

Mr. CHILDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the first experimental forest at Fort Valley, Arizona, by the Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Experimental forests and ranges provide places for long-term science and management studies in many of the major vegetation types across the country.

Fort Valley, the first experimental forest research station, established in 1908, as was mentioned earlier, was used to study how the ponderosa pine regenerates as the entire forest was being decimated through extensive logging, yet was not regrowing. Recommendations derived from research at Fort Valley were the basis of many U.S. Forest Service management practices that now allow us to responsibly log our forests so that they continue to produce.

The 80 experimental forests and ranges in existence today play an integral role in our Nation's ability to maintain healthy forests and establish responsible forestry practices. Thirty-five States have one or more experimental forests, including three in my home State of Mississippi.

Experimental forests and ranges provide samples of many ecological and environmental conditions across the United States. They support many forms of multisite research, monitoring and data sharing that address questions at regional and national scales.

As a tree farmer, I understand the vital role that experimental forests and ranges play in keeping myself and other tree farmers at the forefront of forestry research. As we continue to face challenges such as new diseases and invasive species in the forestry industry, experimental forests and ranges will be the key to finding solutions to these challenges and ensuring America's tree farmers continue to be competitive and profitable.

So I ask my colleagues, Members on both sides of the aisle today, to join me in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the establishment of experimental forests and support the passage of this resolution.

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

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I join the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. LUCAS from Oklahoma, in urging adoption of this resolution and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 95.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1415

TERMINATING CERTAIN EASEMENTS IN CASEYVILLE, ILLINOIS

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 511) to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to terminate certain easements held by the Secretary on land owned by the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, and to terminate associated contractual arrangements with the Village.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 511

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

SECTION 1. TERMINATION OF NRCS EASEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS, VILLAGE OF CASEYVILLE, ILLINOIS.

(a) TERMINATION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Agriculture may terminate any easement held by the Secretary on land owned by the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, and terminate associated contractual arrangements with the Village.

(b) CONSIDERATION.—As consideration for the termination of an easement and associated contractual arrangements under subsection (a), the Village of Caseyville, Illinois, shall enter into such compensatory arrangements with the Secretary as determined to be appropriate by the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 511 would provide a limited authorization regarding the administration of a flood plain easement in the village of Caseyville, Illinois. The village of Caseyville and the United States Department of Agriculture executed a warranty easement deed in 1999 under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. However, differences in approach on how to best protect and restore the flood plain led Caseyville to seek termination of the easement, including paying back the entire easement purchase price of \$60,000 to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 511 would allow the National Resource Conservation Service the flexibility to release the terms of the easement so that the village can use the land for flood prevention. This bill passed the House Agriculture Committee by voice vote earlier this year, and I encourage my colleagues to support it today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 511. This bill will allow the Secretary of Agriculture to terminate certain flood easements in the village of Caseyville, Illinois, in return for compensation. Termination of easements is essential for flood protection projects in Caseyville. This bill has passed the House Agriculture Committee with no opposition. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 511, a bill I introduced to correct a problem in Caseyville, Illinois, which is part of the congressional district I represent. I appreciate the efforts of Chairman PETERSON and Ranking Member LUCAS to bring this bill to the floor today.

H.R. 511 simply gives the USDA the authority to terminate an easement it entered into with the Village of Caseyville on September 20, 1999, due to a disagreement over how the land could be used. The Village received \$60,000 and the easement covered 44 acres.

The Village believed that the Warranty Easement Deed under the "Emergency Watershed Protection Program" allowed the 44 acres to continue to be used for flood control. However, the National Resource Conservation Service began referring to the easement as a "Wetlands Reserve Program" property—that program is not concerned with flooding, but rather protecting and restoring wetlands.

The differences in approach led the Village to seek a termination of the easement, including paying back all of the \$60,000 to the Department of Agriculture. After a great deal of discussion, the Department of Agriculture stated that it did not have the authority to terminate the easement, and suggested this legislative approach.

I again, thank the Committee for its attention to this matter and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I have no further speakers and will yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I join the gentleman from Oklahoma in encouraging our colleagues to pass this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 511.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3175) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey to Miami-Dade County certain federally owned land in Florida, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3175

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act:

(1) COUNTY.—The term “County” means Miami-Dade County in the State of Florida.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(3) PROPERTY.—The term “Property” means approximately 2.0 acres, more or less, of the federally owned land comprising the Subtropical Horticulture Research Station in Miami-Dade County, Florida, as described in section 2(b).

SEC. 2. LAND CONVEYANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon receipt of the consideration and cost reimbursement provided herein, the Secretary shall convey and quitclaim to the County, all right, title, and interest of the United States in the Property, subject to easements and rights-of-way of record and such other terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe.

(b) PROPERTY DELINEATION.—Of the federally owned land comprising the Subtropical Horticulture Research Station, the Secretary and the authorized representative of the County shall mutually delineate 2.0 acres, more or less, fronting on SW 67th Avenue for conveyance as the Property.

(c) CONSIDERATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As consideration for the conveyance of the Property, the County shall pay to the Secretary an amount in cash equal to the market value of the property.

(2) DETERMINATION OF VALUE.—To determine the market value of the property, the Secretary shall have the Property appraised in conformity with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions. The approved appraisal shall at all times be the property of the United States.

(d) SURVEY.—The County shall, at its cost, survey the exterior boundaries of the Subtropical Horticulture Research Station and the Property to Federal survey standards to the satisfaction of the Secretary, and shall provide to the Secretary certified originals with signature and raised seal.

(e) RELEASE.—The County, by a recordable instrument satisfactory to the Secretary, shall release the United States Department of Agriculture from that instrument dated September 8, 2006, titled “Unity of Title”.

(f) TIME OF CONVEYANCE.—The Secretary shall convey the Property to the County not later than 120 days after the date on which the County deposits the consideration with the Department of Agriculture.

(g) CORRECTIONS.—With the agreement of the County, the Secretary may make minor corrections or modifications to the legal description of the Property.

SEC. 3. COSTS.

(a) TRANSACTION COSTS.—At closing for the conveyance of the Property under this Act, the County shall pay or reimburse the Secretary, as appropriate, for the reasonable transaction and administrative personnel costs associated with the conveyance authorized by this Act, including the transaction costs of appraisal, title, hazardous substances examination, and closing costs.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—In addition to transaction costs under subsection (a), the County shall pay administrative costs in the liquidated amount of \$50,000.

(c) ATTORNEYS’ FEES.—The County and the Secretary shall each bear their own attorneys’ costs.

SEC. 4. RECEIPTS.

The Secretary shall deposit the consideration and receipts for costs into the Treasury of the United States to be credited to the appropriation for the Agricultural Research Service, and such sum shall be available to the Secretary until expended, without further appropriation, for the operation, upkeep, and maintenance of the Subtropical Horticulture Research Station.

SEC. 5. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

(a) SECURITY FENCING.—On or before closing for the conveyance of the Property under this Act, the County shall, at its cost, contract for the construction of a security fence located on the boundary between the Property and the adjacent land administered by the Secretary. The fence shall be of materials and standards approved in advance by the Secretary. The Secretary may approve temporary security structures for use during construction phases.

(b) OTHER TERMS.—The Secretary and the County may otherwise effect the purpose of this Act on such additional terms as are mutually acceptable and which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

H.R. 3175 was introduced by Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida to facilitate the sale of 2 acres of land at the USDA Agricultural Research Service’s Subtropical Horticulture Research Station in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The land would be sold at market value to the county for the purpose of building a fire station in the village of Palmetto Bay, a community of 25,000 people. This area currently faces below-average firefighting response times when compared to other municipalities in the region.

This ARS station was established in 1898 as a plant introduction garden on 6 acres, and it has grown to about 200 acres today. The ARS station has worked with the county and the village to identify land that could be used for the fire station, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Today I rise in support of H.R. 3175. This bill will allow the Ag Research Service (ARS) to sell 2 acres of land in southeast Florida to the local government of Miami-Dade County, Florida, for the purpose of constructing a new fire station. Current response times for firefighters in the village of Palmetto Bay and South Coral Gables have fallen below the district-wide average, and there is a safety concern for local residents and neighborhoods. ARS has no current use for the land and supports the sale of the fire station, as does local government and local residents. Miami-Dade County will pay market

price for the land along with all associated costs.

The Congressional Budget Office has scored H.R. 3175 at no cost to the Federal Government. This bill passed the Agriculture Committee with no opposition, and I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I thank my dear friend, Ranking Member LUCAS, for the time as well as Mr. HOLDEN, and they’ve summarized the legislation well. I introduced this bill, H.R. 3175, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to sell approximately 2 acres to Miami-Dade County so that a fire station can be built. It is an issue of great importance to the community. The southern portion of the district that I’m honored to represent, covering the village of Palmetto Bay and the city of Pinecrest, continues to grow rapidly. Due to the population growth, public services have been stretched, and fire response times, as Mr. LUCAS pointed out, have fallen below the district average.

This morning I met with distinguished leaders from the village of Palmetto Bay. They reiterated to me the urgent need for this fire station in our south Miami-Dade County community. So this problem really deals with the issue that new construction for public services in Miami-Dade is confronting a lack of available land. The USDA station currently occupies, as Mr. HOLDEN pointed out, approximately 200 acres in southeast Florida with plenty of land to spare.

So, Mr. Speaker, the citizens of my community were not asking for a hand-out, as Mr. LUCAS was pointing out. The county is going to pay fair market value for the land, along with all associated fees, and they have committed to completely funding the construction of the fire station. The CBO has scored the bill at no cost to the taxpayer. So again, I would like to thank Chairman PETERSON and Ranking Member LUCAS for their prompt action on the bill. I also wish to thank my dear colleagues from south Florida who have cosponsored the bill, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, who will shortly address the House, Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART, and KENDRICK MEEK. I urge passage of the legislation.

Mr. HOLDEN. I will continue to reserve, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the Congresswoman from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank my colleague from Oklahoma for the time, and I thank my friend and colleague from Florida, LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, for introducing this important bill and for getting it to the floor today in such

a prompt manner. Our congressional districts share a border, and this piece of land to be conveyed to Miami-Dade County actually sits just about on that very border.

But regardless of congressional districts, the conveyance of this property will be of great benefit to all of the residents in south Florida, particularly for the families living in Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay and Cutler Bay. This land will soon bring them increased safety and important peace of mind. Miami-Dade County expects to build the only fire station that would be equipped to swiftly address emergency situations in these communities. I'm a local resident of this area myself, so I can say that we have all too long needed this fire station.

I commend Congressman DIAZ-BALART as well as the House for swiftly moving this bill to make the lands available for its creation. I must point out that the fire station would be nothing without the brave men and women who will serve there. Our firefighters put their lives on the line for us each and every day, and I know that all of south Florida thanks them for their supreme dedication.

Along with my colleague Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, I also had the opportunity of meeting with the leaders of the Palmetto Bay community, and they strongly support this bill that will go a long way to ensuring the safety and well-being of all of our residents. I thank Mr. LUCAS for the time, and I thank Mr. DIAZ-BALART for his leadership.

Mr. HOLDEN. I continue to reserve, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3175.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LOUISIANA FOREST LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 940) to provide for the conveyance of National Forest System land in the State of Louisiana.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 940

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND DEFINITIONS.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds it in the public interest to authorize the sale of certain

federally owned land in the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana for market value consideration.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this Act:

(1) The term “Collins Camp Properties” means Collins Camp Properties, Incorporated, a corporation existing under the laws of the State of Louisiana.

(2) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION TO SELL LAND.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Subject to valid existing rights and subsection (b), the Secretary is authorized to sell by quitclaim deed the following lands in the State of Louisiana at public or private sale, including by competitive sale by auction, bid or otherwise:

(1) All federally owned lands within section 9, Township 10 North, Range 5 West, in Winn Parish, Louisiana.

(2) A parcel of land consisting of 2.16 acres situated in the SW¼ of section 4, Township 10 North, Range 5 West, Winn Parish, Louisiana, as more specifically depicted on a certificate of survey dated March 7, 2007, by Glen L. Cannon, P.L.S. 4436.

(b) FIRST RIGHT OF PURCHASE.—Subject to valid existing rights and the provisions of section 4, for a period of one year after the date of enactment of this Act, upon tender of consideration from the Collins Camp Properties, the Secretary shall sell and quitclaim to said corporation all right, title and interest of the United States in—

(1) up to 47.92 acres within section 9, Township 10 North, Range 5 West, in Winn Parish, Louisiana, as generally depicted on a certificate of survey dated February 28, 2007, by Glen L. Cannon, P.L.S. 4436, said land comprising the Collins Campsites; and

(2) the 2.16 acres described in subsection (a)(2).

(c) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may configure the lands to maximize marketability or achieve management objectives, and may prescribe such terms and conditions on the land sales authorized by this Act as the Secretary deems in the public interest.

(d) CONSIDERATION.—Land sales authorized by this Act shall be for cash consideration equal to the market value of the land.

(e) MARKET VALUE.—The market value of the land sold under this Act shall be as determined by an appraisal approved by the Secretary and done in conformity with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; or, if sold by means other than that provided in subsection (b), market value may be determined by competitive sale.

(f) HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.—(1) In any disposal of lands authorized by this Act, the Secretary shall meet disclosure requirements for hazardous substances, but shall otherwise not be required to remediate or abate those substances.

(2) Nothing in this section shall otherwise affect the application of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (“CERCLA”, 42 U.S.C. 9601, and following) to conveyances of lands out of Federal ownership.

SEC. 3. PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF LAND.

(a) DEPOSIT OF RECEIPTS.—The consideration received by the Secretary for the sale of land under this Act shall be deposited into the account in the Treasury of the United States established by Public Law 90-171 (commonly known as the Sisk Act; 16 U.S.C. 484a).

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Monies deposited pursuant to subsection (a) shall be available to the Secretary until expended, without further appropriation, for the acquisition of lands and interests in land in the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana.

SEC. 4. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

(a) COSTS.—The Secretary shall require the Collins Camp Properties to pay at closing the reasonable costs of appraisal and any administrative and environmental analyses required by law or regulation.

(b) PERMITS.—An offer by Collins Camp Properties shall be accompanied by written statements from holders of Forest Service special use authorizations agreeing to relinquish their authorizations upon a sale to Collins Camp Properties. For any holder not providing such written authorization, the Secretary shall require the Collins Camp Properties to administer such authorization according to its terms until the date of expiration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

H.R. 940 was introduced by Congressman RODNEY ALEXANDER of Louisiana. This bill would authorize the Forest Service to sell certain residential parcels of land in the Kisatchie National Forest, located in Winn Parish, Louisiana. The total land sold would be just over 50 acres, and a local nonprofit group already living in residence on the site would have the right of first refusal to purchase the land at fair market value. H.R. 940 has the bipartisan support of all seven members of the Louisiana congressional delegation as well as the support of the U.S. Forest Service, and I urge its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 940, a bill which gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to sell 50 acres of national forest land along the Lower Saline Lake in the State of Louisiana. The bill, drafted with the assistance and support of the Forest Service, gives the first option to purchase this tract to a group of residents who already own cabins on the land.

The sale of 50 acres relieves the Forest Service from the burden of performing maintenance and cleanup of the land and gives the task to private citizens who are ready and willing to assume this responsibility. CBO has scored this bill, and it will not have a cost for the taxpayers. The purchaser of the land will be responsible for all costs and fees associated with the transaction, further ensuring that the taxpayers will not be forced to pay for this legislation. This bill passed out of