

Act, we heard from experts discussing the impact of this phenomenon.

According to the American Sportfishing Association, 52.4 million people went fishing in the United States, supporting 826,000 jobs and contributing \$129 billion to the economy.

The American Sportfishing Association also found that 87 percent of charter guides surveyed said they experienced depredation with clients, resulting in negative impacts on their businesses.

Anglers are losing their catch and tackle to sharks at alarming rates, and they are understandably becoming increasingly frustrated by it.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced the SHARKED Act to study this issue, evaluate how we can improve sportfishing conditions for anglers while protecting sharks.

This bill establishes a fisheries management task force to focus on identifying research opportunities, recommending management strategies, and developing educational materials for fishermen.

□ 1645

This legislation will help fishermen understand which species of sharks have higher rates of depredation and where you are most likely to run into that species.

It will serve first as a major step in improving communication and coordination among fisheries managers in addressing shark depredation nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to passing this bill through the committee and further consideration on the floor, which is where we are today. It has been a great process.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have experienced what Mr. WITTMAN was talking about; you know, excited to be reeling in a fish, and you get it to the boat, and you maybe have a couple of lips and an eyeball and part of a gill. That is all that is left. I don't get to fish offshore that much, but I can tell you it can be disappointing, and that is why it is important to do this research.

I appreciate the gentleman bringing the bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is quite the fisherman himself.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, nothing ruins a great day like the tax man. Nothing ruins a great day like the tax man, and I am not talking about the IRS. I am talking about when you are out there fishing, and you have this big shark that just comes up and takes your catch.

You have great fishermen like Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. WESTERMAN, and maybe it is not that big of a deal; your next cast you are going catch another one. But you have people out there who don't know what they are doing, like

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio; it is a whole other thing. You just ruined his day.

What happens is—as Mr. WITTMAN clearly laid out—you will be out there, and you may be on a red snapper, you may be out there in some mangrove, and you are just catching fish; that is dinner.

This is an amazing experience. As Mr. WITTMAN noted, this is about economic activity all across the coastal United States. One of the biggest gaps, one of the biggest voids in our ability to properly manage fisheries is knowing more, knowing better about the impact of this apex predator, the shark.

I want to be very clear. This bill is not about culling species. It is not about killing sharks. What it is about is simply ensuring that we have the right data, that we have the right understanding to build properly managed fisheries, and to be able to ensure we can promote avoidance techniques to prevent this depredation from occurring.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia, who is an expert in this field, Mr. WITTMAN, and I thank Mr. SOTO and Mr. VEASEY, some of the cosponsors on this legislation, for their support, but this is all about improving the accuracy of fish management.

It benefits recreational fisheries, it benefits commercial fisheries, and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it benefits the sustainable fisheries, the sustainable stocks of some of these important areas like the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico, and other areas.

Again, I thank my friend from Virginia for his hard work on this legislation. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for working with us and some of the great staff on his team, Vivian and Sandra. I thank Anderson on our staff, as well as Rachel on Ranking Member GRIJALVA's staff for their work in coming together to make sure that we have the right balance here.

This is all about ensuring that for generations to come that our children and our grandchildren can enjoy the same experiences that we have for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this legislation.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am sure living in Florida you have probably stood on the edge of a boat and asked that question: Why? Why did a shark eat my fish? What was it that motivated it? Is it because there are too many sharks? Is it something I did? It leaves you with this empty feeling.

This legislation is here to answer that question. It is simple legislation. It creates a task force that would be responsible for improving coordination and communication across the fisheries management community on shark depredation, as well as identifying research priorities and funding opportunities.

Again, I commend Congressman WITTMAN for his tireless work on fisheries issues and for his work on this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4061, 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.

DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4385) to extend authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4385

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 “Drought Preparedness Act”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION.

(a) DROUGHT PROGRAM.—Section 104(c) of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (43 U.S.C. 2214(c)) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2028”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 301 of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (43 U.S.C. 2241) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2028”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members will have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4385, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4385, sponsored by Congressman NEGUSE of Colorado. This legislation extends authorities granted to the Bureau of Reclamation under the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act, which provided Reclamation emergency authorities to make water available for users outside of a project's area, offer loans to water

users to build drought mitigation infrastructure and make water available for fish and wildlife restoration efforts, among others.

Since 1992, when this legislation was enacted, Reclamation has relied on these authorities to assist communities across the 17 Reclamation States and territories to effectively manage water resources and mitigate impacts posed by droughts and natural disasters.

As the western United States responds to drought events and with the cost of these events posing ever greater financial burdens, it is critical that Reclamation continues to utilize these important authorities to pursue its vital mission, helping to support local economies and ensuring access to water resources.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4385 introduced by my colleague from Colorado, Representative NEGUSE.

Over the past several years, we have seen higher temperatures—with 2023 having been the hottest year on record—and reduced precipitation, snowpack, and stream flow due to climate change.

As ongoing impacts of climate change intensify, it is imperative we advance policies that would enhance climate resilience, restoration, and conservation—particularly when it comes to the quality and quantity of our available water resources.

The Drought Preparedness Act helps to do just that by reauthorizing a key program to support the development of drought contingency plans and mitigate climate-related drought impacts, including emergency response for communities grappling with water shortages for human health and safety needs.

I urge the swift passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE).

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague and friend from Michigan for yielding. I also thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his leadership and Ranking Member GRIJALVA for his support of this bill—my bill, the Drought Preparedness Act—and for being willing to consider it through the Natural Resources Committee and help us to bring it to the floor today.

Finally, I thank my colleague, Representative CISCOMANI, who co-chairs the Colorado River Caucus here with me in the United States and is a co-lead of this particular bill.

As has been mentioned, throughout the West and certainly in my home

State of Colorado, we have seen continuing drought conditions threaten the lives and the livelihoods of so many of our communities. These ongoing drought conditions are shrinking the region's many, many water lifelines.

I will just say as someone who represents the Second Congressional District of Colorado and has the privilege of representing the Headwaters of the Colorado River, we know in my district and our communities know firsthand just how important that critical water supply is for our State.

That is why we created and formed the bipartisan Colorado River Caucus, a forum for Members located in Colorado River Basin States to discuss the various issues facing the Colorado River, upper basin and lower basin States.

As the Bureau of Reclamation, States, Tribes, and stakeholders are working toward long-term solutions, it is necessary that we continue to provide States and agency partners with every tool possible to mitigate its impacts, and that is exactly what this bill does.

As Representative DINGELL and Chairman WESTERMAN just articulated, the authorities that the Bureau has used in the past include drought contingency planning, resiliency projects, and emergency response actions. It is critical that we empower the Bureau to be able to utilize these tools into the future.

The Bureau of Reclamation testified during the legislative hearing during this particular bill as to just how important these tools are and how critical it is for Congress to ensure that they continue.

I am excited that this bill passed unanimously out of the House Natural Resources Committee and has strong bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to support this bill here on the floor so we can get this across the finish line and to support Colorado and States across the Rocky Mountain West and the 17 Bureau of Reclamation States as we continue to deal with this crisis.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, when President George H.W. Bush signed the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, he said that the legislation would help us serve as good neighbors in times of need.

The Drought Preparedness Act reauthorizes vital authorities that the Bureau of Reclamation has relied on for more than three decades to do just that—help communities respond and to prepare for droughts, ensure effective management of water resources, and encourage fish wildlife restoration efforts. These efforts are critically important.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4385.

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.

WILDLIFE INNOVATION AND LONGEVITY DRIVER REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5009) to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5009

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 “Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver reauthorization Act” or the “WILD Act”.

SEC. 2. PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE ACT.

Section 5 of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 3774) is amended by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2024 through 2028”.

SEC. 3. AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ACT.

(a) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—Section 2101 of the African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4211) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) MULTIYEAR GRANTS.—

“(1) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary may award to a person who is otherwise eligible for a grant under this section a multiyear grant of up to 5 years to carry out a project that the person demonstrates is an effective, long-term conservation strategy for African elephants and the habitat of African elephants.

“(2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this subsection precludes the Secretary from awarding a grant on an annual basis.”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 2306(a) of the African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4245(a)) is amended by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2024 through 2028”.

SEC. 4. ASIAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ACT OF 1997.

(a) ASIAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE.—Section 5 of the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4264) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) MULTIYEAR GRANTS.—

“(1) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary may award to a person who is otherwise eligible for a grant under this section a multiyear grant of up to 5 years to carry out a project that the person demonstrates is an effective, long-term conservation strategy for Asian elephants and the habitat of Asian elephants.

“(2) EFFECT.—Nothing in this subsection precludes the Secretary from awarding a grant on an annual basis.”.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 8(a) of the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4266(a)) is amended by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2024 through 2028”.