

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

and operation of one or more of the public land laws.

(d) OPENING ORDER.—If the Secretary of the Interior accepts the lands subject to such a notice and determines that the lands are suitable for restoration, in whole or in part, the Secretary of the Interior may open the lands to operation of one or more of the public land laws and may issue an order to that effect.

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 to 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.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act, sponsored by Congresswoman KRISTI NOEM of South Dakota.

This bill expands the Black Hills National Cemetery, outside of Sturgis, South Dakota, by permanently transferring the jurisdictional authority of approximately 200 acres of undeveloped Federal land from the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Originally opened in 1948, the cemetery now houses a memorial carillon, a memorial to Korean war veterans, and is the final resting place of many notable veterans, including Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Charles Windolph. With its existing acreage, the cemetery can only accommodate a finite number of additional burials. Transferring jurisdiction of the land from the BLM to the VA will provide space for hundreds of additional grave sites for future generations of American veterans. Without the transfer, the National Cemetery Administration will be forced to close the cemetery to further burials in the very near future.

This is a commonsense piece of legislation that will ensure that the Black Hills National Cemetery can continue to provide proper burial sites and final resting places for America's fallen heroes.

At this point, I include in the RECORD an exchange of letters with Chairman ROE of the Veterans' Affairs Committee regarding this bill. I thank him for helping to expedite the consideration of this bill today.

I commend Representative NOEM for working closely with both the BLM and the VA on this issue, and I urge the adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, February 1, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act. There are certain provisions in the legislation which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important bill, I am willing to waive this committee's right to sequential referral. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I request that you urge the Speaker to name members of this committee to any conference committee which is named to consider such provisions.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 337 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2017.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act, was introduced on January 5, 2017. The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with an additional referral to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

I thank you for allowing the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may be scheduled by the Majority Leader. This discharge in no way affects your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill, and it will not serve as precedent for future referrals. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support having the Committee on Veterans' Affairs represented on the conference committee. Finally, to memorialize our understanding, I would be pleased to include your letter and this response in the Congressional Record when the bill is considered by the House.

Thank you for your response and cooperation. I look forward to further opportunities to work with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

This bill provides the Veterans Administration with 200 acres of Federal land, which are currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, in order to expand the Black Hills National Cemetery.

National cemeteries are reserved for the brave men and women who make the ultimate personal sacrifice while serving in the military in defense of our freedom, and it is important that we have the sufficient space to meet all of those interment requests. These heroes have served our country and deserve to permanently rest in a ceme-

tery that honors their sacrifice and commitment to the ideals that hold us together as a nation.

With respect to the Black Hills National Cemetery specifically, the BLM and the VA determined that only Congress can provide the permanent jurisdiction transfer that is needed for this particular expansion; thus, we are considering this bill and, after passage, are encouraging our friends in the Senate to do the same.

Of course, this bill represents a small fraction of the ways we can support our veterans and need to support our veterans to demonstrate our appreciation for those who have served. We need to improve access to education and job training. We need to increase funding and raise the bar on accountability for the Department of Veterans Affairs. We should work to shorten wait times at VA hospitals by allowing nurses to practice to the full extent of their licensure to ensure quality care in a quicker way at a reasonable cost, and there are many other things we need to do to make sure that those who proudly put their lives on the line—or in this case, who have paid the ultimate price to protect our freedom—and their families and loved ones are cared for by this country in recognition of their sacrifice.

I do believe this simple change in land ownership will have an impact by providing the men and women who have bravely served a final resting place. Expanding the Black Hills National Cemetery is a noble and worthy cause that deserves our support.

I thank my colleague from South Dakota for bringing this issue forward and for her hard work in guiding this bill through Congress. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his gracious remarks.

I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the great State of South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), who is working hard for the people of her State.

Mrs. NOEM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 337, the Black Hills National Cemetery Boundary Expansion Act.

I thank the chairman of the committee and his staff for working so hard to move this bill through Congress. Their support means so much to our veterans and to their families.

Those who have served and those families who have sacrificed beside them deserve our Nation's eternal gratitude. Since 1948, the Black Hills National Cemetery has been one way that we have shown that appreciation to them. The cemetery currently covers about 100 acres of land and is home to the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Its peaceful landscape serves as the final resting place for hundreds of servicemembers and their family members.

Chief David Beautiful Bald Eagle is among the brave men and women buried here. Born in a tepee in 1919, Chief Bald Eagle served our country in World War II as a paratrooper and as one of the legendary Lakota code talkers. We lost him last summer, but his life continues to be an inspiration to the Lakota people and those who knew him.

Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth was also laid to rest there. He was a man who flew 400 combat missions during World War II. He earned numerous medals and returned to the U.S., where he eventually became wing commander of the Rapid City Air Force Base. In 1953, that base was renamed in his honor.

The surrounding community also does its part to honor this hallowed ground. On a brisk day this past December, Pennington County 4-H, the Sturgis Boy Scouts, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and community members came together and placed over 1,000 wreaths on the graves of servicemembers who were laid to rest at this cemetery. They upheld the vow that those laid to rest should never be forgotten. Now we must do our part to uphold that very same vow.

So we honor the legacy of these veterans and many others at the Black Hills National Cemetery, but the facility is not going to have the room it needs to continue serving future veterans without expansion. This bill would allow that expansion by transferring around 200 acres of adjacent land near Sturgis, South Dakota, from the Bureau of Land Management's jurisdiction to the Department of Veterans Affairs. My office worked with these agencies and the stakeholders in crafting this legislation, and all agreed that this land transfer is necessary.

The transfer of this land will provide the Black Hills National Cemetery with the additional burial space that is needed to assure that today's veterans and servicemembers, as well as their families, will be able to utilize the space and that we will be able to uphold our commitment and offer this Nation's eternal gratitude for everything that they have done for us.

Again, I thank the committee, my colleagues, and the chairman for supporting this bill. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill that supports our veterans.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this bill.

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. 337.

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.

FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSION ACT

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 494) to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 494

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 "Fort Frederica National Monument Boundary Expansion Act".

SEC. 2. FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT, GEORGIA.

(a) MAXIMUM ACREAGE.—The first section of the Act of May 26, 1936 (16 U.S.C. 433g), is amended by striking "two hundred and fifty acres" and inserting "305 acres".

(b) BOUNDARY EXPANSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The boundary of the Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia is modified to include the land generally depicted as "Proposed Acquisition Areas" on the map entitled "Fort Frederica National Monument Proposed Boundary Expansion", numbered 369/132,469, and dated April 2016.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map described in paragraph (1) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(3) ACQUISITION OF LAND.—The Secretary of the Interior may acquire the land and interests in land described in paragraph (1) by donation or purchase with donated or appropriated funds from willing sellers only.

(4) WRITTEN CONSENT OF OWNER.—No non-Federal property may be included in the Fort Frederica National Monument without the written consent of the owner.

(5) NO USE OF CONDEMNATION OR EMINENT DOMAIN.—The Secretary of the Interior may not acquire by condemnation or eminent domain any land or interests in land under this Act or for the purposes of this Act.

(6) NO BUFFER ZONE CREATED.—Nothing in this Act, the establishment of the Fort Frederica National Monument, or the management plan for the Fort Frederica National Monument shall be construed to create buffer zones outside of the Monument. That activities or uses can be seen, heard, or detected from areas within the Fort Frederica National Monument shall not preclude, limit, control, regulate, or determine the conduct or management of activities or uses outside of the Monument.

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 to 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. 494, introduced by my colleague Congressman BUDDY CARTER of Georgia, expands the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire approximately 21 acres of land. The St. Simons Land Trust currently owns the additional acreage and will steward the land until the National Park Service can acquire the property.

The Fort Frederica National Monument, located on St. Simons Island, Georgia, preserves the archaeological remnants of a fort established in 1736 by James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe constructed the fort to protect the Colony of Georgia from attack from the Spanish. The fort successfully fended off a Spanish attack in 1742 and confirmed Georgia as a British territory.

This bipartisan legislation is fully supported by the Georgia delegation, and an identical version of this legislation passed the House by voice vote in the 114th Congress. I urge the passage of the bill.

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

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

This bill expands the Fort Frederica National Monument to include a 20-acre property, known as the North Marsh, currently owned by the St. Simons Land Trust. The National Park Service evaluated the property in a 2014 study and determined that its acquisition would provide additional opportunities to protect and interpret resources that are associated with the site.

Fort Frederica, which is located on St. Simons Island, Georgia, was built by James Oglethorpe in 1736 to protect the Colony of Georgia from Spanish Florida. The National Park Service has managed the fort since 1936 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt used the Antiquities Act to designate the site as a national monument. This bill is an important reminder of how a decision to protect and elevate our shared national heritage resonates generation after generation.

Here we are today, 80 years after President Roosevelt made the decision to establish a national monument, and we are looking at a terrific opportunity to expand it and increase the resources it protects. By using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund—a Federal program that wasn't yet around in President FDR's time and of which I fought hard to reauthorize in this body—we can continue this important legacy. It is good to highlight the work of the Land and Water Conservation Fund as we pass this bill with regard to a national monument that has been with us for 80 years.