

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 33 which allows the Forest Service to sell or exchange a total of 23 administrative sites on national forest lands in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The funds generated will be used to relocate and renovate offices as well as purchase and replace administrative sites. Overall, the lands covered by the bill total just over 308 acres. The total value of the sites to be sold is \$3.375 million.

The total acreage involved requires an act of Congress to allow the agency to sell these lands. The sales will encourage efficient management of the National Forest Service lands in Arkansas and Oklahoma. And I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for S. 33, a lands exchange bill that was introduced by Senator LINCOLN of Arkansas which passed the Senate on November 11, 2003. Its companion bill in the House, H.R. 3744 was introduced by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS). These two pieces of legislation are the same except for changes to the title and some capitalization.

This legislation authorizes the sale of 16 administrative sites in the Ouachita National Forest and 7 administrative sites in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. Because some of the parcels contain buildings which must be maintained for historic preservation purposes, they are expensive to maintain, according to the U.S. Forest Service. In fact, the U.S. Forest Service contends that the cost of maintaining such parcels generally exceeds their value in terms of management. S. 33 allows the monies from the sale of the sites to be used to relocate and renovate offices and to purchase and replace administrative sites.

The Forest Service has indicated that it has no objections to the legislation. For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I welcome back the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) who I hear has been at the Committee on Rules.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further request 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 Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 33.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 33.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR THE USE BY THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA OF FEDERAL LANDS AT THE OXFORD RESEARCH STATION IN GRANVILLE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2119) to provide for the use by the State of North Carolina of Federal lands, improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2119

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

SECTION 1. LAND CONVEYANCE, OXFORD RESEARCH STATION, GRANVILLE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

(a) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall convey, without consideration, to the State of North Carolina all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of Federal real property consisting of approximately 4.28 acres and administered as part of the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina. The conveyance shall include all improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the research station.

(b) DESCRIPTION OF REAL PROPERTY.—The exact acreage and legal description of the real property to be conveyed under subsection (a) shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary. The cost of the survey shall be borne by the State.

(c) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require such additional terms and conditions in connection with the conveyance under subsection (a) as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2119 sponsored by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

H.R. 2119, as amended, would allow the Forest Service to transfer a currently disused facility in North Carolina to the State of North Carolina. The facility has not been used in several years, and in fact, the land on which it sits was donated by the State of North Carolina to the Federal Government for the purpose of establishing a research station.

The administration supports the proposed transfer, and the State intends to use the facility to do research on invasive species, a very worthwhile project.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, October 5, 2004.

Hon. TOM DAVIS,
Chairman, House Committee on Government Reform, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a copy of H.R. 2119 as passed by the Committee on Agriculture. As you know, the Committee on Government Reform has received an additional referral of this legislation and I am respectfully requesting that this legislation be discharged from your committee. This legislation, sponsored by Representative Balance would provide for the use by the State of North Carolina of Federal lands, improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina.

As the committee of primary jurisdiction, on September 23, 2004, the Committee on Agriculture favorably reported this legislation by an affirmative voice vote. As this bill prepares to move to the floor I am asking for your discharge to move this legislation forward.

This discharge in no way affects your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill and it will not serve as precedent for future referrals. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Government Reform represented on the conference committee.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter and look forward to working with your committee in the future.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC, October 5, 2004.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for working with me as you developed H.R. 2119, a bill to provide for the use by the State of North Carolina of Federal lands, improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina. I would like to confirm our mutual understanding with respect to the consideration of H.R. 2119. As you know, the disposal of federal property, including real property, is within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Government Reform.

In the interests of moving this important legislation forward, I will agree to waive sequential consideration of this bill by the Committee on Government Reform. However, I do so only with the understanding that this procedural route should not be construed to prejudice the Committee on Government Reform's jurisdictional interest and prerogatives on this bill or other similar legislation. I respectfully request your support for the appointment of outside conferees from the Committee on Government Reform should this bill or a similar Senate bill be considered in conference with the Senate.

Finally, I would ask that you include a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during the

House debate of this bill. If you have questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call me. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

TOM DAVIS,
Chairman.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 2119, legislation to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to convey to the State of North Carolina approximately 4.28 acres of Federal lands administered as part of the Oxford Research Station in Granville, North Carolina.

The bill addresses concerns raised by USDA with the original legislation. In a letter dated March 30, 2004, USDA acknowledged the strong, equitable interest the State of North Carolina has in the research station and stated it will gladly exercise the authority provided to convey the Oxford Research to the State of North Carolina once the legislation is enacted.

According to USDA estimates, the amendment will not significantly affect the Federal budget. In fact, the research station is currently unused and actually costs the USDA's property inventory funding to maintain it.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for bringing up this legislation today.

The Oxford Research Station was established in 1912 as a crop and forestry research station. The station facilities include computerized curing barns, office facilities, a shop building, several equipment shelters, a tobacco evaluation facility and underground irrigation systems.

For 92 years, the station's marquee programs have been tobacco-related. Accomplishments at the Oxford Tobacco Research Station include fertility investigations concerning tobacco plants' nutrition; development of the first tobacco varieties with resistance to Granville Wilt and black shank disease; the invention of tobacco bulk curing barns; genetic studies to develop new varieties resistance to Granville Wilt and black shank diseases; evaluation of crop breeding lines, curing experiments, computerized monitoring and control of humidity and temperatures; and many others.

As long as a list of accomplishments that the station has accumulated in its 92 years of service to American agriculture, the station now stands unused by USDA, and American taxpayers are still paying for upkeep and maintenance. An unofficial estimate, Mr. Speaker, from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for fiscal

year 2005 is that the station will cost \$227,000 for basic upkeep.

Mr. Speaker, one man's trash is another man's treasure. USDA does not want or need the Oxford Research Station, but the North Carolina Department of Agriculture does. If the facility is conveyed to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, the State will move its entire biological control program to the station. The State intends to use the quarantine facilities to research invasive species without risk of introducing them to the national environment of our State.

Among the species to be studied include the hemlock wooly adelgid, an insect that has been identified in Public Law 108-148, the President's Healthy Forest Initiative, as a forest-damaging insect. The facility will also research control methods of the Sudden Oak Death Fungus.

The people of North Carolina, Mr. Speaker, would be grateful for the passage of this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the gentleman from North Carolina on bringing forward a fine piece of legislation. I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the ranking member, for his work on this and other bills that we brought before the House tonight. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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 Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2119, 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 of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to provide for the conveyance of Federal lands, improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina, to the State of North Carolina."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. 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. 2119.

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

There was no objection.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for coordinating a discussion of a very important topic as we ask ourselves, "In the arena of health care, are we better off now than we were 4 years ago?"

In order to answer this question, are we better off, I need look no further than the innumerable, and often heart-breaking, letters and calls that I receive from people of Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District every single day.

I get letters from seniors who detail the unbelievable choices they are forced to make, deciding whether to use their limited and fixed incomes for food or prescription drugs.

I get letters from small business owners who are agonizing over the fact that they can no longer afford the costs associated with offering insurance to their employees.