

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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.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.

The Griffith Project forms an integral part of a much larger water delivery system built separately by the Southern Nevada Water Authority and its constituent agencies. It consists of the intake facilities, pumping plants, et cetera required to provide water from Lake Meade for distribution.

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 fully support the passage of S. 986. I note that the Department of the Interior has raised concerns regarding the effect of the bill on the Lake Meade National Recreation area. It is my understanding that the rights of way provisions in S. 986, while generous, are intended to provide the Southern Nevada Water Authority with reasonable access to project facilities across Federal lands.

The Secretary of the Interior has responsibility for protecting and managing the Lake Mead National Recreation area, and I would expect the Secretary's participation in negotiations involving rights of way over Federal lands which provide ample opportunities to ensure that those resources are fully protected.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say that I want to commend the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), my good friend, and the good senator from Nevada for his bipartisan support of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), the author of the House companion bill to S. 986.

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to rise in support of S. 986, the Griffith Project Prepayment and Conveyance Act.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) for yielding me the time with which to speak and to thank the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) for their leadership and assistance with this bill and also to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for his courtesies and assistance in this bill as well.

The Griffith Project, formerly known as the Southern Nevada Project, was first authorized in 1965, and directed to Secretary of Interior to construct, operate and maintain the project in order to deliver water to Clark County, Nevada.

With the phenomenal growth of the Las Vegas Valley over the past several decades, and the associated need for additional water, the Griffith Project has become but a small part of the overall system used to deliver water to the Las Vegas metropolitan area.

With the strong support of the State and local government to increase and improve the water delivery and treatment system for the Las Vegas Valley, it is projected that the federally funded share of the overall system will decrease to approximately 6 percent when completed.

The time has come, Madam Speaker, for the title of the Griffith Project to be transferred to the local ownership, and this is the goal of S. 986. S. 986 will convey to the Southern Nevada Water Authority all right, title and interest of the United States in and to the Griffith Project.

This conveyance is subject to the payment by the Southern Nevada Water Authority of the net present value of the remaining repayment obligation.

This repayment obligation will be determined under financial terms and conditions that are similar to other title transfer laws which have been enacted on other projects.

The repayment obligation will also be governed by the guidance from the Department of Interior and the office of Management and Budget. This conveyance will simplify the overall operation of the system for the Southern Nevada Water Authority by removing some of the duplicative efforts required by having dual owners.

For example, a pump station in the Griffith Project portion of the system requires repairs or maintenance, then Project employees must notify the Bureau of Reclamation that a repair is needed.

Madam Speaker, then they must describe the exact nature of the work to be performed, obtain permission for a crew to perform the work and schedule the work to be done at such a time when the Bureau of Reclamation employees can be present just to watch or oversee the repair or maintenance being performed by the Project employees.

When the Project work is completed, the Bureau of Reclamation then sends a local bill to the water authority for the time spent by its personnel simply watching the work being done by the Project employees.

Madam Speaker, we should note that this could be as simple as replacing just a valve handle, even though there are no leaks or any technical problems with the system. Truly, Madam Speaker, this is a tremendous waste of Bureau of Reclamation time and an unnecessary and expensive cost burden for the people of Las Vegas.

In summary, this is a rather straightforward bill which will result in a much simplified and improved operation of the water supply and treatment facility for the Las Vegas Valley.

Madam Speaker, I, along with the senior Senator from Nevada, have worked with the Bureau of Reclamation to resolve their concerns, and we believe this is the right approach for Southern Nevada.

I do understand the right of way issues that remain and will work with the administration and those concerned with that right of way issue to resolve those problems, and I would ask my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill and pass S. 986.

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

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time as well.

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 Senate bill, S. 986.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

1500

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING VIETNAMESE AMERICANS AND OTHERS WHO SEEK TO IMPROVE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM

Mr. BEREUTER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 322) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding Vietnamese Americans and others who seek to improve social and political conditions in Vietnam, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 322

Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam fought together for the causes of freedom and democracy in the former Republic of Vietnam;

Whereas the Armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam suffered enormous casualties, including over 250,000 deaths and more than 750,000 wounded between 1961 and 1975 for the cause of freedom;

Whereas many officers and enlisted personnel suffered imprisonment and forcible reeducation at the direction of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

Whereas on June 19 of each year, the Vietnamese American community traditionally commemorates those who gave their lives in the struggle to preserve the freedom of the former Republic of Vietnam;

Whereas June 19 serves as a reminder to Vietnamese Americans that the ideals and values of democracy are precious and should be treasured; and

Whereas the Vietnamese American community plays a critical role in raising international awareness of human rights concerns regarding the Socialist Republic of Vietnam: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—*