean plays in the lives of the Nation's people, and the important role the Nation's people must play in the continued life of the ocean.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 415, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased today that the House is considering House

Resolution 415. This is a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Oceans Day should be established to recognize the significant role the ocean plays in our lives, that the ocean's resources are limited, and therefore, nations must work together to conserve them.

The oceans will continue to play an important role in the lives of our Nation's people, especially as the population grows. Currently, more than 50 percent of the Nation's population lives in the coastal areas of the United States, and one out of six American jobs is in fishing, shipping, or tourism. Yet, we do not have a full understanding of the oceans and their resources, upon which we rely so heavily.

Declaring a National Oceans Day would draw the public's attention to the importance of their relationship to the ocean, and more importantly, to the need for responsible stewardship. Internationally there has been recognition of the importance of the oceans, and the State of Hawaii has led the way in this country by declaring a day in June as Ocean Day.

Madam Speaker, I believe we should as a nation join in celebrating the significance of our oceans. I urge the House to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 415, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Oceans Day to recognize the significant role the oceans play in our lives today and in the years to come.

I certainly want to thank the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) for introducing this legislation. I also want to thank the committee chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and our ranking Democrat member, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), for their support of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, as we toil away in our offices today in Washington, D.C., it is quite easy to forget just how dependent we are on the world's oceans. With two-thirds of the Earth's surface covered with water, mostly oceans, they have a significant impact on our daily lives and everyone on this planet. The oceans' ability to retain heat longer than land masses provides a steady influence on daily temperature changes, and the energy generated by hurricanes and cyclones is felt throughout the equatorial regions, as well as through the subtropical zones.

Small increases in temperature could melt large amounts of ice at the poles. This will have an impact on coastal areas and an enormous impact on some

small island countries in the Pacific, as well as in the Atlantic region, possibly totally submerging some of these atolls.

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Madam Speaker, the ocean also provides substance to much of the world's population through seafood and shellfish. In 1999, and for the 10th consecutive year, and for the information of my colleagues, the value of the volume of fish and shellfish imported into the United States now is at a record of over \$9 billion, approximately 3.9 billion pounds.

The recreation and employment provided by the world's oceans are also significant. Coming from a small island community, Madam Speaker, I am intimately familiar with the ocean and am constantly reminded of the influence it has upon all of us. Passage of this resolution can serve as an annual reminder to all of us as to the important role the oceans play in our lives.

Madam Speaker, as the world's population develops in further appreciation of this important role, we can hope that the human race will treat the oceans with more respect, thereby maintaining this most important, valuable resource in our planet today.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no one else to speak on this, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure and honor to yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK), who is the chief sponsor of this resolution.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 415 which expresses the sense of Congress that a National Ocean Day should be established in recognition of the vital role that the ocean plays in the lives of our Nation's people and the significant impact our people have on the health of this essential resource.

I want to take this time to thank the chairman of this committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG); the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) of the Committee on Resources; the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON); the ranking member, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans for their efforts in bringing this bill to the floor today.

The oceans cover 71 percent of the Earth's surface and are key to the life support systems for all creatures on our planet. The oceans contain a wondrous abundance and diversity of life, and two-thirds of the world's people live within 50 miles of a coast and one out of six American jobs are marine related.

On June 8, the Earth's Summit Conference convened in Rio de Janeiro on 1992 and declared Oceans Day as part of the recognition of the importance of this resource and similar declarations have been made by other countries.

My own State followed suit shortly afterwards and declared the first Wednesday of June as Oceans Day in recognition of the significant role that oceans play in the lives of the people of my State.

So the adoption of this resolution will encourage the declaration of Oceans Day for the United States, and I hope that this resolution will pass.

The support of human existence by the oceans goes well beyond fisheries and other coastal resources. Oceanic research has contributed greatly to our understanding of global warming and of the effects of the ocean on climate and weather. Sea surface temperatures have a major effect on atmospheric circulation, warming and cooling trends brought on by the ocean currents like El Nino and La Nina have significant effects on the amount of rainfall, severity of storms and global temperatures. The warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions also affects the temperatures of the ocean.

We take the riches of the ocean for granted at our peril. This incredibly rich resource is neither inexhaustible nor immune to the actions of humankind. Poor stewardship of the oceans pollutes beaches, contaminates the food supply and robs people of a precious resource that they depend upon.

More than two-thirds of the world's fisheries are over exploited and more than a third of the world's fisheries are in a state of decline. Nearly 60 percent of the oceans' coral reefs, the rain forests of the sea, are degraded and destroyed by human activities.

In the 21st century, people will look increasingly to the resources of the oceans to meet its need. It is vital that the United States take the lead in ensuring that the oceans are recognized for its importance and protected so that its riches can be enjoyed and available for future declarations.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I support H. Res. 415 and urge all Members to do the same. The oceans are vital to the welfare of this Nation and its people. The idea of taking one day annually to remind people why they need to appreciate our oceans and coasts should attract broad bipartisan support.

Much of today's public awareness in the environment is attributed to the establishment 30 years ago of the first Earth Day. But as much as I applaud the success of Earth Day, it is my impression that we can and should do more to inform the public about the many threats confronting our oceans and coasts.

I have been encouraged by recent efforts of the Clinton administration that have focused public attention on ocean issues such as the International Year of the Reef in 1997, and the International Year of the Ocean in 1998. But it appears to me that an annual event to rally

public support and interest in the oceans is needed if we are to sustain long-term public awareness.

H. Res. 415 would be a very helpful step in that direction, and I commend our colleague from Hawaii, Congresswoman PATSY MINK, for proposing this resolution. I also commend the Chairman of the Fisheries Subcommittee, Mr. SAXTON, and the ranking Democrat, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for their support and cooperation in fine-tuning the resolution while it was under consideration by the Resources Committee. I urge all Members to support this bipartisan resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers, and 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 Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 415, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Madam 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.

GRIFFITH PROJECT PREPAYMENT AND CONVEYANCE ACT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 986) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Griffith Project to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 986

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 "Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term "Authority" means the Southern Nevada Water Authority, organized under the laws of the State of Nevada.

(2) The term "Griffith Project" means the Robert B. Griffith Water Project, authorized by and constructed pursuant to the Southern Nevada Water Project Act, Public Law 89-292, as amended, (commonly known as the "Southern Nevada Water Project Act") (79 Stat. 1068), including pipelines, conduits, pumping plants, intake facilities, aqueducts, laterals, water storage and regulatory facilities, electric substations, and related works and improvements listed pursuant to "Robert B. Griffith Water Project (Formerly Southern Nevada Water Project), Nevada: Southern Clark County, Lower Colorado Region Bureau of Reclamation", on file at the Bureau of Reclamation and all interests in land acquired under Public Law 89-292, as amended.

(3) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) The term "Acquired Land(s)" means all interests in land, including fee title, right(s)-of-way, and easement(s), acquired by the United States from non-Federal sources by purchase, donation, exchange, or condemnation pursuant to Public Law 89-292, as amended for the Griffith Project.

(5) The term "Public Land" means lands which have never left Federal ownership and are under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management.

(6) The term "Withdrawn Land" means Federal lands which are withdrawn from settlement, sale, location of minerals, or entry under some or all of the general land laws and are reserved for a particular public purpose pursuant to Public Law 89-292, as amended, under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation, or are reserved pursuant to Public Law 88-639 under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. CONVEYANCE OF GRIFFITH PROJECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In consideration of the Authority assuming from the United States all liability for administration, operation, maintenance, and replacement of the Griffith Project and subject to the prepayment by the Authority of the Federal repayment amount of \$121,204,348 (which amount shall be increased to reflect any accrued unpaid interest and shall be decreased by the amount of any additional principal payments made by the Authority after September 15, 1999, prior to the date on which prepayment occurs), the Secretary shall, pursuant to the provisions of this Act—

(1) convey and assign to the Authority all of the right, title, and interest of the United States in and to improvements and facilities of the Griffith Project in existence as of the date of this Act;

(2) convey and assign to the Authority all of the right, title, and interest of the United States to Acquired Lands that were acquired for the Griffith Project; and

(3) convey and assign to the Authority all interests reserved and developed as of the date of this Act for the Griffith Project in lands patented by the United States.

(b) Pursuant to the authority of this section, from the effective date of conveyance of the Griffith Project, the Authority shall have a right of way at no cost across all Public Land and Withdrawn Land—

(1) on which the Griffith Project is situated; and

(2) across any Federal lands as reasonably necessary for the operation, maintenance, replacement, and repair of the Griffith Project, including existing access routes.

Rights of way established by this section shall be valid for as long as they are needed for municipal water supply purposes and shall not require payment of rental or other fee.

(c) Within twelve months after the effective date of this Act—

(1) the Secretary and the Authority shall agree upon a description of the land subject to the rights of way established by subsection (b) of this section; and

(2) the Secretary shall deliver to the Authority a document memorializing such rights of way.

(d) REPORT.—If the conveyance under subsection (a) has not occurred within twelve months after the effective date of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the status of the conveyance.

SEC. 4. RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING CONTRACTS.

The Secretary and the Authority may modify Contract No. 7-07-30-W0004 and other contracts and land permits as necessary to conform to the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS AND FUTURE BENEFITS.

(a) If the Authority changes the use or operation of the Griffith Project, the Authority shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing the changes at that time.

(b) On conveyance of the Griffith Project under section 3 of this Act, the Act of June 17, 1902 (43 U.S.C. 391 et seq.), and all Acts amendatory thereof or supplemental thereto shall not apply to the Griffith Project. Effective upon transfer, the lands and facilities transferred pursuant to this Act shall not be entitled to receive any further Reclamation benefits pursuant to the Act of June 17, 1902, and all Acts amendatory thereof or supplemental thereto attributable to their status as a Federal Reclamation Project, and the Griffith Project shall no longer be a Federal Reclamation Project.

(c) Nothing in this Act shall transfer or affect Federal ownership, rights, or interests in Lake Mead National Recreation Area associated lands, nor affect the authorities of the National Park Service to manage Lake Mead National Recreation Area including lands on which the Griffith Project is located consistent with the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), Public Law 88-639, October 8, 1964 (78 Stat. 1039), or any other applicable legislation, regulation, or policy.

(d) Nothing in this Act shall affect the application of Federal reclamation law to water delivered to the Authority pursuant to any contract with the Secretary under section 5 of the Boulder Canyon Project Act.

(e) Effective upon conveyance of the Griffith Project and acquired interests in land under section 3 of this Act, the United States shall not be liable for damages of any kind arising out of any act, omission, or occurrence based on its prior ownership of the conveyed property.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 986.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, S. 986 was introduced by Senator REID of Nevada and a companion bill was introduced by our friend and colleague, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) on May 5 of 1999.

This legislation provides for the Southern Nevada Water Authority to accept responsibility for administration, operation and maintenance of the Griffith Project and to pay the net present value of the remaining repayment obligation. In addition, the bill directs the Secretary to convey and assign to the authority all right, title and interest of the United States in and to the Griffith Project.