

This is a good bill, and I urge my colleagues to support its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) for his work and leadership on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join me to honor the more than 400 individuals who lost their lives nearly 90 years ago by supporting this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5244, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TUOLUMNE BAND OF ME-WUK LAND INTO TRUST

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3079) to take certain Federal land located in Tuolumne County, California, into trust for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3079

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

SECTION 1. LAND INTO TRUST.

(a) *FEDERAL LAND.*—Subject to valid existing rights, all right, title, and interest (including improvements and appurtenances) of the United States in and to the Federal land described in subsection (b) shall be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for nongaming purposes.

(b) *LAND DESCRIPTION.*—The land taken into trust under subsection (a) is the approximately 80 acres of Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of the United States Forest Service, located in Tuolumne County, California, and described as follows:

(1) Southwest 1/4 of Southwest 1/4 of Section 2, Township 1 North, Range 16 East.

(2) Northeast 1/4 of Northwest 1/4 of Section 11, Township 1 North, Range 16 East of the Mount Diablo Meridian.

(c) *GAMING.*—Class II and class III gaming (as those terms are defined in section 4 of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2703)) shall not be permitted at any time on the land taken into trust under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wyoming.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), the author of this bill, the chairman of the Federal Lands Subcommittee of the Natural Resources Committee, a committee on which I serve.

I want to salute the fine work during this Congress and previous Congresses of the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK).

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, although I am still very angry at her for her decision to retire from the House at the end of this term. I don't think anyone blames her for wanting to deprive herself of the pleasure of our company, but I do blame her very much for depriving all of us of the pleasure of her company. She will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3079 would transfer two 40-acre parcels owned by the Forest Service to the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians. These parcels are landlocked Forest Service property that are caught between a private property owner to the north and east, and tribally owned lands to the south and west that are currently in the process of being converted from fee to trust.

These new parcels would be added to the tribe's existing tribal conservation area and would be forbidden from being used for gaming.

This bill has the full support of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors, the elected land use agency in this jurisdiction. The private property owner whose lands abuts this parcel also supports the transfer. Similar legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Feinstein and Boxer.

The Federal Lands Subcommittee has held extensive hearings into the maintenance backlog of U.S. Forest Service properties and the horrific fire danger posed by these overgrown Federal lands. Acreage in the Sierra now typically carries four times the timber density that the land can support. This region has been devastated by forest fires in the past decade because the Federal lands have been so badly neglected. The land in question is designated as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The tribal chairman testified that the Forest Service has done no thinning of these parcels throughout his lifetime.

Now, in my district that spans the Sierra Nevada, forest fires have utterly destroyed more than 1,000 square miles of forest in just the last 3 years. The Rim Fire, the largest in the history of the Sierra and one of the largest in the history of the State, came within just a few miles of this parcel.

When I visited the command center at the Rough Fire just south of

Tuolumne in August, the beleaguered firefighters begged me to carry back one message to Congress: that forest treatment matters. Where the fire ran into treated acreage, it slowed enough to extinguish, but there just wasn't enough of it. So that fire burned for more than 10 weeks and destroyed 151,000 acres of forest land.

By adding these parcels to the existing tribal conservation area, we ensure that this acreage will be properly maintained, which means additional fire protection for the region. It will add 80 acres of properly managed and maintained forest land where excess timber can be carried out before it burns out. And in association with the tribe's other conservation work, that just could make the difference in stopping or slowing the next catastrophic fire in the region. It is, at least, a start.

I thank the gentlewoman for the time, and I thank the House for hearing this bill today and ask for its adoption.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Tuolumne Band of the Me-Wuk Indians of the Tuolumne Rancheria is seeking a transfer of the two parcels that have been mentioned from the U.S. Forest Service land to the Department of the Interior to be held in trust for the tribe. These two parcels, which represent a combined total of about 80 acres, are both undeveloped and they are landlocked.

The parcels are located in an area of great cultural and historical significance to the tribe and are contiguous to lands the tribe currently owns in fee simple, known simply as the Murphy Ranch.

When the tribe inquired about the status of these parcels, the local U.S. Forest Service staff confirmed that there are no current or future uses to the U.S. Forest Service or any other Federal agency.

The tribe would like to make these existing two parcels a part of their Murphy Ranch Conservation Area, which was established to protect the environment, wildlife, and the natural beauty of the area, and also, as Congressman MCCLINTOCK noted, to provide additional fire protection, which is absolutely essential.

We, as a result of 4 devastatingly dry years, combined with the bark beetle, have a tinderbox of extreme fire conditions that we are dealing with in California. Some of you have noted the fires that have taken place already in other Western States.

So fire protection is a part of the concern of this effort, and I feel very strongly that we need to do everything we can to improve the Forest Service's ability to manage our forest lands. Frankly, we are spending all the money that we do give to the Forest Service to put out fires and, therefore, it only makes matters worse because we are not doing the kind of work we ought to be doing in managing the forests.

So I want to commend the tribe for working with the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and the Edward Ingalls Trust to mitigate any other concerns that the land transfer might have had.

Of course, Congressman MCCLINTOCK has been tenacious in working with all the parties to try to bring this legislation to the floor for swift adoption, and I want to commend his efforts.

We have no further speakers, and I think it would be appropriate that I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) for all her good work. I, too, will be one of those who will miss her presence, her active engagement, and her constructive efforts to try to find bipartisan solutions to the challenges we face here in Congress.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3079. The tribe intends to incorporate the 80 acres into what is commonly referred to as the “Murphy Ranch,” as the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) just indicated, and to designate the land as part of the tribe’s 2013 permanent conservation area.

Once again, we have Californians coming together in a bipartisan way to do the right thing for their State. Nobody knows better than the people of their own State how best to manage their State.

I think this evening’s debates are an example of people coming together to do the right thing on a bipartisan basis for their State. This is how Congress should work. This is how Congress can work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to salute my colleague, chairman of the Federal Lands Subcommittee, Mr. TOM MCCLINTOCK, for all of his important work on this piece of legislation and other pieces of legislation. As I leave Congress, I am delighted to entrust the future of this Nation’s lands and water and air to the gentleman with whom I have been having these conversations tonight and debating these very bipartisan bills, practical commonsense approaches, just what the American people want to see more of in this Congress.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3079, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENNIAL COMMISSION ACT OF 2016

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 4875) to establish the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4875

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 “United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the historic events preceding that anniversary—

(1) are of major significance in the development of the national heritage of the United States of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

(2) have had a profound influence throughout the world.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a Commission to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the United States Semiquincentennial Commission established by section 4(a).

(2) PRIVATE CITIZEN.—The term “private citizen” means an individual who is not an officer or employee of—

(A) the Federal Government; or

(B) a State or local government.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a commission, to be known as the “United States Semiquincentennial Commission”, to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the history of the United States leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) 4 members of the Senate, of whom—

(A) 2 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; and

(B) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(2) 4 members of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) 2 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(B) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) 16 members who are private citizens, of whom—

(A) 4 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) 4 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) 4 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) 4 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) 1 of whom shall be designated by the President as the Chairperson.

(4) The following nonvoting ex officio members:

(A) The Secretary.

(B) The Secretary of State.

(C) The Attorney General.

(D) The Secretary of Defense.

(E) The Secretary of Education.

(F) The Librarian of Congress.

(G) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

(H) The Archivist of the United States.

(I) The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

(c) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) MEETINGS.—All meetings of the Commission shall be convened at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to honor the historical significance of the building as the site of deliberations and adoption of both the United States Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

(e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

SEC. 5. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(1) prepare an overall program for commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and the historic events preceding that anniversary; and

(2) plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded, and are associated with, the United States Semiquincentennial.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In preparing plans and an overall program, the Commission—

(A) shall give due consideration to any related plans and programs developed by State, local, and private groups; and

(B) may designate special committees with representatives from groups described in subparagraph (A) to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities.

(2) EMPHASIS.—The Commission shall—

(A) emphasize the planning of events in locations of historical significance to the United States, especially in those locations that witnessed the assertion of American liberty, such as—

(i) the 13 colonies; and

(ii) leading cities, including Boston, Charleston, New York City, and Philadelphia; and

(B) give special emphasis to—

(i) the role of persons and locations with significant impact on the history of the United States during the 250-year period beginning on the date of execution of the Declaration of Independence; and

(ii) the ideas associated with that history, which have been so important in the development of the United States, in world affairs, and in the quest for freedom of all mankind.

(3) INFRASTRUCTURE.—The Commission shall—

(A) evaluate existing infrastructure;

(B) include in the report required under subsection (c) recommendations for what infrastructure should be in place for the successful undertaking of an appropriate celebration in accordance with this Act; and

(C) coordinate with State and local bodies to make necessary infrastructure improvements.

(c) REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the President a