

SEC. 106. GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL MEASUREMENTS.

Section 306(5) of the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 892d(5)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (E) as clauses (i) through (v), respectively;

(2) by striking “(5)” and inserting “(5)(A)”;

and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) Of the amounts authorized under subparagraph (A), \$2,000,000 in each fiscal year is authorized for the Great Lakes Water Level Observation Network.”.

TITLE II—FISHERY SURVEY VESSELS**SEC. 201. FISHERY SURVEY VESSELS.**

Section 302(c) of the Fisheries Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 2000 (33 U.S.C. 891b note) is amended by striking “\$60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2002 and 2003” and inserting “\$51,000,000 for fiscal year 2005 and \$39,000,000 for fiscal year 2006.”

SEC. 202. ACQUISITION OF HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY VESSEL.

No later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate—

(1) a detailed requirements package and cost estimate for the construction and equipping of a hydrographic survey vessel that is capable of—

(A) staying at sea continuously for at least 30 days;

(B) carrying at least 4 hydrographic survey launches;

(C) conducting hydrographic surveys; and

(D) conducting other work necessary to provide mariners with the accurate and timely data needed to conduct safe and efficient maritime commerce;

(2) an explanation of what vessel or vessels would be retired if a vessel described in paragraph (1) were to become operational; and

(3) a comparison of the 10-year estimated costs of operation and maintenance of a new vessel described in paragraph (1) versus such costs for a vessel or vessels proposed for retirement under paragraph (2).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 958.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, is responsible for the United States navigation services programs. These include the collection of hydrographic data, the production and distribution of nautical charts, the maintenance of geodetic reference systems, and the measurement and prediction of tides and currents.

In the 1990s, years of budget cuts and a revolution in technology left NOAA decades behind in meeting its mission goals and made it unable to provide the up-to-date products needed to assure safe and efficient marine transportation. In response to this problem, Congress enacted the Hydrographic Services Act of 1998. Coupled with increased appropriations, the 1998 act has reduced the nautical charting backlog for areas critical to navigation and modernized NOAA hydrographic, geodetic, and tide and current measurement programs.

To build on that reauthorization, H.R. 958 creates four regional navigation response teams which will conduct activities related to navigational safety and the validation of hydrographic data. The bill allows the Secretary of Commerce to accept volunteer services and create a volunteer program.

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Section 103 of the bill names a cove in Alaska for a sailor who drowned while on a nautical charting mission. The bill requires the Secretary to provide Congress with a plan to depict shorelines consistently on NOAA and the United States Geographical Survey maps. It makes technical modifications to the Hydrographic Services Panel. It also clarifies that \$2 million of the funds authorized each fiscal year are for the Great Lakes Water Level Observation Network.

Finally, Title II of the bill reauthorizes the Fishery Survey Vessel Authorization Act of 2000 for 2 years and authorizes the Secretary to provide Congress with a plan detailing requirements for the cost for the construction and equipping of the hydrographic survey vessel.

H.R. 958 will continue the progress we have made to get our coastline surveys up to date and to make our ports and waterways safer. This is a noncontroversial bill and I urge all Members to support it.

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

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, especially NOAA's hydrographic survey, current and tide measurements, and nautical charts are extremely important to ensure safe marine commerce and navigation.

H.R. 958 is noncontroversial legislation that would make helpful amendments to the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act to clarify authority and address recognized gaps in operations.

I am pleased that this legislation would authorize emergency response survey teams to go in and resurvey coastal areas after catastrophic storms which will enhance safe navigation for

both commercial mariners and recreational boaters. I am also very much appreciative that this legislation includes my amendment adopted by the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans to authorize specific annual funding for water level observations important to my State of Michigan.

Great Lakes water level measurements constitute one of the longest, high-quality hydrological data sets in North America. Reference gauge records begin as far back as 1860 and some sporadic records date back to the early 1800s.

We will learn from these observations that the water levels of the Great Lakes can and do fluctuate greatly from year to year. These fluctuations can have dramatic negative consequences for shipping, port and marine operations, and lakeshore erosion throughout the Great Lakes Basin.

My amendment will ensure that adequate funding is allocated by NOAA to carry out those important observations in the future.

In closing, NOAA's navigation and hydrographic services are vital to the economic and environmental well-being of our Nation, and I urge all Members to support this noncontroversial bill.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 958, 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. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE VOLUNTEER ACT OF 2003

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2408) to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize volunteer programs and community partnerships for national wildlife refuges, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2408

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 “National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Act of 2003”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS UNDER FISH AND WILDLIFE ACT OF 1956.

Section 7(f) of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742f(f)) is amended to read as follows:

“(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior to carry out subsections (b), (c), (d), and (e) \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2009.”.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF PROJECTS UNDER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1998.

Section 4(a) of the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 742f note) is amended—

(1) in the heading by striking “PILOT”;

(2) by striking “pilot project” each place it appears and inserting “project”;

(3) in paragraph (1) by striking “, but not more than 20 pilot projects nationwide”;

(4) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking “pilot projects” and inserting “projects”; and

(B) by striking “after the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “after the date of the enactment of the National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Act of 2003, and every 3 years thereafter”; and

(5) in paragraph (4) by striking “each of fiscal years 1999 through 2002” and inserting “for each fiscal year through fiscal year 2009”.

SEC. 4. CLARIFICATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.

Section 7(d)(2) (A) of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742f(d)(2)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding chapter 63 of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary of the Interior may negotiate and enter into a cooperative agreement with a partner organization, academic institution, State or local government agency, or other person to implement one or more projects or programs for a refuge or complex of geographically related refuges in accordance with the purposes of this subsection and in compliance with the policies of other relevant authorities, regulations, and policy guidance.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2408.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I introduced the bill, H.R. 2408, to reauthorize the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act, which I authored in 1998.

There is no question that volunteers play an invaluable role in the successful operation of hundreds of National Wildlife Refuges throughout the United States. Since 1982, the number of refuge volunteers has grown from about

4,200 individuals to over 39,000 people. In the past year alone, volunteers have contributed over 1.4 million man-hours of their own time to the refuge system. From operating a backhoe, assisting in the banding of birds or providing education to the public, to many other functions, volunteers can do it all.

At the hearing of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans held in June of this year, significant support for the volunteer program was very evident. A number of suggestions were made to improve the existing 1998 landmark law, and at the subcommittee markup these suggestions were incorporated into the bill. Included in these changes is the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements outside the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 with academic institutions, State and local agencies, and partner organizations, like the “Friends” groups that exist at many refuges. The Cooperative Agreement Act has been a hindrance to the Secretary in entering into these agreements. H.R. 2408 would clarify that Congress intended to give the Secretary the same flexibility that the Secretary has to enter into these agreements under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

I urge all Members to support the Refuge Volunteer Program by voting yes on this legislation.

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

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

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, as noted by the previous speaker, H.R. 2408 is noncontroversial legislation that would reauthorize the existing authority that promotes volunteer programs and community partnerships across our National Wildlife Refuge System.

Volunteers provide truly indispensable hours of service to augment the yeoman labor of our Federal resource managers, rangers, and biologists stretched thin by the day-to-day demands of managing 98 million acres of fish and wildlife habitat. Congress should do all that it can to encourage the expansion of volunteer opportunities at our National Wildlife Refuges.

I commend the act's author and the bill's sponsor, my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), for his continued steadfast leadership in promoting our refuges as places for both people to enjoy and wildlife to have a proper habitat.

I also congratulate the chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST), and the ranking Democratic member of that subcommittee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), for developing mutually acceptable language to clarify the authority for the Fish and Wildlife Serv-

ice to enter into cooperative agreements in support of volunteer activities.

This clarification should not only help spur the creation of new partnerships, but also enhance private sources of support for our refuges.

This is good legislation, Mr. Speaker, and I urge all Members to support the bill.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise in enthusiastic support of H.R. 2408, “The National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Act.”

Since the first refuge was established in my home state in 1912, the Wisconsin refuge system has become an integral part of life for our citizens. Our five wildlife refuges and two wetlands management districts attract nearly 2 million visitors each year. They provide critical habitat for our state's world-renowned wildlife resources, as well as opportunities for recreation and groundbreaking research.

Thankfully, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has help in meeting President Teddy Roosevelt's commitment of protecting our country's diverse wildlife heritage for future generations. Volunteers like my constituent John Wetzel, and the “Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges,” work constantly to improve our local refuges and serve as advocates at the national level.

John Wetzel is only one of over 45,000 individuals across the country who provide support for our refuge system. These “Friends of the Refuge” do whatever is needed—whether it is raising funds, guiding tours, battling invasive species or restoring wetlands. As noted anthropologist, Margaret Mead, once said, “Never doubt that a small thoughtful group of concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

I am proud to support the National Fish and Wildlife Service in its vital mission, and I'm pleased this legislation will provide these dedicated activists the tools and information necessary to help them in their efforts on behalf of us all.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2408, 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. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

COWLITZ INDIAN TRIBE DISTRIBUTION OF JUDGMENT FUNDS ACT

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill