

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), the distinguished, wise and principled chairman of the Committee on Resources.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I thank gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, in California's Eleventh District, the City of Morgan Hill and surrounding communities, face a serious problem due to groundwater contamination with perchlorate. Hundreds of private and city-owned wells have been closed, and many residents are forced to rely on bottled water.

To help remedy this situation, I introduce H.R. 4459, the Llagas Reclamation Groundwater Remediation Initiative. This bill will provide \$25 million in Federal funding to assist the Santa Clara Valley Water District's efforts to identify the scope of the contamination and begin a comprehensive, long-term program to once again provide high-quality drinking water to the area's residents. This funding mechanism is based on a practical working model currently underway in the San Gabriel Basin in Southern California.

Everyone agrees on the need for safe drinking water for our communities. This bill reflects this consensus and puts words into action. It is my hope that this bill will act as a successful model for other areas of the country as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, before I speak to H.R. 4459, I just want to also take this opportunity to recognize the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian which will honor, memorialize, and teach the history and culture of the first people of this country and to welcome their representatives here to the Nation's Capitol.

Mr. Speaker, on H.R. 4459, many communities in California, and, in fact, throughout the Nation, are faced with the prospect of shutting down their drinking water supply wells because water has been contaminated with perchlorate or other chemicals. It is critically important we provide assistance to these communities so they can clean up their drinking water supplies.

H.R. 4459 will specifically provide assistance to communities in the Santa Clara Valley area of California. The Committee on Resources has also approved similar legislation, H.R. 4606, for Southern California, introduced by our colleague on the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA). I support both bills and I

appreciate the support and leadership demonstrated by the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) on this important problem.

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I commend Chairman POMBO for introducing the Llagas Reclamation Groundwater Remediation Initiative.

On January 16, 2003, residents of San Martin, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy in south Santa Clara County were shocked to learn that perchlorate had been detected in more than 800 area wells. The approximately 90,000 residents of the Llagas Groundwater Subbasin rely solely on groundwater for their drinking water supply, but the perchlorate concentration in more than 200 wells exceeds the California Public Health Goal of 6 micrograms per liter.

From 1956 to 1996, the Olin Corporation owned and, along with Standard Fusee, operated a flare manufacturing facility on Tennant Avenue in Morgan Hill. During that time, waste water containing perchlorate was discharged to evaporation ponds on the site, which allowed perchlorate to enter the subsurface and contaminate groundwater. The perchlorate was first detected in a public water supply well across the street from the Olin facility in Spring 2002. Subsequent groundwater testing by Olin and the Santa Clara Valley Water District revealed a 10.5 mile long perchlorate plume contaminating the groundwater in the area.

As a result, bottled water is being provided to approximately 800 households, and thousands of other residents are receiving treated groundwater from the city of Morgan Hill, the West San Martin Water Works, or San Martin County Water District. The level of community interest in the situation and participation in efforts to solve it, has been unprecedented. The Santa Clara Valley Water District has held two public meetings to respond to community concerns, and approximately 800 people attended the first meeting, with 450 attending the second meeting. Water District staff continues to receive dozens of inquiries from the public every week.

The Water District has spent more than \$2,000,000 addressing the perchlorate issue to date. In addition, the City of Morgan Hill has incurred costs for wellhead treatment and the city of Gilroy has incurred costs for contingency planning. The county of Santa Clara has incurred costs related to analyzing health data and communicating health risks to the community. Residents in the affected area have devoted their own time and resources toward finding solutions. The entire community has been affected and is working together to find solutions, and the Federal Government should help in any way it can.

While much work has been done on this contamination case, significant unknowns remain and many of the necessary remediation efforts, including containment of the 10.5 mile long perchlorate plume, have not yet been started. Residents still wonder when the contamination will reach their wells, whether it is safe to eat produce from their gardens or the store, and whether health problems of people they know are related to the perchlorate contamination. The community has the right to have its groundwater restored to the condition it was in before it was polluted. That cleanup

should begin now, before the plume affects any more areas.

H.R. 4459 establishes a program that can address the community's perchlorate needs and interests. The \$25 million specified in the bill provides a means of implementing overdue solutions for the community. The funding in the bill provides a means for local agencies to implement timely, necessary solutions to protect the community, for which they can be reimbursed by the responsible party at a later date. It is not meant to excuse responsible parties from their duties to remediate contamination.

In the past, Chairman POMBO, Representative LOFGREN, and I have been fortunate to secure appropriations for perchlorate groundwater remediation and cleanup in this area where our Congressional districts come together, but the implementing regulations have prevented the use of this funding to move many projects of interest to the community forward. The broad parameters of H.R. 4459, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the funding and implementation of a balanced, long-term remediation program for California, will provide for solutions the community is asking for.

Once again, I thank chairman POMBO for his hard work on this bill and for bringing it to the House floor quickly. I look forward to continuing to work with him in the future to solve the perchlorate problem in south Santa Clara County.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. 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 New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4459.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CASTLE NUGENT FARMS, ST. CROIX, VIRGIN ISLANDS, NATIONAL PARK FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2663) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Castle Nugent Farms, located on St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2663

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

SECTION 1. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STUDY REGARDING CASTLE NUGENT FARMS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Castle Nugent Farms, located on the southeastern shore of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, is the largest parcel of privately-held land in the Virgin Islands and has been an operating cattle ranch for 50 years.

(2) This land has the largest and healthiest fringing coral reef anywhere in the Virgin Islands.

(3) It consists of Caribbean dry forest and pasturelands with considerable cultural resources including both pre-Columbian and post-European settlement.

(4) Castle Nugent Farms contains a large historic 17th century Danish estate house that sits on over 4 miles of pristine Caribbean oceanfront property.

(5) In addition to being an area for turtle nesting and night heron nesting, it is the home for the Senepol cattle breed, a unique breed of cattle that was developed on St. Croix in the early 1900's to adapt to the island's climate.

(b) STUDY.—The Secretary of the Interior shall carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating Castle Nugent Farms as a unit of the National Park System.

(c) STUDY PROCESS AND COMPLETION.—Section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)) shall apply to the conduct and completion of the study required by this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. 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 H.R. 2663, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2663, introduced by my colleague on the Committee on Resources, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Castle Nugent Farms, located on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, as a unit of the National Park System.

I understand that the owners of the Farm, the largest parcel of privately-held land in the U.S. Virgin Islands, are aware of this legislation and support the National Park Study.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2663 is supported by the majority and minority of the Committee on Resources and the administration. I urge adoption of the bill.

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

□ 1430

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

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased the House is considering my bill, H.R. 2663, to provide for

a study to determine the feasibility and suitability of designating Castle Nugent Farms on my home island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands as a unit of the National Park System.

Castle Nugent Farms is a unique 1,350-acre property located on the southeastern shore of St. Croix. It contains natural and cultural resources which could provide an unparalleled insight into the plantation period of the Virgin Islands.

Castle Nugent Farms is presently operated as a cattle ranch by owners who are very interested in preserving and interpreting the natural and cultural resources of the area. I want to take this opportunity to commend Caroline Gasperi and her family for the stewardship of this land for more than 50 years and for her enthusiasm and dedication to this cause.

The owners are justifiably proud of their ranch which contains more than 4 miles of pristine oceanfront with a large and healthy fringing coral reef. The interior of the property consists of Caribbean dry forest and pasture lands with cultural resources from both pre-Columbian and post-European settlement. A large Danish estate house, dating to the 1730s, sits on the property. That house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

At various points in its history, Castle Nugent Farms has been operated as a cotton plantation and a sugarcane plantation. Its current use as a cattle ranch involves raising unique Senepol cattle, a breed which is well-suited to the climate and vegetation of the area.

H.R. 2663 is a noncontroversial bill. The National Park Service has no objections to the legislation, and the property's owners not only support a park study of the site but are enthusiastic about the opportunity to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the farm.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the park study will provide the blueprint by which we can preserve and interpret this unique piece of island history and resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) for taking the time to personally communicate with my constituent, Mrs. Gasperi, and for his strong support and for shepherding this bill through the committee. And I thank my colleagues on the Committee on Resources for their favorable consideration of H.R. 2663 and express my wholehearted support for the adoption of this bill by the House this afternoon.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2663.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof)

the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RIGHT-TO-RIDE LIVESTOCK ON FEDERAL LANDS ACT OF 2004

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2966) to preserve the use and access of pack and saddle stock animals on public lands, including wilderness areas, national monuments, and other specifically designated areas, administered by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Forest Service where there is a historical tradition of such use, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2966

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 "Right-to-Ride Livestock on Federal Lands Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. USE AND ACCESS OF PACK AND SADDLE ANIMALS ON PUBLIC LANDS.

(a) NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM LANDS.—Section 12 of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-7) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) USE AND ACCESS OF PACK AND SADDLE ANIMALS.—

“(1) GENERAL RULE.—The Secretary of the Interior shall provide for the management of National Park System lands to preserve and facilitate the continued use and access of pack and saddle stock animals on such lands, including wilderness areas, national monuments, and other specifically designated areas, where there is a historical tradition of such use. As a general rule, all trails, routes, and areas used by pack and saddle stock shall remain open and accessible for such use. The Secretary may implement a proposed reduction in the use and access of pack and saddle stock animals on such lands only after complying with the full review process required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

“(2) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed—

“(A) to authorize the Secretary to refuse to issue a permit for a new use of pack and saddle stock animals, including use by a commercial outfitter or guide, without complying with applicable resource management plans and planning processes required under this Act or any other provision of law;

“(B) to limit the authority of the Secretary to impose a temporary emergency closure of a trail, route, or area to pack and saddle stock animals or issue special permits; or

“(C) to create a preference for one recreational use for any unit of the National Park System, without consideration of the stated purpose of the unit.”.

(b) BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LANDS.—Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1732) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) USE AND ACCESS OF PACK AND SADDLE ANIMALS.—

“(1) GENERAL RULE.—The Secretary shall provide for the management of public lands to preserve and facilitate the continued use and access of pack and saddle stock animals on such lands, including wilderness areas, national monuments, and other specifically designated