

had the opportunity to be a guest and a conferee at so many times.

I deeply appreciate the work of Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN. I urge a "yes" vote.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 618.

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.

ELKHORN RANCH AND WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 698) to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 698

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 "Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. LAND CONVEYANCE, ELKHORN RANCH AND WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST, COLORADO.

(a) LAND CONVEYANCE REQUIRED.—Consistent with the purpose of the Act of March 3, 1909 (43 U.S.C. 772), all right, title, and interest of the United States (subject to subsection (b)) in and to a parcel of land consisting of approximately 148 acres as generally depicted on the map entitled "Elkhorn Ranch Land Parcel-White River National Forest" and dated March 2015 shall be conveyed by patent to the Gordman-Leverich Partnership, a Colorado Limited Liability Partnership (in this section referred to as "GLP").

(b) EXISTING RIGHTS.—The conveyance under subsection (a)—

(1) is subject to the valid existing rights of the lessee of Federal oil and gas lease COC-75070 and any other valid existing rights; and

(2) shall reserve to the United States the right to collect rent and royalty payments on the lease referred to in paragraph (1) for the duration of the lease.

(c) EXISTING BOUNDARIES.—The conveyance under subsection (a) does not modify the exterior boundary of the White River National Forest or the boundaries of Sections 18 and 19 of Township 7 South, Range 93 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado, as such boundaries are in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) TIME FOR CONVEYANCE; PAYMENT OF COSTS.—The conveyance directed under subsection (a) shall be completed not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. The conveyance shall be without consideration, except that all costs incurred by the Secretary of the Interior relating to

any survey, platting, legal description, or other activities carried out to prepare and issue the patent shall be paid by GLP to the Secretary prior to the land conveyance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 698, the Elkhorn Ranch and White River National Forest Conveyance Act sponsored by my colleague, Congressman SCOTT TIPTON of the great State of Colorado, and cosponsored by Congressman POLIS and myself, resolves a longstanding surveying issue in the White River National Forest in western Colorado.

In the early 20th century, the U.S. Government issued a series of patents conveying Federal land to private landowners in the region. However, a land survey conducted in 1949 brought these conveyances into question, and the ownership of the land has been in dispute for nearly 70 years. In 2014 the White River National Forest conducted a survey to finalize the land ownership and concluded that 148 acres were improperly within the forest's boundary.

This legislation simply conveys this land back to its rightful ownership. This land conveyance is consistent with the existing forest management plan, and the Forest Service is managing this land as though it were already private property.

This bill has the support of a wide range of stakeholders in the community and I thank the Congressman from Colorado for his work on this legislation. I would point out, as we discussed earlier, there is bipartisan support from within the Colorado delegation for this bill as well.

I urge adoption of the measure and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Living in and around public land, as Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LAMBORN, and I do, we often have these kinds of bills to address the interactions between our communities and our Federal lands in Colorado.

H.R. 698 is another bill that addresses public lands. I am proud to join Mr. TIPTON as a cosponsor of this bill. It will convey 148 acres of land to the Gordman-Leverich Partnership, a company in Colorado, which will remedy a land dispute between a private landowner and the Forest Service.

Way back in 1947, just a few years after my dear mother—who is watching us on C-SPAN as we speak—and my father were born, an administrative error occurred that shifted the boundary between the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest. This survey placed 148 acres of private land inside the forest boundary without providing consideration to the landholders. Since then, the title of the ranch has changed several times, but the administrative error has never been corrected.

We all know how we hold private property rights dear in this country, and this bill will correct the error, acknowledge the correct boundary of the Elkhorn Ranch, providing the current owner with a clear and free title rather than the encumbrance that the disputed nature of the land previously provided.

It will help avoid costly litigation to both sides, provides clarity for landowners and the Forest Service. It recognizes today's reality on the ground and it will help local officials in the Forest Service as well.

I thank my colleague, Mr. TIPTON, for his good work on this legislation, working with stakeholders. I want to point out that the Forest Service testified in support of this bill. I join my colleagues in urging its adoption.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those comments. I would point out, for anyone who is interested, that the three of us who are here—and I am about to yield the floor to Representative TIPTON—we are all on the Natural Resources Committee. This is a committee that is going to be doing a lot of exciting and interesting things in this Congress. We are going to be very busy. I am looking forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON), my friend and colleague, who is also a member of the committee.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues, Mr. POLIS and Mr. LAMBORN. I think among our three congressional districts, we hold the vast majority of public lands in the State of Colorado. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to work with you on these significant bills, to be able to address many of the challenges that we have, and to be able to work together in a bipartisan manner as well.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me time to be able to discuss this important legislation. H.R. 698 is a very straightforward bill, which Congressmen LAMBORN and POLIS and I have reintroduced this year that confirms private ownership of 148 acres of land in my congressional district.

The lands concerned were patented into private ownership via the United States land patents issued in 1914, 1917, and 1957, but their ownership came into question by virtue of a 1949 government

survey which erroneously showed them to be National Forest land rather than private land. A long-held U.S. law specifically states that a government resurvey cannot take away private property or private property rights.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Service and the private landowner of the Elkhorn Ranch only became aware of the potential title issue in the early 2000s, and thereafter, the Forest Service conducted a lengthy and thorough review of the matter. Upon completion of their review in 2014, both the supervisor and the surveyor of the White River National Forest concluded the ownership of the 148 acres should be confirmed in the successors in interest to the original patentee; namely, the Elkhorn Ranch.

In reaching this conclusion, the Forest Service noted that the land has never been managed as National Forest land and, indeed, has been fenced and occupied with stock ponds, developed springs, roads and other private improvements, and has been used as private land for ranching and agriculture for the better part of the past 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a simple matter of fairness and equity to a private landowner to honor government land patents that were granted by the Federal Government to the landowner's predecessors 60 to 100 years ago. The bill is supported by both the surveyor and supervisor of the White River National Forest; the Garfield County surveyor; the Garfield County Commissioner; the city of Rifle; Colorado Club 20, which represents 20 Colorado counties; and Piceance Energy, which has a lease on part of the area.

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In addition, the legislative hearing that was held on the same bill in 2015, the administration testified that this bill is a practical and workable way to address this longstanding issue. This bill is identical to the one that passed out of the House by voice vote in the last Congress, and I once again urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Once again, I extend my thanks to my colleagues Congressman LAMBORN and Congressman POLIS for all of their hard work on this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight, as Mr. TIPTON said, a number of the bills that we are going through, including this one, have passed the House before, and yet the Senate failed to send them to the President's desk. These are real issues that our constituents face.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Senate to simply take up these noncontroversial bills, pass them, and allow President Trump to sign them so we can resolve these real-life issues that affect our constituents. While it feels good to pass a bill as a legislator—and Mr. TIPTON deserves credit, and I look forward to being able to argue for the passage

of a bill that I am a lead sponsor on shortly; and, of course, we recently passed, by voice vote, Mr. LAMBORN's bill—these issues will remain pending until the Senate acts.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to bring forward these bills so we can address these pressing concerns that our constituents have and deal with them in an appropriate multistakeholder manner, where Democrats and Republicans can join in support of addressing the real-life issues that those of us who represent areas in and around public land have.

I urge a "yes" vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 698.

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.

ARAPAHO NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 688) to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 688

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 "Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. ARAPAHO NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The boundary of the Arapaho National Forest in the State of Colorado is adjusted to incorporate the approximately 92.95 acres of land generally depicted as "The Wedge" on the map entitled "Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment" and dated November 6, 2013, and described as lots three, four, eight, and nine of section 13, Township 4 North, Range 76 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado. A lot described in this subsection may be included in the boundary adjustment only after the Secretary of Agriculture obtains written permission for such action from the lot owner or owners.

(b) BOWEN GULCH PROTECTION AREA.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall include all Federal land within the boundary described in subsection (a) in the Bowen Gulch Protection Area established under section 6 of the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 539j).

(c) LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND.—For purposes of section 200306(a)(2)(B)(i) of title 54, United States Code, the boundaries of the Arapaho National Forest, as modified under subsection (a), shall be considered to be the boundaries of the Arapaho National Forest as in existence on January 1, 1965.

(d) PUBLIC MOTORIZED USE.—Nothing in this Act opens privately owned lands within the boundary described in subsection (a) to public motorized use.

(e) ACCESS TO NON-FEDERAL LANDS.—Notwithstanding the provisions of section 6(f) of the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 539j(f)) regarding motorized travel, the owners of any non-Federal lands within the boundary described in subsection (a) who historically have accessed their lands through lands now or hereafter owned by the United States within the boundary described in subsection (a) shall have the continued right of motorized access to their lands across the existing roadway.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 688, sponsored by Congressman JARED POLIS and cosponsored by Congressman TIPTON and myself, would adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest in the State of Colorado to incorporate 93 acres. It passed the House under suspension of the rules during the 113th and 114th Congresses.

The legislation would incorporate 10 undeveloped parcels of land into the Arapaho National Forest. The parcels sit between the Arapaho and the Rocky Mountain National Park and will help the Forest Service to better manage this land. The bill ensures that private landowners with parcels within the national forest will continue to have access through these parcels. Additionally, the land purchased by the Forest Service must be with the written consent of the landowner.

I urge adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have introduced the Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act, also known as the Wedge Act.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I wish all of my bills could come to the floor so quickly, within a week of introducing them. But I am very glad, on behalf of Grand County, which I am honored to represent, that we could move so expeditiously, at least through the House, through this body.

Once again, I will call upon the Senate, upon passage, to move on this bill. Again, this is another bill the House did its work on, we did pass last session, and the Senate failed to pass into law.