

and so I am happy to commemorate National Health IT Week.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOTH THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND AND THE WILDERNESS ACT

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of both the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Wilderness Act, two momentous accomplishments for the environmental movement at both the time of their signing and today.

The technology sector in my district is booming. People come to Seattle not just because of our vibrant technology ecosystem or our business- and worker-friendly environment. They also come because smart, forward-thinking people for the past 50 years have set aside open space—preserving farmland, building parks, and conserving habitat.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund helped conserve iconic natural treasures in all fifty states, including Mount Rainier National Park in the great state of Washington. I am a frequent visitor to the beautiful San Juan Islands, another Washington gem protected by the LWCF. The Wilderness Act enabled the highest levels of protection for the stunning Alpine Lakes Wilderness, a natural landscape Seattleites are fortunate to have in their backyard.

Programs like the Land and Water Conservation Act and the Wilderness Act are not just good for the environment; they are good for people and the economy. I commend those who enacted these programs half a century ago and those working to promote this work today. It is imperative that we continue the legacy of preserving America's rich and diverse natural heritage.

CELEBRATING WILDERNESS WEEK
2014

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2014

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of our nation's public lands and wilderness and in honor of Wilderness Week, observed September 13–18, 2014.

This year, Wilderness Week takes on special meaning, as this September marks the 50th anniversary of two enduring tools for American conservation: the Wilderness Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Passed by Congress in 1964, these two acts

remain vital to our efforts of conserving the best of America's natural lands.

On September 3, 1964, President Johnson signed into law the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, landmark legislation that established a dedicated and permanent funding stream for the purpose of protecting and conserving our nation's irreplaceable outdoor recreational, natural, historic and cultural landmarks.

Paid for by royalties collected from oil and gas companies, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has financed generations of projects to bring parks and clean, green spaces to the hearts of our urban areas. The suite of LWCF programs is critical for protecting natural lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, and working forests at the local, state and federal levels. Since its creation, the LWCF program has conserved more than 5 million acres of parks, recreation, forests, and other lands through the federal program and more than 2.6 million acres in communities throughout every state in the nation.

But LWCF does more than simply add to our public lands. Investing in LWCF is also an important way to grow our economy. The Outdoor Industry Association states that outdoor recreation contributes more than \$1.06 trillion annually to the U.S. economy, supports more than 9.4 million jobs, and stimulates 8 percent of all consumer spending. And The Trust for Public Land found that every \$1 invested in LWCF returns \$4 in economic value. Without LWCF funding to stimulate matching investments from state, local and private entities, this crucial economic driver will be lost.

These numbers prove the program's success, and I am pleased that the program is also extremely popular. In recent polls, more than 80 percent of voters expressed support for continuing to deposit fees from offshore oil and gas drilling into LWCF—this broad support extends from every geographic region of the country and every political persuasion. Supporters include governors, mayors, sportsmen, industry leaders, conservationists, Civil War enthusiasts, historians, recreationists, small businesses, forest owners, and the many Americans who see firsthand the tangible benefits this program has had on their communities and families.

Although LWCF has a dedicated revenue stream from offshore drilling royalties and takes no taxpayer money from the general fund, large portions of this funding have been diverted over the years to non-conservation purposes. Even at last year's appropriated level of \$306 million, we were a far cry from the \$900 million that is annually authorized for conservation work. In addition, LWCF's authorizing legislation is set to expire in September 2015, and it is imperative that we reauthorize this successful program before that date. I believe Congress should uphold its decades long commitment to land and water conservation and reinvestigate LWCF, thereby expanding opportunities for all Americans to

have access to parks and natural areas for outdoor recreation.

Along with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, President Johnson also signed into law the Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Act allows Congress to designate some public lands as "wilderness." These wilderness areas are designed to remain unchanged by humans—to allow ecological and evolutionary processes could be carried out without human intervention and give future generations a "glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning." As such, these areas are off-limits to commercial ventures, such as logging and mining, and permanent structures (roads and lodges), but they remain available for public exploration.

Just as our government had established the first national parks in the world almost a century earlier, the Wilderness Act made the United States the first country in the world to designate and protect wilderness. When it was first signed, the Wilderness Act designated 54 wilderness areas, protecting about 9.1 million acres in 13 states. Since that time, the number of wilderness areas has increased to more than 750, covering about 110 million acres of wilderness in 44 states. Our wilderness areas include some of the highest points of the Rockies to places like Linville Gorge in my home state of North Carolina's mountains. Sadly, some opponents of conservation in Congress would like to see this hard work undone. In 2012, for the first time, Congress actually took 222 acres out of the wilderness designation.

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, once said, "Wilderness is a necessity . . . There must be places for human beings to satisfy their souls." Today, in an increasingly urban nation, wilderness areas are ever more important as we need a place to get away, to enjoy and restore ourselves. Wilderness areas also serve to provide biological diversity, clean air and water, and baseline data for research as we deal with issues like climate change. We need to protect connected landscapes to sustain our fish and wildlife and other natural resources for the future.

So, while the 50th anniversary of each of these landmark bills is an occasion for celebration, it must also serve as a reminder of the work we have to do. I once heard it said that "America's public lands are like unfinished works of art; incomplete masterpieces." LWCF and the Wilderness Act will help to complete this work. In fact, that was the promise made to the American people 50 years ago when these bills were enacted. President Johnson wisely observed, "True leadership must provide for the next decade and not merely the next day." So, let us celebrate wilderness week and honor the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and LWCF by renewing our commitment to protect our nation's wild places.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of 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 infor-

mation, 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, September 18, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

SEPTEMBER 23

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Lourdes Maria Castro Ramirez,

of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Therese W. McMillan, of California, to be Federal Transit Administrator, Department of Transportation.

SD-538

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine The FANS Act, focusing on if sports blackouts and antitrust exemptions are harming fans, consumers, and the games themselves.

SD-226