

the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1376, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY AND TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2009

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1121) to authorize a land exchange to acquire lands for the Blue Ridge Parkway from the Town of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1121

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 "Blue Ridge Parkway and Town of Blowing Rock Land Exchange Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TOWN.—The term "Town" means the Town of Blowing Rock in the State of North Carolina.

(3) MAP.—The term "map" means the National Park Service map titled "Blue Ridge Parkway, Proposed Land Exchange with Town of Blowing Rock", numbered "601/90,000A", and dated "April, 2008".

(4) EXCHANGE.—The term "exchange" means the exchange of land authorized by section 3(a).

SEC. 3. LAND EXCHANGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (d), the Secretary may exchange approximately 20 acres of land within the boundary of the Blue Ridge Parkway that are generally depicted on the map as "Blowing Rock Reservoir", for approximately 192 acres of land owned by the Town that are generally depicted on the map as "Town of Blowing Rock Exchange Lands".

(b) MAP AVAILABILITY.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(c) TIMING.—The Secretary shall seek to complete the land exchange not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) APPLICABLE LAWS; TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The exchange shall be subject to—

(1) laws, regulations, and policies applicable to exchanges of land administered by the National Park Service, including those concerning land appraisals, equalization of values, and environmental compliance; and

(2) such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(e) EQUALIZATION OF VALUES.—If the lands proposed for exchange are found to be not equal

in value, the equalization of values may be achieved by adjusting the acreage amounts identified in subsection (a).

(f) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—Upon completion of the exchange, the Secretary shall adjust the boundary of the Blue Ridge Parkway to reflect the exchanged lands.

(g) ADMINISTRATION.—Lands acquired by the Secretary through the exchange shall be administered as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

(h) FUTURE DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.—If the Town desires to dispose of the reservoir property that is the subject of the exchange, the Secretary shall have the right of first refusal to acquire the property for the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1121 is sponsored by our colleague Representative VIRGINIA FOXX of North Carolina. The bill authorizes the exchange of approximately 192 acres of land owned by the Town of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, for roughly 20 acres of land within the Blue Ridge Parkway, a unit of the National Park System. Both the town and the National Park Service support this exchange. All applicable laws and policy regarding environmental compliance and equalization of values will be followed.

This is a good bill, Mr. Speaker, that resolves a longstanding management issue for both parties, so I ask my colleagues to support the passage of this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the reservoir that supplies the water to Blowing Rock, North Carolina, is on land that was donated to the Blue Ridge Parkway over 50 years ago. After the Park Service acquired the land, the reservoir continued to operate under an informal agreement until recently when the National Park Service decided to require an annual special use permit for the site and imposed water rights fees. The Park Service pronouncement means that the town faced the prospect of renting its longstanding sole source of water 1 year at a time and being charged for the water.

So I want to compliment Dr. Foxx for this legislative solution to the problem. Her bill will allow Blowing Rock to own and manage its 20-acre munic-

ipal water supply, rather than accessing it through the Park Service permitting process.

I must say, though, that I am dismayed because of the price extracted by the National Park Service because it forced the town to come up with 192 acres in exchange for 20. I think that is a bad ratio. Nevertheless, I support this legislation. I think it's a good piece of legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the author of this legislation, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Washington and my colleague from Guam for bringing my bill forward, and I especially want to thank the committee for bringing H.R. 1121, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Town of Blowing Rock Land Exchange Act forward for consideration.

This is noncontroversial, bipartisan legislation, which is recognized by the North Carolina delegation as essential to the Blue Ridge Parkway's vital tourism industry and the town of Blowing Rock's access to public drinking water. My two colleagues have done a phenomenal job of explaining the need for this legislation and the fact that it is noncontroversial and very, very positive legislation.

In recent years, the North Carolina mountain region has experienced remarkable population growth and increased tourism, increasing the need for a reliable water supply in the towns like Blowing Rock. A testament to its importance in the region, this legislation is cosponsored by the entire North Carolina delegation.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and again thank the committee for bringing it to the floor for consideration.

This land exchange will ensure an adequate public drinking water supply for the Town's citizens, guests and Parkway travelers. The Town's economy is heavily based on tourism generated primarily by the Blue Ridge Parkway. With thousands of annual visitors, the transfer will benefit the town's residents and the many North Carolinians who visit Blowing Rock each year.

The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Town of Blowing Rock have had a long, successful relationship and history of working together in order to serve their constituencies. This land exchange will continue to provide demonstrable benefits to both parties and the region.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional requests for time and would inquire of the minority whether they have any additional speakers.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have no more requests for time, and so I'll yield back my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I again urge Members to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1121, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SOUTHERN SEA OTTER RECOVERY AND RESEARCH ACT

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 556) to establish a program of research, recovery, and other activities to provide for the recovery of the southern sea otter, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 556

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 "Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act".

SEC. 2. SOUTHERN SEA OTTER RECOVERY AND RESEARCH PROGRAM.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Geological Survey, shall carry out a recovery and research program for southern sea otter populations along the coast of California, informed by the prioritized research recommendations of the Final Revised Recovery Plan for the southern sea otter (*Enhydra lutris nereis*) published by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and dated February 24, 2003, the Research Plan for California Sea Otter Recovery issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Southern Sea Otter Recovery Implementation Team and dated March 2, 2007, and any other recovery, research, or conservation plan adopted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service after the date of enactment of this Act in accordance with otherwise applicable law. The Recovery and Research Program shall include the following:

(1) *Monitoring, analysis, and assessment of southern sea otter population demographics, health, causes of mortality, and life history parameters, including range-wide population surveys.*

(2) *Development and implementation of measures to reduce or eliminate potential factors limiting southern sea otter populations that are related to marine ecosystem health or human activities.*

(b) *REAPPOINTMENT OF RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM.*—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall appoint persons to a southern sea otter recovery implementation team as authorized under section 4(f)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(f)(2)).

(c) *SOUTHERN SEA OTTER RESEARCH AND RECOVERY GRANTS.*—

(1) *GRANT AUTHORITY.*—The Secretary shall establish a peer-reviewed, merit-based process to award competitive grants for research regarding southern sea otters and for projects assisting the recovery of southern sea otter populations.

(2) *PEER REVIEW PANEL.*—The Secretary shall establish as necessary a peer review panel to provide scientific advice and guidance to prioritize proposals for grants under this subsection.

(3) *RESEARCH GRANT SUBJECTS.*—Research funded with grants under this subsection shall be in accordance with the research recommendations of any plan referred to in subsection (a), and may include the following topics:

(A) *Causes of sea otter mortality.*

(B) *Southern sea otter demographics and natural history.*

(C) *Effects and sources of pollutants, nutrients, and toxicants on southern sea otters and sequestration of contaminants.*

(D) *Effects and sources of infectious diseases and parasites affecting southern sea otters.*

(E) *Limitations on the availability of food resources for southern sea otters and the impacts of food limitation on southern sea otter carrying capacity.*

(F) *Interactions between southern sea otters and coastal fisheries and other human activities in the marine environment.*

(G) *Assessment of the keystone ecological role of sea otters in southern and central California's coastal marine ecosystems, including both the direct and indirect effects of sea otter predation, especially as these effects influence human welfare, resource utilization, and ecosystem services.*

(H) *Assessment of the adequacy of emergency response and contingency plans.*

(4) *RECOVERY PROJECT SUBJECTS.*—Recovery projects funded with grants under this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with recovery recommendations of any plan referred to in subsection (a), and may include projects to—

(A) *protect and recover southern sea otters;*

(B) *reduce, mitigate, or eliminate potential factors limiting southern sea otter populations that are related to human activities, including projects to—*

(i) *reduce, mitigate, or eliminate factors contributing to mortality, adversely affecting health, or restricting distribution and abundance; and*

(ii) *reduce, mitigate, or eliminate factors that harm or reduce the quality of southern sea otter habitat or the health of coastal marine ecosystems; and*

(C) *implement emergency response and contingency plans.*

(d) *REPORT.*—The Secretary shall—

(1) *within 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, report to Congress on—*

(A) *the status of southern sea otter populations;*

(B) *implementation of the Recovery and Research Program and the grant program; and*

(C) *any relevant formal consultations conducted under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) with respect to the southern sea otter; and*

(2) *within 24 months after the date of enactment of this Act and every 5 years thereafter, and in consultation with a southern sea otter recovery implementation team (if any) that is otherwise being utilized by the Secretary under section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(f)), report to Congress and the public on—*

(A) *an evaluation of southern sea otter health, causes of southern sea otter mortality, and the interactions of southern sea otters with California's coastal marine ecosystems;*

(B) *an evaluation of actions taken to improve southern sea otter health, reduce southern sea otter mortality, and improve southern sea otter habitat;*

(C) *recommendation for actions, pursuant to current law, to improve southern sea otter*

health, reduce the occurrence of human-related mortality, and improve the health of such coastal marine ecosystems; and

(D) *recommendations for funding to carry out this Act.*

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) *RECOVERY AND RESEARCH PROGRAM.*—The term "Recovery and Research Program" means the recovery and research program under section 2(a).

(2) *SECRETARY.*—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Geological Survey.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015 of which—

(1) *no less than 30 percent shall be for research grants under section 2(c)(3); and*

(2) *no less than 30 percent shall be for recovery projects under section 2(c)(4).*

(b) *ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.*—Of amounts available each fiscal year to carry out this Act, the Secretary may expend not more than 7 percent to pay the administrative expenses necessary to carry out this Act.

SEC. 5. TERMINATION.

This Act shall have no force or effect on and after the date the Secretary (as that term is used in section 4(c)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(c)(2))) publishes a determination that the southern sea otter should be removed from the lists published under section 4(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(c)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, growth of the southern sea otter population has been slow over the last decade because of high mortality rates. Otters die from many causes, including disease and parasites, malnutrition and entanglement in fishing gear. Additional action is needed to ensure the recovery of these animals is a success.

H.R. 556, introduced by our colleague Congressman SAM FARR of California, would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement a program that would address the decline of the southern sea otter by looking at health, mortality, and life history parameters, develop measures to reduce factors impacting marine ecosystems, health and human activities that limit sea otter populations, and to do so in accordance with consensus recommendations made by the Service's published Southern Sea Otter Recovery Plan.

H.R. 556 has been substantially revised since it was introduced, largely