

It is very important for Grand County. It is a commonsense protection of public lands. It was coordinated with local landowners and local officials, supported by the county commissioners and Federal land agencies.

The legislation involves a parcel of 10 lots in Grand County, which we and locals call the "wedge." As indicated by its name, the parcel is wedged between Arapaho National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park, effectively separating the two. Although the wedge is integral for the successful management of the public land, it remains outside of the National Forest Service boundary.

Millions of visitors already enjoy the parcel's beauty as they travel west from the 13,000-foot apex of the Rocky Mountains, along the Trail Ridge scenic byway and into the destination town of Grand Lake, in my district. The area is undeveloped. Seven of the ten parcels are already being managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The owners of the remaining parcels are all in favor of this bill. It is very important to point out that all of the stakeholders are supportive of this effort in statute.

Development of the wedge parcel would significantly affect the health of Rocky Mountain National Park and hurt the adjoining Colorado River headwaters. Not only would the development harm clean water for millions, but it could also harm the economic potential for what is truly a jewel of the National Park System, Rocky Mountain National Park, supporting millions of visitors in the surrounding communities.

In recognition of these potential threats to the quality and character, as well as the economy and jobs in the area, there has been significant support locally for this bill. Supporters include everyone from local officials, like the Grand County Commissioners and the town of Grand Lake, to conservation and outdoor recreation groups, including Headwaters Trails Alliance, Conservation Colorado, and the Rocky Mountain Nature Conservancy.

H.R. 688 simply responds to the wishes of my constituency—including the landholders in these areas, particularly those living in and around the wedge, as well as the visitors every year—by incorporating it into the Arapaho National Forest boundary and adding the lots owned by the Forest Service into the adjacent Bowen Gulch Protection Area, just as we did when the House passed this exact bill last year.

This strong, bipartisan bill has the express support of my Colorado colleagues in both chambers, including the cosponsorship of Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN, and introduction by Senator BENNET and Senator GARDNER in the Senate.

It was passed out of the Natural Resources Committee unanimously last Congress and passed here on the House floor. Unfortunately, the clock ran out before the Senate was able to consider

it. I am looking forward to, after expeditiously moving it out of this body, allowing the Senate to do their work and pass this bill into law.

I am extremely grateful for the House Natural Resources Committee's support of this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just build on what my colleague was saying about the rest of his bills.

On this one, there is strong collaboration and consensus. I look forward to working with him to pass it. I will make an offer on the rest of his bills. If he lets me help him write them, I bet we could get them to the floor sooner.

In all seriousness, the Rocky Mountain National Park is a crown jewel of the National Park System. I believe it is in the top five of all parks in the entire country in terms of visitorship. It is very popular, and for good reason. It is a spectacular and accessible place near Boulder, Colorado, not far from Denver.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Furthermore, I call upon the United States Senate to bring up these series of bills that are very important to those of us like Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LAMBORN, and me, who represent areas with substantial public land where our constituents in the private sector, our residents, interact every day with issues around public land and land management. These issues will improve the quality of life in our communities. This bill will help improve the quality of the tourism experience, as well as the conservation goals of Rocky Mountain National Park.

I urge a "yes" vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. 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. 688.

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.

BOLTS DITCH ACCESS AND USE ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 689) to insure adequate use and access to the existing Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment within the Holy Cross Wilderness in Eagle County, Colorado, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 689

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 "Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act".

SEC. 2. BOLTS DITCH ACCESS.

(a) ACCESS GRANTED.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall permit by special use authorization nonmotorized access and use, in accordance with section 293.6 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, of the Bolts Ditch headgate and the Bolts Ditch within the Holy Cross Wilderness, Colorado, as designated by Public Law 96-560, for the purposes of the diversion of water and use, maintenance, and repair of such ditch and headgate by the Town of Minturn, Colorado, a Colorado Home Rule Municipality.

(b) LOCATION OF FACILITIES.—The Bolts Ditch headgate and ditch segment referenced in subsection (a) are as generally depicted on the map entitled "Bolts Ditch headgate and Ditch Segment", dated November 2015.

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.

Since 1882, the town of Minturn, Colorado, has used Bolts Ditch to fill Bolts Lake, a place of recreation for the town and an important source of water for the surrounding community. When Congress passed the Colorado Wilderness Act in 1980, 450 feet of Bolts Ditch was inadvertently included in the Holy Cross Wilderness area, leading to questions and the town's ability to access this important infrastructure. After a discussion amongst stakeholders, the town agreed to seek a legislative solution to address this access issue.

This bipartisan bill, sponsored by Congressman JARED POLIS and cosponsored by Congressman TIPTON and myself, simply allows the Forest Service to issue a special use permit to the town of Minturn to allow nonmotorized access to maintain a headgate and water ditch in the Holy Cross Wilderness. This bill ensures the town will have access to Bolts Ditch for basic maintenance needs.

H.R. 689 was developed in consultation with the community and the Forest Service and enjoys support from a wide range of groups in the region. 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 introduced H.R. 689, the Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act, at the request of our local community in my district, Minturn, Colorado. In Eagle County, Minturn really needs this legislation because it improves

public land and water management in my district.

The bill has bipartisan support. I thank Mr. TIPTON and Mr. LAMBORN for collaborating with me on this bill here in the House. I am thankful that Senator GARDNER and Senator BENNET have partnered to pass this bill as well.

This legislation passed the House last session, but once again was held up in the Senate. I call upon the Senate, after House passage, to act expeditiously to put this matter to rest. I am very hopeful we can get it across the finish line soon.

I am grateful to the town of Minturn, to the conservation community, and to water utilities for working together for a commonsense solution that I am proud to support. This is an example of how we can truly solve any problem when everybody comes together and works together to solve it.

The need for this bill is to solve a vital local problem for the people of Minturn, Colorado, a town of about 1,000 people in Eagle County. The problem it fixes results from a mistake, an error, in the 1980 Wilderness Act, which inadvertently left Bolts Ditch off of the list of existing water facilities, where it should have been included.

This legislation would simply authorize the special use of the Bolts Ditch headgate and the segment of the Bolts Ditch within the Holy Cross Wilderness area, allowing Minturn to use rights that it already has, existing water rights, to fill Bolts Lake.

The residents of Minturn, including the mayor, whom I have met with, who brought this bill to me, as well as Coloradans across the central mountains, have long relied on water infrastructure like Bolts Ditch to access clean and affordable drinking water for our growing communities. This bill will ensure that the town of Minturn is able to utilize a crucial resource, and do so without compromising the sanctity of the surrounding wilderness areas.

I thank the Republican and Democratic staffs on the committee for working with us on this bill.

It is very important for the people of Minturn and for our central mountain region in Colorado to pass this bill into law. I urge its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that this body is moving forward on the Bolts Ditch land boundary adjustment bill. I am hopeful that, after passage, the Senate will bring this bill up and pass it on until it becomes law to remove any encumbrances that Minturn has in accessing its pre-existing water rights due to a clerical error from the 1980s. I urge a "yes" vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. 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. 689.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1715

BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 337) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in the Black Hills National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 337

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

The Act may be cited as the "Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act".

SEC. 2. WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LAND FOR CEMETERY USE.

(a) DUE DILIGENCE.—Prior to the withdrawal and transfer in subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will complete appropriate environmental, cultural resource and other due diligence activities on the public lands identified in subsection (c), so that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may confirm that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of such due diligence activities prior to initiating and shall coordinate as needed during the performance of such activities.

(b) WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER.—After completion of the due diligence activities in subsection (a) and upon receipt by the Secretary of the Interior of written confirmation from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes, and subject to valid existing rights, the public lands described in subsection (c) shall be—

(1) withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including the mining laws, the mineral leasing laws, and the geothermal leasing laws, for as long as the lands remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

(2) deemed property as defined in section 102(9) of title 40, United States Code, for as long as the lands remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

(3) transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use as national cemeteries under chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) LAND DESCRIPTION.—The public lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred

under subsection (b) shall be the approximately 200 acres of land adjacent to Black Hills National Cemetery, South Dakota, generally depicted as "Proposed National Cemetery Expansion" on the map entitled "Proposed Expansion of Black Hills National Cemetery—South Dakota" and dated June 16, 2016, except the land located within 100 feet of the centerline of the Centennial Trail (which runs along the northern boundary of the "Proposed National Cemetery Expansion") and that is located south of the Trail.

(d) BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.—Immediately after the public lands are withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under subsection (b), the boundary of the Black Hills National Cemetery shall be modified to include the public lands identified in subsection (c).

(e) MODIFICATION OF PUBLIC LAND ORDER.—Immediately after the public lands under subsection (b) are withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under subsection (b), Public Land Order 2112, dated June 6, 1960 (25 Fed. Reg. 5243), shall be modified to exclude the lands identified in subsection (c).

SEC. 3. LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.

(a) PREPARATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—As soon as practicable following receipt of written confirmation from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the land is suitable for cemetery purposes, the Secretary of the Interior shall publish in the Federal Register a notice containing the legal descriptions of the public lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2(b).

(b) LEGAL EFFECT.—The legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) shall have the same force and effect as if the legal descriptions were included in this Act, except that the Secretary of the Interior may correct any clerical and typographical errors in the legal descriptions.

(c) AVAILABILITY.—Copies of the map referred to in section 2(c) and the legal descriptions prepared under subsection (a) shall be available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of—

- (1) the Bureau of Land Management; and
- (2) the National Cemetery Administration.

(d) COSTS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reimburse the Secretary of the Interior for reasonable costs incurred by the Secretary of the Interior in implementing this section, including the costs of any surveys.

SEC. 4. RESTORATION TO PUBLIC LANDS FOR NON-CEMETERY USE.

(a) NOTICE AND EFFECT.—Upon a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that all or a portion of the lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2 shall not be used for cemetery purposes, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Secretary of the Interior of such determination. Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transfer administrative jurisdiction of the lands subject to such notice to the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) DECONTAMINATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall be responsible for costs of any decontamination of the lands resulting from contamination on the lands withdrawn, deemed property, and transferred under section 2(b) while the Secretary of Veterans Affairs exercised jurisdiction over those lands subject to a notice under subsection (a) determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be necessary for the lands to be restored to the public lands.

(c) RESTORATION TO THE PUBLIC LANDS.—The lands subject to a notice under subsection (a) shall only be restored to the public lands upon acceptance by the Secretary of the Interior and a determination by the Secretary of the Interior that such lands are suitable for restoration to the public lands