

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2408.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2671.

That the Senate passed S. 1396.

That the Senate passed S. 1585.

That the Senate passed S. 2339.

That the Senate passed S. 2484.

That the Senate passed S. 1916.

That the Senate passed S. 1858.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE INDUSTRY TO THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 15) recognizing the contributions of the Christmas tree industry to the United States economy.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 15

Whereas Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since the 1850s;

Whereas, by 1900, one in five American families decorated a tree during the Christmas season, while, by 1930, a decorated Christmas tree had become a nearly universal part of the American Christmas celebration;

Whereas 32.8 million households in the United States purchased a live-cut Christmas tree in 2005;

Whereas the placement and decoration of live-cut Christmas trees in town squares across the country have become an American tradition;

Whereas, for generations, American families have traveled hundreds and even thousands of miles to celebrate the Christmas season together around a live-cut Christmas tree;

Whereas 36 million live-cut Christmas trees are produced each year, and 98 percent of these trees are shipped or sold directly from Christmas tree farms;

Whereas Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, Virginia, California, and Ohio are the top producers of live-cut Christmas trees, but Christmas trees are grown in all 50 States;

Whereas there are more than 21,000 growers of Christmas trees in the United States, and approximately 100,000 people are employed in the live-cut Christmas tree industry;

Whereas many Christmas tree growers grow trees on a part-time basis to supplement their other farm and non-farm income;

Whereas growing Christmas trees provides wildlife habitat;

Whereas, in 2005, Christmas trees were planted on more than a half million acres of land;

Whereas 73 million new Christmas trees will be planted in 2006, and, on average, over 1,500 Christmas trees can be planted per acre; and

Whereas the retail value of all Christmas trees harvested in 2005 was \$1.4 billion: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress recognizes the important contributions of the live-cut Christmas tree industry, Christmas tree growers, and persons employed in the live-cut Christmas tree industry to the United States economy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.J. Res. 15.

H.J. Res 15, a resolution introduced by Congresswoman VIRGINIA FOXX of North Carolina, recognizes the success and importance of the live-cut Christmas tree industry in the United States.

It is an appropriate time of the year for Congress to consider this resolution, as I think that most of us here today have memories of decorating a Christmas tree during the holiday season. The live-cut Christmas tree industry ensures that this tradition continues every year for families across the Nation.

Likewise, there are private forest landowners all across America for whom Christmas trees are an important source of income. Over 35 million live-cut Christmas trees are produced this year, and they are growing in all 50 States. Christmas tree growers are responsible land stewards who provide wildlife habitat, give us cleaner air, protect watersheds, and improve the environment.

The economic strength and cultural contribution of this industry makes this resolution worthy of congressional support.

I encourage the support of the resolution.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honored today to rise as the House considers House Joint Resolution 15, a resolution I authored to recognize the contributions of the Christmas tree industry to the United States economy.

As a former Christmas tree grower myself, I can attest to the importance of recognizing this often overlooked, yet highly significant, farming industry. Christmas trees have held a historic place in traditional American family values since 1850. Just as importantly, Christmas trees play a vital role in the North Carolina High Country's economy by providing jobs and livelihoods for thousands of North Carolinians.

My district in North Carolina is one of the largest producers of live-cut Christmas trees in the entire country. There are over 1,600 North Carolina growers and approximately 400 choose-and-cut Christmas tree farms across the State. The North Carolina Christmas tree industry is ranked second in the Nation in the number of trees harvested, producing over 19 percent of the real Christmas trees in the United States.

North Carolina has an estimated 50 million Fraser fir Christmas trees growing on over 25,000 acres. Representing over 95 percent of all species growing in North Carolina, Fraser firs are grown in North Carolina's western counties, including Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey.

The North Carolina Fraser fir Christmas tree is the most popular Christmas tree in North America and is shipped to every State in the United States, as well as the Caribbean Islands, Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, Japan, and other points all over the world.

The North Carolina Fraser fir has soft needles with incomparable needle retention, a long-lasting aroma, and more pliable, yet stronger, branches for even the heaviest ornaments.

Through a contest sponsored by the National Christmas Tree Association, the North Carolina Fraser fir has been judged the Nation's best and has been chosen for the official White House Christmas tree 10 times, more than any other species, in 1971, 1973, 1982, 1984, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2005 and 2007.

It is my great privilege to say that a beautiful Fraser fir grown by Joe Freeman and Linda Jones of Mistletoe Meadows Christmas Tree Farm in Laurel Springs, North Carolina, presently sits in the White House Blue Room as this year's official White House Christmas tree.

The Christmas tree industry supports our economy and the environment. Christmas trees are grown in all 50 States, with North Carolina, Oregon, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, Virginia, California, and Ohio being the top Christmas tree producers. Nationally, there are more than 21,000 Christmas tree growers, and more than 100,000 people are employed in the live-cut Christmas tree industry.

Thirty-six million live-cut Christmas trees are produced each year, and 98 percent are shipped or sold directly from Christmas tree farms. Live-cut Christmas trees are a renewable, recyclable resource. There are over 500,000 acres in production for growing Christmas trees in the U.S., and each acre provides the daily oxygen requirement for 18 people.

□ 1215

On average, over 1,500 Christmas trees are planted per acre, providing an abundant habitat for wildlife.

It can take up to 15 years to grow Christmas trees to retail sale height, a

testament to the commitment growers have to maintain strong and healthy trees. The retail value of all Christmas trees harvested in 2004 was \$1.4 billion. Live-cut Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since 1850. By 1900, one in five American families decorated live-cut trees during Christmas. By 1930, the tree had become a nearly universal part of the American Christmas. For generations, American families have traveled hundreds and thousands of miles to celebrate the holiday season together at home around the Christmas tree. This year, more than 10,000 trees were donated to American troops by over 750 Christmas tree farmers across the Nation. These Christmas trees were delivered to over 37 bases across 19 States and over 15 countries abroad to spread the holiday spirit to our men and women in uniform who are bravely and honorably serving our Nation throughout this Christmas season.

I would like to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture and the majority leader for their assistance in getting this resolution to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support this measure, recognizing this important industry, not just for its economic and environmental impact, but also for its cultural contribution to the Christmas holiday. Thank you to Christmas tree growers across the country for their contribution to our economy, our environment, and our Nation's heritage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I also yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 15.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 15.

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

There was no objection.

GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3454) to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in the George Washington National Forest in Alleghany County, Virginia, that con-

tains the cemetery of the Central Advent Christian Church and an adjoining tract of land located between the cemetery and road boundaries.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3454

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

SECTION 1. LAND CONVEYANCE, CENTRAL ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH CEMETERY AND ADJOINING TRACT, GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST, ALLEGHANY COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

(a) CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall convey, without consideration, to the Central Advent Christian Church of Alleghany County, Virginia (in this section referred to as the "recipient"), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of real property in the George Washington National Forest, Alleghany County, Virginia, consisting of not more than 8 acres, including a cemetery encompassing approximately 6 acres designated as an area of special use for the recipient, and depicted on the Forest Service map showing tract G-2032c and dated August 20, 2002, and the Forest Service map showing the area of special use and dated March 14, 2001.

(b) CONDITION OF CONVEYANCE.—The conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to the condition that the recipient accept the real property described in such subsection in its condition at the time of the conveyance, commonly known as conveyance "as is".

(c) DESCRIPTION OF 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 recipient.

(d) 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 Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of H.R. 3454. This bill, sponsored by Mr. BOUCHER from Virginia, would convey property in the George Washington National Forest to the Central Advent Christian Church of Alleghany County, Virginia. The parcel will consist of no more than 8 acres, and included in this parcel will be a cemetery encompassing approximately 6 acres.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3454 requires that the church accept the property at the time of the conveyance in an "as is" condition. The exact acreage and legal description of the property to be conveyed will be determined in a survey of USDA's approval. USDA will also set additional terms and conditions in connection with the conveyance of the property.

The United States Forest Service has acknowledged that this particular

tract of forest land is difficult to manage. Owning a cemetery tract is inconsistent with the Forest Service mission, which is why they have attempted to sell this property several times without success. I understand the Central Advent Christian Church has already been doing basic maintenance on the cemetery grounds. Conveying this land to the church would enable them to make more significant repairs to the property. This effort deserves congressional support.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in support of H.R. 3454 which our distinguished ranking member on the Agriculture Committee (Mr. GOODLATTE) has cosponsored with Congressman BOUCHER. H.R. 3454 requires the U.S. Forest Service to convey, without consideration, 8 acres of the George Washington National Forest in Alleghany County, Virginia, to the Central Advent Christian Church. The conveyance includes a 6-acre cemetery and 2 additional acres between the cemetery and Interstate 64.

While typically the Forest Service would sell this property under existing authority, they did not receive any bids when they attempted to sell it. Clearly, the Forest Service should not be in the business of owning a cemetery, particularly that has been managed by the community church since 1941 under a special use permit. The church has tried to acquire the property, but for financial and other reasons has been unsuccessful.

The cemetery also creates some management problems for the agency, since there is a fair amount of maintenance associated with it.

This conveyance makes sense for the Federal Government and for the community church. It will allow the Forest Service to focus on the land Congress intended the agency to manage.

I urge adoption of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3454, bipartisan legislation which will authorize the conveyance by the Forest Service to the Central Advent Christian Church in Alleghany County, Virginia of a small parcel of land containing a cemetery currently operated by the church. The church and the land in question are located in my Congressional District.

For 66 years, the Central Advent Christian Church has been operating its cemetery through a Special Use permit granted by the U.S. Forest Service. The historic cemetery contains more than 300 graves, two-thirds of which are located on land owned by the U.S. Forest Service. In recent years, maintenance of this land has become difficult for the Forest Service, taking valuable staff time to remove discarded flowers and other items.

It is the desire of the families of those buried in the cemetery, the members of Central Advent Christian Church and the Forest Service that the cemetery be transferred into church ownership, and the bill before the House takes the entirely appropriate step of authorizing the conveyance.