

oversees all of the company's real estate development and construction activities. Mrs. Staudt's portfolio includes more than 5,000 acres of development ground that involves more than \$11 million in infrastructure, \$20 million in new construction, and \$16 million in tenant improvements. Aimee is also heavily involved in her community, where she has been on the Ankeny Plan and Zoning Commission, a previous president and vice president of the Home Builder's Association of Greater Des Moines' developers' council, a current board member and youth mentor of the ACE Mentor Program, and a court-appointed special advocate for children in need of assistance. Aimee resides in Ankeny with her husband Ryan and their three children. In every facet of her life, Aimee is an example of service and Iowa work ethic that our state can be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Aimee in the United States Congress and it with great pride that I recognize and applaud Mrs. Staudt for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Aimee on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2013 Forty Under 40 class continued success.

A BILL TO AMEND THE SIKES ACT TO PROMOTE THE USE OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS UNDER SUCH ACT FOR LAND MANAGEMENT RELATED TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE READINESS ACTIVITIES AND TO AMEND TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, TO FACILITATE INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE IMPACTS ON MILITARY READINESS ACTIVITIES

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a bill to amend the Sikes Act to promote the use of cooperative agreements for land management related to the Department of Defense (DoD) readiness activities and to facilitate interagency cooperation in conservation programs to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on military readiness activities. The bill provides common sense reforms to the Sikes Act and DoD Readiness Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI). These reforms afford both programs with greater flexibility to leverage cooperative agreements and other federal funds to meet program requirements.

In particular, section 1 of the bill would provide additional enhancements to the authorities provided to DoD under the Sikes Act and parallels a similar amendment made in the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act to the REPI program. Specifically, the provision would authorize DoD, pursuant to a cooperative agreement under the Sikes Act, to provide funds for the long term maintenance and improvement of natural resources on non-DoD lands without first having to protect such lands through acquisition of easements. This will

greatly enhance the ability of DoD to take action to relieve or eliminate current or anticipated challenges that could restrict, impede, or otherwise interfere with, whether directly or indirectly, current or anticipated military activities. For example, this provision would help DoD meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act and other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements through actions on non-DoD lands pursuant to a cooperative agreement with a state or local agency or a private landowner. This authority would help avoid or reduce the need to restrict training and testing activities on DoD lands.

Section 2 of the bill would help DoD better protect military installations and ranges from encroachment under REPI and the Sikes Act by enhancing cooperation with the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior. Sustainability and the long-term viability of many DoD installations and ranges continue to be threatened by incompatible development and loss of habitat in areas in the vicinity of, or ecologically related to, those installations and ranges. Current law allows funds from non-DoD federal programs to be used by REPI partners as contributions under a REPI agreement. Greater partnership and cooperation is enhanced under this provision by allowing funds provided by the DoD to protect bases from encroachment to qualify as match or cost share in the conservation programs of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. For example, prior to the 2008 Farm Bill enactment, DoD, through the REPI program, was able to protect installations in Oklahoma, Kansas, and South Carolina from encroachment while at the same time assisting state and local governments and willing landowners in meeting the matching funds requirements of the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP, now the Farmland Protection Program (FRP)). However, technical changes to this program in the 2008 Farm Bill had the unintended result of terminating the authority for DoD funds to be used as matching or cost-share requirements for that program. The provision reverses that unintended consequence and addresses the broader issue of allowing the DoD funds to be used as a match to other federal programs to help address encroachment issues at military installations. This provision is important to improving the readiness of our forces and ensuring their installations and ranges can be sustained.

Again, the bill is a common sense approach to better enabling DoD to meet its conservation goals and requirements while protecting its ability to meet readiness requirements. In a time of fiscal austerity, it is important for Congress to provide the Administration with the tools and authorities to be flexible and adaptable to challenges with innovative thinking and minimal investment. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

WILDLIFE SERVICES INVESTIGATION REQUEST AND AGENCY RESPONSE

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, on November 30, 2012 I sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary

of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack, requesting an investigation into Wildlife Services and the conduct of its employees. Mr. Vilsack responded to my letter on February 1, 2013 and my office received this letter on February 13, 2013. I intend to monitor this situation closely and look forward to seeing the results of the internal investigation that is currently taking place of WS employees and their compliance with state and federal anti-cruelty and animal protection laws.

NOVEMBER 30, 2012.

THOMAS VILSACK,
Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of
Agriculture, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY VILSACK: We are writing to request a thorough audit of Wildlife Services, especially its lethal predator control program, by the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding the culture within Wildlife Services.

As you know, recent news reports indicate that Jamie P. Olson, a Wildlife Services employee working in Wyoming, may have apparently committed acts of animal cruelty that appear to violate Wildlife Services' Directives and Wyoming state law. If it is found that Mr. Olson committed these acts, it would bring disrepute to the Wildlife Services' program and the federal government at a time when Wildlife Services, and in particular its lethal control of predators to protect livestock, labors under heavy criticism for unnecessarily killing wild animals and lacking transparency and accountability. We urge you to be thorough in your investigation because these alleged acts clearly violate standards of human decency.

However, we are gravely concerned that photographs, published on Mr. Olson's Facebook in an album labeled "work" and since removed, do not represent an isolated occurrence, but may reflect a deep-rooted problem within the Wildlife Services program that allows for, and encourages, inhumane lethal methods of predator control. According to a recent Sacramento Bee article, Gary Strader, a former Wildlife Services trapper in Nevada, "was not surprised to learn about the controversial photos. 'That is very common,' Strader wrote in an email." (Toni Knudson, U.S. wildlife worker's online photos of animal abuse stir outrage. Sacramento Bee, Friday, November 2, 2012).

We look forward to seeing the results of your investigation, and thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,

JOHN CAMPBELL,
Member of Congress.
PETER DeFAZIO,
Member of Congress.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, Feb. 1, 2013.

Hon. PETER DeFAZIO,
U.S. House of Representatives, Rayburn House
Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN DeFAZIO: Thank you for your letter of November 30, 2012, regarding allegations of animal cruelty by an employee with the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildlife Services (WS) program. I apologize for the delayed response.

I, and other USDA officials, take this matter very seriously. USDA does not condone any form of animal cruelty and holds all employees responsible for adhering to Departmental and Agency standards and directives. WS personnel are expected to use approved and humane methods to euthanize captured or restrained animals whenever practicable, and in accordance with American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines. WS employees are also required to comply at all times with applicable State and Federal laws.

At this time, the Administrative Investigations and Compliance Branch (AICB) of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is engaged in an ongoing investigation of this matter. In response to a previous request to initiate an investigation into these allegations, USDA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has deferred to AICB's

active investigation. However, OIG officials have requested that AICB report its findings to them once the investigation has been finalized. In the meantime, WS officials are also taking this opportunity to reaffirm to program staff their ethical obligation to uphold professional standards and their responsibilities to the American public.

I appreciate the opportunity to address your concerns. I assure you that USDA remains steadfast in its commitment to responsible oversight and stewardship with regard to the WS program. I am sending a similar letter to Congressman Campbell.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK,
Secretary.