

years, the courses have had problems associated with upkeep and insufficient capital investment. Without a ready source for capital investment, apart from appropriations, NPS has continuously struggled to manage and maintain each of these courses since their inception. There is no prospect that the necessary Federal funds for capital investment and improvement of golf will be available today or in the future. Moreover, the current fee to play at the golf courses, as established in the concessions contract process, must remain affordable and cannot generate sufficient revenue for NPS or the concessioners to keep the courses properly maintained, or to make the capital investment required for a golf course today. In fact, NPS owes millions of dollars to the concessioner of the golf courses for necessary improvements.

General Services Administration land and real estate professionals and other experts advise that the best option consistent with Federal law and practices is to create a long-term ground lease that bundles all three of the courses into a single contract and then to request proposals that allow for response with ideas and alternatives for modernization and maintenance consistent with anticipated use and affordability. This bill requires that historic features of the courses be preserved and that two of the three courses remain affordable to the general public.

The confines of Federal concession law inhibited NPS and the concessioner from making improvements to the courses because Federal concession laws are incompatible with golf course operations. Historically, the constrictions of NPS concessions law have been a direct cause of disrepair and capital disinvestment, reducing the quality of play and jeopardizing the historic preservation of the courses. However, the NPS is attempting to join two of the three golf courses together for the next 7 years under a proposed concession contract that was issued on October 23, 2007. The draft contract requires only that the next concessioner be able to perform routine repair and maintenance consistent with NPS practice and the limits imposed by concession law. The draft contract does not and could not impose any requirement that capital improvements be made to the courses, usually guaranteeing

that these courses will stay in the same poor condition until 2015. East Potomac was excluded from the proposed concession contract because its concession contract expires next year, not for any reason associated with maintaining and improving the courses for public use. This separates East Potomac, the only financially viable golf course from Langston and Rock Creek, the two that need subsidy for their operations. The effect will leave Langston and Rock Creek worse off than they are today.

This bill would exempt these golf courses from concession law and bind the three courses into one contract. This approach applies another vehicle commonly used by the Federal Government to allow for more creative solutions consistent with the NPS mission to preserve general public access and preserve the historic qualities of the courses. The single long-term ground lease for all three courses, designed outside of the constraints of concession law, provided by this bill would encourage private investment in these courses, improve the quality of the courses, ensure affordable play, and preserve their historic nature.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

FLOOR CONSIDERATION OF THE
MINE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION ACT OF
2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, as a cosponsor, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3877, the Mine Communications Technology Innovation Act, which was introduced by our colleague from Utah, Mr. MATHESON.

Mining is an important part of our history and it will be critical to our future as well, but we have seen too many mining accidents that have ended in tragedy. Too often, these tragedies have been related to difficulties with communication. The unfortunate deaths of six min-

ers and three rescuers at the Crandall Canyon Mine this year has highlighted the severe communication challenges that miners face when deep underground.

While mines generally use reliable communications systems, some mines—specifically, deep underground mines—present a number of unique challenges that make communications and tracking more difficult. For example, the open air pathway required for radio signals and WiFi often do not exist in underground mines and less than ten percent of the radio spectrum that is used above ground can be used underground. Additionally, in the event of a catastrophic event, existing communications systems are often compromised.

This bill would help improve tracking and communications systems for two-way communication between the miners and people above ground. Specifically, H.R. 3877 would accelerate the research and development of innovative mine tracking and communications technologies. Since the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) addresses oversight of immediately available technologies, this legislation is targeted R&D for new technologies to advance our ability to communicate underground. Under this legislation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) would establish an initiative to promote the research, development, and demonstration of miner tracking and communications systems and to promote the establishment of standards and other measurement services regarding underground miners.

Not only will this legislation help miners, but it will draw upon the expertise of Colorado researchers. NIST's Boulder labs have already begun similar work for communications in collapsed buildings and are well positioned to support this new effort with its experience in developing technical standards, best practices and conformance testing.

This bill will ensure that our miners have the state-of-the-art equipment they need to communicate with people above ground, especially in times of emergency. I urge the House to support this important legislation that will help us save lives in the future.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the *Extensions of Remarks* section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, November 1, 2007 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

NOVEMBER 5

3 p.m.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine the twenty-first century security in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) region, focusing on challenges among member states, protracted and unresolved conflicts, shifting political and military alliances, while still confronting the threat of terrorism.

2212-RHOB

NOVEMBER 6

10 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the efficacy of the domestic energy industry, focusing on its available workforce to meet our nation's growing needs.

SD-366

Judiciary

Business meeting to continue consideration of the nomination of Michael B. Mukasey, of New York, to be Attorney General.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Finance

Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the Government Pension Offset (GPO), and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), focusing on policies affecting pensions from work not covered by Social Security.

SD-215

NOVEMBER 7

9:30 a.m.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, "Small Business Contracting Revitalization Act of 2007".

SR-428A

Veterans' Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the performance and structure of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans.

SD-562

10 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the United States government enforcement of intellectual property rights.

SD-226

Rules and Administration

To hold hearings to examine the Government Accountability Office report focusing on funding challenges and facilities maintenance at the Smithsonian Institution.

SR-301

1:30 p.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine sovereign wealth fund acquisitions and other foreign government investments in the United States, focusing on economic and national security implications.

SD-538

NOVEMBER 8

10 a.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine ways to protect the employment rights of those who protect the United States.

SD-430

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the employment-unemployment situation for November 2007.

SH-216

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

National Parks Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 86, to designate segments of Fossil Creek, a trib-

utary to the Verde River in the State of Arizona, as wild and scenic rivers, S. 1365, to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with any of the management partners of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, S. 1449, to establish the Rocky Mountain Science Collections Center to assist in preserving the archeological, anthropological, paleontological, zoological, and geologic artifacts and archival documentation from the Rocky Mountain region through the construction of an on-site, secure collections facility for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Denver, Colorado, S. 1921, to amend the American Battlefield Protection Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for that Act, S. 1941, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Wolf House, located in Norfolk, Arkansas, as a unit of the National Park System, S. 1961, to expand the boundaries of the Little River Canyon National Preserve in the State of Alabama, S. 1991, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of extending the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to include additional sites associated with the preparation and return phases of the expedition, S. 2098, to establish the Northern Plains Heritage Area in the State of North Dakota, S. 2220, to amend the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1963 to authorize certain appropriations, and H.R. 1191, to authorize the National Park Service to pay for services rendered by subcontractors under a General Services Administration Indefinite Deliver Indefinite Quantity Contract issued for work to be completed at the Grand Canyon National Park.

SD-366

NOVEMBER 13

2:30 p.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (Public Law 95-87), focusing on policy issues thirty years later.

SD-366