

habitat, wetlands or resource conversation, pursuant to the agreement between the State of Nevada and the Pershing County Water Conservation District. Lander County will receive title to designated pasture lands and Pershing County will acquire lands immediately adjacent to Derby Airport for maintenance and future expansion purposes.

Over the past 5 years, the Pershing County Water Conservation District has undergone an extensive consensus-based process with the Federal Government, the counties and the State of Nevada. They have also conducted outreach with local representatives of environmental organizations.

As a result of public comments received through scoping meetings and in their other convenient views, the Pershing County Water Conservation District has continued to reformulate their proposal in a sincere attempt to address all concerns. They should be commended for their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, this bill ratifies agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Pershing County Water Conservation District, the State and the counties. It has the support of the Governor of Nevada, the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority and the counties of Lander and Pershing in Nevada as well. The Department of Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation are on record as supporters of transferring title to the reclamation project to the local entities.

This is the third and hopefully final attempt to obtain title to Humboldt Project facilities since it repaid its original project loan back in 1978. The Pershing County Water Conservation District operates and maintains the project and its constituents are the sole beneficiaries of the project. Local control is the logical choice.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to pass this legislation.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4708, which includes legislation I introduced to extend a repayment period for the Tom Green County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1.

The Tom Green County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 has an outstanding loan with the Department of Interior for the construction of an irrigation canal. The remaining balance is approximately \$2.4 million. The farmers in the District have made diligent efforts to make timely payments on the contract. They have paid 38 percent (about \$1.5 million) of the original debt owed to the Department of Interior despite the fact that they have yet to receive a fair return on their investment.

In West Texas, there is virtually nothing of a higher daily concern than the availability of water. In recent years, Texas has been devastated by drought. As a result, the farmers have received a full year's allocation of irrigation water only 50 percent of the time. Moreover, for the other 50 percent of the time, they received either less than the annual allocation or no irrigation water at all.

Payment on the debt has never been forgiven, even in years when the District received no water. Deferments have been granted

seven times; however, those payments still have to be made. They are added to the remaining balance and the payments continue to get higher annually because the original contract end date does not change.

To make matters worse, the concrete lining placed in the canal in 1960 has started to deteriorate after forty-two years and repairs are necessary. These repairs are very expensive. Farmers simply cannot sustain paying the costs of the annual operation and maintenance costs due to the irrigation district, the bureau of Reclamation annual payment, and extensive repair costs when little or no water is available.

The Bureau of Reclamation has stated that the increased payments, as a result of continued deferments due to the drought conditions, are making it increasingly difficult on the farmers' ability to repay the annual payments. The increased annual payments place additional financial burdens on the District and increasing these payments further will only lead to future difficulty that the Bureau of Reclamation cannot remedy. Only Congress can remedy the long-term problem, which is why I have introduced H.R. 4910 to get this loan restructured.

This legislation would allow the Secretary of Interior to revise the repayment contract (No. 14-06-500-369) by extending the period authorized for repayment of reimbursable construction costs of the canal from 40 to 50 years.

These Tom Green County farmers have been doing their part to meet their responsibilities. When year-after-year the water was unavailable, their only recourse was to ask for an extension on the loan. I'm glad Tom Green County Commissioner Clayton Friend brought this to my attention and I'm very appreciative of the speedy Resources Committee action. I have high hopes that we will be able to get this bill to the President within the next few weeks.

On behalf of the farmers in my district, I urge you to support H.R. 4708.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank you for considering H.R. 4708, the Freemont Madison Conveyance Act. Under H.R. 4708, the Cross-cut Diversion Dam, Cross-cut Canal and five wells with associated water rights would be owned and operated by the FMID. The district has operated and maintained these facilities since they were constructed.

In July the Resources Committee held a hearing on H.R. 4708. During this hearing the Bureau of Reclamation expressed concern over capping the costs for the required NEPA study and administrative costs associated with the transfer.

After the hearing I worked with the Bureau and Freemont Madison Irrigation District to find a solution that is acceptable. The Resources Committee marked up an amended version of H.R. 4708. The amendment in the nature of the substitute was agreed up by all interested parties and was subsequently reported out of the Committee by unanimous consent.

This bill is the culmination of many years of hard work by the members of the Freemont-Madison Irrigation District. In fact, it is one of the first issues I was approached with when I was elected to my first term in the House almost four years ago. I know the members of the Freemont-Madison will continue to provide quality service and remain the good stewards

of the natural resources that are at their disposal upon transfer of this title and I look forward to the passage of H.R. 4708.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4708, as amended.

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

The title is amended so as to read: "A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain facilities to the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WEST BUTTE ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY ACT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4953) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to grant to Deschutes and Crook Counties in the State of Oregon a right-of-way to West Butte Road, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4953

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

SECTION 1. COUNTY RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WEST BUTTE ROAD IN THE STATE OF OREGON.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) WEST BUTTE ROAD.—The term "West Butte Road" means the unpaved Bureau of Land Management road in the State of Oregon identified on the map as BLM Road 6520.

(2) COUNTY.—The term "County" means each of Crook County and Deschutes County in the State of Oregon.

(3) MAP.—The term "map" means the map entitled "West Butte Road Right of Way" dated July 17, 2002.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(b) GRANT TO COUNTIES.—Notwithstanding any other Act, and subject to subsection (d), the Secretary shall grant to each County a right-of-way to the West Butte Road.

(c) BOUNDARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the rights-of-way granted under subsection (b) shall—

(A) extend in length from Reservoir Road in Crook County to United States Route 20 in Deschutes County, Oregon; and

(B) shall extend in width 100 feet on each side of the centerline of West Butte Road.

(2) MODIFICATIONS.—

(A) STATE ROADS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall amend the existing rights-of-way of each of the Counties as contained in their respective road case files to include the rights-of-way granted under subsection (b).

(ii) EFFECT.—The rights-of-way amended under clause (i) shall be subject to the common terms, conditions, and stipulations identified in the Counties' rights-of-way grants that apply on the date of enactment of this Act.

(iii) *CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.*—Environmental concerns associated with any development of the West Butte Road shall be addressed by the County in meeting compliance requirements associated with State and Federal highway projects and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as administered by the Federal Highway Administration.

(B) *WEST BUTTE ROAD.*—Notwithstanding any other Act, the Secretary shall provide for adjustment to the right-of-way width and alignment granted under subsection (b) in portions of the West Butte Road necessary for the road to meet applicable State and Federal highway standards.

(d) *RELINQUISHMENT OF RIGHT-OF-WAY.*—The right-of-way granted to each County under subsection (b) shall be contingent upon the Counties relinquishing any right, title, or interest in and to any RS 2477 right-of-way claim held by the Counties to the portion of the road known as George Millican Road that is located in the area described in subsection (c)(1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the author of the bill, to explain the legislation.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4953. This is a bill that would promote important transportation infrastructure improvements to an economically depressed area of central Oregon.

Rapid population growth among the Bend and Redmond corridor in central Oregon has created a perpetual bottleneck along Highway 97, a vital north-south right-of-way and highway in central Oregon. H.R. 4953 would authorize the relinquishment of rights-of-way between Crook and Deschutes Counties and the Bureau of Land Management, in effect a swap. The BLM would simply relinquish their management right to the West Butte Road, transferring that right to the counties. The counties, in turn, would relinquish their management rights to the George Millican Road, transferring those rights to the Bureau of Land Management.

West Butte Road extends from Reservoir Road in Crook County to U.S. Route 20 in Deschutes County. This legislation would allow the counties to make improvements to West Butte Road, thereby providing real and meaningful access to U.S. Highway 20, which is a major transportation route in central Oregon. Improvements to the road would provide an alternative route for trucks and other vehicles that now travel on a very busy and congested U.S. Highway 97.

A recent survey conducted by the Oregon Department of Transportation estimated that 25 percent of the trucks that now pass through Bend from Highway 20 would use this alternative route, which would save an estimated 1 hour in travel time and reduce air pollutants as a result.

Mr. Speaker, not only does H.R. 4953 alleviate traffic congestion in central Oregon, but it also spurs economic growth in Crook County, a county with a current unemployment rate of 8.2 percent. This unemployment rate is due to the dismantling of the timber industry and the exodus of industries linked to that industry. This legislation would divert the excess traffic on Highway 97, transferring to Highway 20, providing incentives to businesses, enticing them to move to Crook County. It also gives businesses currently located in Crook County a reason to stay, due to the long-term viability of its transportation infrastructure. The long-term effect would be to provide family-wage jobs, to increase economic development, reduce pollutants, reduce commute times and trucking times, and free up access on Highway 97.

This legislation is supported by both Crook and Deschutes Counties, the cities of Prineville, Bend and Redmond, the Oregon Department of Transportation and Central Oregon Area Transportation Committee.

I would especially like to thank my friend and commend Judge Scott Cooper, who has worked tirelessly to make passage of this bill a reality.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4953 is a perfect opportunity for us to step up our efforts in alleviating the County's traffic congestion problems, provide additional commerce routes in central Oregon and work to reduce unemployment. I urge passage of H.R. 4953.

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

The minority has reviewed this bill and we support the majority's explanation of it.

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

Mr. HANSEN. 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 Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4953, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MNI WICONI RURAL WATER SUPPLY PROJECT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2002

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4638) to reauthorize the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Project.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4638

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

SECTION 1. MNI WICONI RURAL WATER SUPPLY PROJECT, SOUTH DAKOTA.

Section 10(a) of the Mni Wiconi Project Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-516; 102 Stat. 2571), as amended by section 813 of the Mni

Wiconi Act Amendments of 1994 (Public Law 103-434; 108 Stat. 4545), is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by inserting “(based on October 1, 1992, price levels) and \$58,800,000 (based on October 1, 1997, price levels)” after “\$263,241,000”;

(2) in the second sentence, by striking “2003” and inserting “2008”; and

(3) in the last sentence, by inserting “(with respect to the \$263,241,000), and October 1, 1997 (with respect to the \$58,800,000)” after “1992”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4953, the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Authorization Act of 2002, will extend the completion date of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Project to 2008 and increase the appropriation ceiling by \$58.8 million.

The Mni Wiconi project was originally authorized under Public Law 100-516 to construct a municipal, rural and industrial water system to serve the Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Lower Brule Indian Reservations and seven counties in southwestern South Dakota. The project was developed to overcome the shortage of good quality drinking water in the region.

While the overall appropriation ceiling for the project has not been reached, two of the primary components have reached their individual allocations. Without additional funding, these two project components will not be completed.

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

Mr. Speaker, I read an article in today's CQ Daily Monitor with the following headline: “Dakota Water Project Marked by November Election Overtones.”

My purpose in supporting this legislation, however, is marked by the pressing need to keep our promise to Native Americans in South Dakota who need and deserve a safe and reliable water supply. That is my motive here, pure and simple. Native Americans deserve no less.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the author of this legislation.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Utah (Chairman HANSEN), the gentleman from California (Chairman CALVERT) and all the members of the Committee on Resources for their support of H.R. 4638, to extend the authorization of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Project, which I introduced earlier this year.

This legislation is absolutely essential to the completion of this critical project, which is now over 50 percent