

That's why conservation easements are so important for our state. It's why the state and many local governments are interested in acquiring conservation easements on undeveloped lands. It is also why non-profit organizations like the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy—to name just two of many—work to help ranchers and other property owners to make these arrangements and so avoid the need to sell agricultural lands to developers.

I strongly support this approach. Of course, by itself it is not enough—it is still important for governments at all levels to acquire full ownership of land in appropriate cases. But in many other instances acquiring a conservation easement is more appropriate for conservation and other public purposes, more cost-effective for the taxpayers, and better for ranchers and other landowners who want to keep their lands in private ownership.

But while it is usually less costly to acquire a conservation easement than to acquire full ownership, it is often not cheap—and in some critical cases can be more than a community or a nonprofit group can raise without some help. That is where my bill would come in.

Under the bill, the Secretary of the Interior would be authorized to provide funds, on a 50 percent match basis, to supplement local resources available for acquiring a conservation easement. For that purpose, the bill would authorize appropriation of \$100 million per year for each of the next 6 fiscal years—similar to the amount that would have been authorized by the CARA legislation that the House passed last year.

The bill provides that the Secretary would give priority to helping acquire easements in areas—such as Colorado that are experiencing rapid population growth and where increasing land values are creating development pressures that threaten the traditional uses of private lands and the ability to maintain open space. Within those high-growth areas, priority would go to acquiring easements that would provide the greatest conservation benefits while maintaining the traditional uses—whether agricultural or some other uses—of the lands involved.

The bill would not involve any federal land acquisitions, and it would not involve any federal regulation of land uses—conservation easements acquired using these funds would be governed solely under state law.

Mr. Speaker, the national government has primary responsibility for protecting the special parts of the federal lands and for managing those lands in ways that will maintain their resources and values—including their undeveloped character—as a legacy for future generations. Regarding other lands, the challenge of responding to growth and sprawl is primarily the responsibility of the states and tribes, the local governments, and private organizations and groups—but the federal government can help.

This bill would provide help, in a practical and cost-effective way. For the information of our colleagues, I am attaching a summary of its main provisions.

DIGEST OF "COOPERATIVE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION ACT"

The bill is based on provisions included in the House-passed Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) legislation of the 106th

Congress. It would provide federal financial assistance to states, local governments, Indian tribes, and private groups working to preserve open space by acquiring conservation easements.

Background: In Colorado and other rapidly-growing states, rising land values and property taxes are putting farmers and ranchers (and other landowners) under increasing pressure to sell their lands for development. By selling conservation easements instead, they can lessen that pressure, capture much of the increased value of the land, and allow the land to continue to be used for traditional purposes. The party acquiring the conservation easement would have an enforceable property right to prevent development.

WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

Program—The bill would establish the "Cooperative Landscape Conservation Program," to be administered by the Department of the Interior. The program would provide grants to assist qualified recipients to acquire conservation easements.

Funding—Bill would authorize appropriations of \$100 million/year for fiscal years 2002 through 2007. Funds would be used for grants, would be on a 50%-50% matching basis, for purchase of conservation easements on private lands in order to provide wildlife, fisheries, open space, recreation, or other public benefits consistent with the continuation of traditional uses by the private landowners. Up to 10% of annual funds could be used by Interior Department to provide technical assistance.

Priority—(1) Priority for grants would be to help acquire easements in areas where rapid population growth and increasing land values are creating development pressures that threaten traditional uses of land and the ability to maintain open space; (2) within those areas, priority would go for acquiring easements that would provide the greatest conservation benefits while maintaining traditional uses of lands.

Eligible Recipients—would be agencies of state or local government, tribes, and tax-exempt organizations operated principally for conservation.

Enforcement—Only an entity eligible for a grant could hold and enforce an easement acquired with program funds; at time of application, state Attorney General would have to certify that an easement would meet the requirements of state law.

WHAT THE BILL WOULD NOT DO

Bill would NOT involve any federal land acquisition.

Bill would NOT involve any federal regulation of land use.

IN APPRECIATION FOR SHARING AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of a brave and resourceful veteran from my district. Recently, I had the pleasure of presenting him with the Distinguished Flying Cross medal—nearly sixty years after the flight engineer saved his plane by repairing it mid-flight.

Ray Huntsinger served as a flight engineer with the United States Army Air Corps, now

the Air Force, during World War II. During a mission to bomb Nazi oil reserves in Romania, Huntsinger's plane suffered damaged from anti-aircraft fire. He examined the plane and found that its hydraulic lines, which affect the air brakes and landing gear, had been ruptured. After notifying the pilot that he would have to make an emergency landing, Huntsinger set to work. Using materials he found on the plane, he constructed a patch over the damaged lines, and he strapped parachutes to the plane's waist to slow it down after landing. After circling the airfield until all emergency vehicles were in place, the pilot began his descent, and executed a perfect landing—the makeshift patch saved the day.

Years later, after retiring to Hot Springs Village, Huntsinger recounted the story to a friend of his who happened to be a retired Air Force Colonel. That friend submitted the story to the Air Force, and almost sixty years after that mid-flight repair, Huntsinger was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal.

I am so pleased to have the opportunity to properly honor one of our veterans. Mr. Huntsinger had an outstanding military career with the U.S. Army Air Corps during the Second World War. He flew fifty combat missions out of Italy, and in the incident that earned him the Flying Cross distinction, he demonstrated incredible ingenuity and resourcefulness, saving the lives of his fellow soldiers as they fought for their country. I welcome any opportunity to thank our veterans and to hear their stories, and this is quite a story!

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLEAN WATER PROTECTION ACT

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Clean Water Protection Act, legislation to protect the beauty and quality of our nation's water resources. This legislation would add a definition to the Clean Water Act that would place a specific prohibition on the use of wastes in "fill material" that is placed in waters of the United States. I am pleased that my colleague, Representative Christopher Shays, has joined me in this effort.

This legislation was predicated by an executive rule change on May 3, 2002, that altered the long-standing definition of "fill material" in the Clean Water Act regulations enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Administration's new definition allows the Corps to permit waste to be used to fill streams, wetlands, and other waters. Importantly, the rule change would have nationwide effects, by allowing all industries to seek permits from the Corps to dump their wastes in waters.

On May 8, 2002, a federal court in West Virginia decided that the Administration's rule change violated the Clean Water Act and was

therefore illegal. Late last month, however, a U.S. appeals court in Richmond reversed the lower court ruling that would have ended the practice of filling rivers and streams with waste rock and dirt from mountaintop removal coal mining operations.

There are far-reaching consequences of the Appellate Court's decision. The Administration's new definition of "fill material" is an attempt to legalize the dumping of countless tons of mountaintop removal coal mining waste—a practice that has already burned and destroyed 1,000 miles of Appalachian streams. The new rule also expressly allows hardrock mining waste, construction and demolition debris, and other types of harmful wastes to be dumped into rivers and streams across the country. Given the possible presence of contaminants such as heavy metals, asbestos, or harmful organic compounds in some of these wastes, the implementation of the new definition of "fill material" in the Corps' regulations could have disastrous impacts even beyond the harm caused by burying streams and other waterways. Congress meant for the Clean Water Act to protect our nation's water resources; the Administrative rule change endangers those resources.

The dangerous precedent set by the Administration's rule change undermines the Clean Water Act. This is why I have proposed the Clean Water Protection Act. This legislation would establish a definition for fill material in the Clean Water Act, such that no wastes could be used to bury our streams and wetlands. Creating a statutory definition of "fill material" that expressly excludes waste materials will end the need for further court proceedings and will clarify environmental law consistent with the purpose of the Clean Water Act—to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.

Clean air and water are not partisan issues; they are issues of vital importance to all Americans. We cannot let the Clean Water Act fade into history as simply a "romantic ideal", but rather we must ensure the protection of our waters, so that our grandchildren have streams to play in and clean water to drink.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to protect the quality and magnificent beauty of our nation's streams and wetlands.

COMMENDING ISRAEL ON THEIR ELECTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution extending this body's congratulations to Israel on their recent elections. I stand with my colleagues and commend Israel as it continues to conduct democracy in a region filled with dictatorship and totalitarian regimes.

On January 28, 2003, nearly four million Israelis went to the polls to participate in the country's 15th national election since becoming a state in 1948. The election was Israel's 5th in the last decade, and comes at an extremely critical juncture in the country's short

history. An ongoing conflict with the Palestinians, a looming U.S. war against Iraq, the global war on terrorism, and a struggling Israeli economy all played pivotal roles in the campaign. But when all was said and done, Israelis reelected Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and established a near majority for the Likud Party in the Israeli Knesset. Prime Minister Sharon's victory was especially significant, as it was the first time in 25 years that Israelis reelected a sitting Prime Minister.

As the sole democracy in the Middle East, Israel is the most reliable ally of the United States in the region. I come to the floor today and further express my commitment to a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Israel has stood by the U.S. in our war on terrorism, and we shall stand with Israel as it continues down the daunting road toward peace and security. Terrorism never has been, and never will be, an ingredient to peace in the Middle East, and the U.S. must stand by Israel in its efforts to protect its borders and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, each of us has his or her own unique way of expressing our support for Israel and the relationship that the U.S. enjoys with the small Middle Eastern country. Coming to the floor today in support of this resolution is just one way Members can show their support. Traveling to Israel is another. I make my commitment today to visit Israel sometime during the 108th Congress to show my support for the Jewish state, and I urge my colleagues to make similar commitments.

Israel is a place rich with history. It is filled with beauty and its people are filled with kindness and generosity. Members of Congress can make no stronger statement of their support for Israel than to travel there and experience first hand the issues facing Israeli leaders attempting to make peace. I am looking forward to the trip that I am co-hosting over the Memorial Day recess with black and Jewish Members, and I do hope that my colleagues will make similar statements of their support. Only next time, we make them in the streets of a peaceful Jerusalem.

CELEBRATING AFRICAN AMERICAN MONTH

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and all the black members of Congress that have served this Nation. As America observes African American History Month, I would be remiss not to remember the giants of this institution who made it possible for me to stand before you today. In the 212 years of Congressional History, there has been only 108 black Members of Congress: 104 elected to the House and 4 to the Senate.

In the great State of Florida there have been five black Members of Congress and I have the distinctive honor to serve as one of them.

I want to commend your attention to the first black Member of Congress elected from the State of Florida, Josiah Thomas Walls.

Congressman Josiah Thomas Walls was the only black representative from the State of Florida before reconstruction. He was born,

probably to slavery, in or near Winchester, Virginia, on December 30, 1842. As a child, Josiah Walls moved to Darksville in what is now West Virginia. Josiah Walls briefly attended the county normal school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and may have received additional education. As a Congressman, Josiah Walls described his impressions into the Confederate army and his capture by Northern forces at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, in May 1862. By July 1863 he had entered the Third Infantry Regiment, United States Colored Troops at Philadelphia, becoming a corporal in October. Josiah Walls moved with his regiment to Florida in February 1864. After his discharge in October 1865 he worked at a sawmill on the Suwannee River and later taught at Archer in Alachua County.

In 1867, Josiah Walls was elected to represent Alachua County at the 1868 Florida Constitutional Convention. The county convention of March 1868 also nominated Josiah Walls for the state assembly. He was elected, taking his seat in June. Later that same year he was elected to the state senate from the Thirteenth District and took his seat the following January. Josiah Walls participated in several national conventions held to discuss problems facing blacks. At the Southern States Convention of Colored Men in 1871 he proposed an amendment to a resolution of support for President Ulysses S. Grant, which called on the Republicans to nominate John Mercer Langston for Vice President in 1872.

In August 1870, Florida Republicans nominated Walls for the state's lone seat in the House of Representatives. Walls appeared to win a narrow election victory and presented his credentials to the Congress on March 4, 1871. He accepted assignments to the Committee on Militia, the Committee on Mileage, and the Committee on Expenditures in the Navy Department.

Congressman Walls put forth several proposals and spoke on a variety of subjects. Since he feared public education would receive little attention if it were administered by southern states, he supported a measure to establish a national educational fund financed with money from public land sales. He introduced bills for the relief of private pensioners and Seminole War veterans. He strongly favored expenditures for internal improvements in Florida and supported efforts to grant belligerent status to rebels fighting in Cuba for independence from Spain, which still permitted slavery to exist on the island.

After a disputed election and defeat for renomination to the House, Josiah Walls took an indefinite leave of absence from public service.

Upon his return to Alachua County, Josiah Walls owned and operated a successful tomato and lettuce farm, sawmill and orange groves. He also remained interested in political developments. He slipped into ill health and lost his fortune when a February 1895 freeze ruined his crops. Shortly thereafter he was placed in charge of the farm at Florida Normal College (now Florida A&M University). He died in Tallahassee on May 15, 1905.

As a great writer once penned, "God will not let us fall . . . For our work is good, We hope to plant a nation, Where none before hath stood." Congressman Josiah Walls planted a nation for other African Americans to follow.