

Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support 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.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), the author of this bill.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 8946, the Reversionary Interest Conveyance Act.

This bill provides a technical correction that will help unlock the innovative potential of Sacramento. It provides the BLM with the clear authority to convey 8½ acres of former railroad right-of-way in Sacramento.

This will allow the city of Sacramento, Sacramento State University, and their partners to continue moving forward on the Sacramento Center for Innovation, a research park that will allow Sacramento to retain and grow the level of talent the region needs to attract investment and business.

We support our innovators, our educators, and our businesses because we know that these economic drivers don't just support job and community growth today, they sustain them for generations. Because of this, I really support this bill. It is something that is very, very needed.

I thank the chair and ranking member for their support of this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a great bill. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is straightforward legislation that will extricate property owners and the Federal Government from a legal quagmire. I support this bill and note that it passed out of the Committee on Natural Resources by unanimous consent.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, 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. 8946.

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.

SARATOGA NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8931) to redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8931

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

SECTION 1. SARATOGA NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—Saratoga National Historical Park shall hereafter be known and designated as “Saratoga National Battlefield Park”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to Saratoga National Historical Park shall be deemed to be a reference to Saratoga National Battlefield Park.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) 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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 8931, the bill now 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 Representative STEFANIK's bill, H.R. 8931, which will redesignate the Saratoga National Historic Park as the Saratoga National Battlefield Park.

On September 19, 1777, General Horatio Gates led the Continental Army troops against the British Empire in present-day Saratoga County, New York. In the ensuing Battles of Saratoga, American colonists would rout a British invasion force and create a turning point in the Revolutionary War.

Today, the site of these battles is conserved in the 3,400-acre Saratoga National Historical Park, a unit of the National Park System.

There, visitors can explore trails and tour routes to experience the historic battlefield, which includes landmarks, fortifications, and other important structures. The park also hosts artifacts, exhibits, historical reenactments, and guided tours.

While the current site was originally named “Saratoga Battlefield Park” by New York State, the “battlefield” nomenclature was dropped in 1938 when the area became part of the National Park System.

With the battles' upcoming 250th anniversary, however, residents of Saratoga County and New York State have called for renaming the park to clarify its place in the heroic struggle of American independence.

Accordingly, Representative STEFANIK's legislation would redesignate the site as the “Saratoga National Battlefield Park,” thus identifying its importance as a historical battlefield

and emphasizing the sacrifices of soldiers who fought there.

I thank Representative STEFANIK for her leadership on this issue and for working tirelessly this Congress on behalf of her constituents. We will all miss Representative STEFANIK next Congress, but in the meantime, I am pleased to be working with her in advancing this important legislation through the House.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 8931. It is unclear to me why when this park changed from being a State park to part of the National Park Service the word “battlefield” was dropped, but, obviously, the Battles of Saratoga are a very important part of history. This is where American Revolutionary forces won decisive victory in 1777.

The change proposed in this legislation is appropriate, I support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), the lead sponsor of the bill.

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Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair and ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan legislation, the Strengthening America's Turning Point Act.

I am always so proud to share with my colleagues in Congress and the American people that upstate New York and the North Country are known as the cradle of the American Revolution, home to numerous battlefields and historic sites that were critical in shaping our Nation's founding and history.

I grew up going to these historic sites like generations of upstaters and, for years, I have been proud to lead the charge in their preservation in Congress. Preserving and championing our battlefields and historic areas is one of my greatest privileges as the Representative of New York's 21st District and co-chair of the Congressional Battlefield Caucus.

The Battles of Saratoga were the most significant turning point and one of the most decisive American battles of the American Revolution. The American defeat of British forces at Saratoga marked a changing of the tide in the Revolutionary War, securing foreign support from France and bolstering domestic support for the American patriots and our righteous cause.

This bipartisan legislation would rename Saratoga National Historical Park to Saratoga National Battlefield Park to more accurately reflect the historical significance of the site and emphasize the crucial military engagements that took place there.

The historic site was originally named the Saratoga Battlefield Park.

When it became a national park in 1938, the word “battlefield” was left out of its name. Unanimously supported by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, this significant fix will help increase public understanding of the deep significance the site holds in our military history and honor the site where so many gave their last full measure of devotion, especially important as we are celebrating our Nation’s semiquincentennial.

I want to express my immense gratitude to my great friend and classmate Chairman BRUCE WESTERMAN and Subcommittee Chair TOM TIFFANY and for their partnership ensuring our battlefields and historic sites in upstate New York and across America are preserved and protected for generations to come, and I urge my colleagues to vote “yes.”

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a simple, bipartisan bill that will distinguish an important site for its pivotal role in the American fight for independence ahead of our Nation’s 250th anniversary.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK). 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. 8931.

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.

NUTRIA ERADICATION AND CONTROL REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8308) to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8308

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 “Nutria Eradication and Control Reauthorization Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NUTRIA ERADICATION AND CONTROL ACT OF 2003.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3(e) of the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 8102(e)) is amended by striking “2025” and inserting “2030”.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 3(a) of the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 8102(a)) is amended by striking “Secretary),” and inserting “Secretary)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) 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 may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8308, the bill now 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 Representative HARDER’s legislation which would reauthorize the nutria eradication program and existing funding levels through 2030.

Nutria are invasive rodents native to South America that were imported to the United States in 1899 for fur production. Since then, the nutria population has exploded in places like northern California, Oregon, the Louisiana bayous, and the Chesapeake Bay. These rodents eat, dig, and trample healthy wetland habitats, causing significant erosion and habitat damage to native ecosystems.

When this legislation was first enacted in 2003, an estimated 17 percent of the Chesapeake Bay’s marshlands were estimated to have been destroyed by nutria. Due to the aid of this program, nutria eradication efforts have been very successful.

For example, in Maryland, they have been declared eradicated. In Louisiana, where more than 423,000 acres were damaged or destroyed between 2002 and 2021, over 5 million nutria have been taken.

I thank Representatives GARRET GRAVES and DAVID VALADAO for co-leading this bill with Congressman HARDER.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation by my colleague from northern California, Representative JOSH HARDER.

This bill would reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act through 2030. This will benefit Maryland, Louisiana, and California, enabling them to manage and eradicate this destructive, invasive species.

The chairman described a little bit about the nutria and how it came to the United States. The reason it is such a problem is it breeds very rapidly, has destructive tendencies towards native wetland vegetation, which has led to erosion and displacement of native species. It can lead to levee breaches and the introduction of diseases and parasites that threaten humans, livestock, and pets.

These effects pose severe threats to our national wetlands which are essential habitats for waterfowl and other

wildlife and which act as buffers from extreme weather events.

To give you an example, according to estimates, had measures not been adopted to control and eradicate the species in Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay, nutria could have destroyed 17 percent of the bay’s marshes in just 50 years.

In 2003, the Nutria Eradication and Control Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to Maryland and Louisiana for a program to eradicate or control nutria and restore marshland that they had damaged.

In 2020, my friend, Representative JOSH HARDER, passed a bill through Congress that amended that legislation to include California. That was a very timely law because California faced a rapidly expanding breeding population of nutria in the San Joaquin Valley and adjacent areas.

The Nutria Eradication and Control Act has significantly reduced nutria populations in all three States. In Maryland, they were entirely eradicated from the Chesapeake Bay in 2022. In California, nutria captures peaked in 2020 and have been steadily declining, but they are not yet fully eradicated. That is why this bill is needed. It would ensure the critical work of eradicating this destructive, invasive species can continue through fiscal year 2030.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), my good friend who I believe may be wearing, if I am not mistaken, a nutria hide suit tonight.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for the recognition.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California, Mr. HUFFMAN, and I legislatively agree on approximately nothing. This is truly an anomaly. This legislation is something that he and I absolutely agree upon. We have worked together on it. I thank the other gentleman from California, Mr. HARDER, for the introduction. We have worked together on this legislation for years.

Nutria are an unbelievably invasive species. Coastal Louisiana loses a football field of wetlands approximately every 90 minutes. A football field of land is lost, which is a result of wave action and it is a result of saltwater intrusion, a result of subsidence, a result of replumbing of coastal Louisiana in a destructive manner. Nutria absolutely contribute to that.

Mr. Speaker, what happened between probably the late 1950s to the early 1990s, there was a huge fur trade. Tens of millions of nutria were actually harvested to provide fur coats. That market declined. As a result, the population of nutria just absolutely exploded. In fact, one nutria can provide on average about 13 offspring a year.