

The bill (S. 3195), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL MINERALS IN HEALTHCARE ACT OF 2023

The bill (H.R. 6395) to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to require the Secretary of the Interior to include the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultations regarding designations of critical minerals, elements, substances, and materials was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2997 and the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following bills: Calendar No. 581, S. 1553; and H.R. 2997.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged of the relevant bill, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; that the bills, as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills passed en bloc, as follows:

RESILIENCY FOR RANCHING AND NATURAL CONSERVATION HEALTH ACT

A bill (S. 1553) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing permits and leases, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Resiliency for Ranching and Natural Conservation Health Act".

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY USE OF VACANT GRAZING ALLOTMENTS FOR HOLDERS OF GRAZING PERMITS OR LEASES DURING EXTREME NATURAL EVENTS AND DISASTERS.

Title IV of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 405. VACANT GRAZING ALLOTMENTS MADE AVAILABLE TO HOLDERS OF GRAZING PERMITS OR LEASES DURING EXTREME NATURAL EVENTS AND DISASTERS.

"(a) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY CONCERNED.—In this section, the term 'Secretary concerned' means—

"(1) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System land; and

"(2) the Secretary, with respect to public lands.

"(b) ALLOTMENTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary concerned may make available to the holder of a grazing permit or lease issued by either Secretary concerned the temporary use of a vacant grazing allotment if—

"(A) 1 or more grazing allotments covered by the grazing permit or lease of the holder of the grazing permit or lease are temporarily unusable, as determined by the Secretary concerned, because of unforeseen natural events or disasters (including an extreme weather event, drought, wildfire, infestation, or blight); and

"(B) the Secretary concerned determines that the vacant grazing allotment is appropriate for temporary grazing use.

"(2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—In establishing the terms and conditions in a permit or lease for the temporary use of a vacant grazing allotment made available pursuant to this subsection, the Secretary concerned—

"(A) shall take into consideration the terms and conditions of the most recent permit or lease that was applicable to the vacant grazing allotment;

"(B) if there are no terms or conditions available for consideration under subparagraph (A), may assign temporary terms or conditions, after considering ecological conditions of, or terms on, adjacent grazing allotments;

"(C) shall base the terms and conditions on local ecological conditions, as determined by the applicable official;

"(D) shall take into consideration other factors, including any prior agency agreement that resolved or sought to resolve a management conflict, including a conflict related to State management of wildlife; and

"(E) may authorize the placement and use of temporary rangeland improvements (including portable corrals, fencing, aboveground pipelines, and water troughs) on the vacant grazing allotment to accommodate the temporary use.

"(3) COORDINATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretaries concerned shall coordinate to make available to holders of grazing permits or leases the use of vacant grazing allotments, regardless of agency jurisdiction over vacant grazing allotments, pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2).

"(4) EFFECT.—The temporary use of a vacant grazing allotment under this subsection shall not—

"(A) preclude or otherwise alter other ongoing or future actions or assessments evaluating the potential of the vacant grazing allotment to be used or otherwise assigned; or

"(B) alter—

"(i) the terms and conditions of the original grazing permit or lease of the holder of the grazing permit or lease;

"(ii) the preference or ability of the holder of the grazing permit or lease to return to the original allotment once access to, or the use of, the original allotment is restored; or

"(iii) the animal unit months in future authorizations, or conditions of a permit, of the holder of the grazing permit or lease.

"(c) DURATION.—The Secretary concerned shall determine the duration of the temporary use of a vacant grazing allotment made available pursuant to subsection (b), after considering—

"(1) the condition of the vacant grazing allotment; and

"(2) the period of time necessary for the original allotment of the holder of the grazing permit or lease to return to use.

"(d) GUIDELINES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary concerned shall establish guidelines to expeditiously, efficiently, and effectively carry out activities authorized under this section.

"(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing the guidelines under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned may consider—

"(A) criteria for determining whether the vacant grazing allotment is suitable for temporary grazing use;

"(B) eligibility criteria for the holders of grazing permits or leases;

"(C) prioritizing holders of grazing permits or leases in close proximity to a vacant grazing allotment;

"(D) any class or change in class of livestock on the temporary use of a vacant grazing allotment, with consideration given to local ecological conditions, disease, wildlife conflicts, and other factors based on localized conditions;

"(E) processes for coordinating with allotments adjoining or within the vicinity of a vacant grazing allotment; and

"(F) any other processes intended to expedite procedures for making vacant grazing allotments available during emergent circumstances.

"(e) PERIODIC EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary concerned shall periodically evaluate land health conditions of vacant grazing allotments to facilitate the efficient implementation of this section."

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 1553), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CLIFTON OPPORTUNITIES NOW FOR VIBRANT ECONOMIC YIELDS ACT

The bill (H.R. 2997) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to Mesa County, Colorado, certain Federal land in Colorado, and for other purposes, was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, Mesa County, CO, out in the far west part of the State, is bursting with opportunities for economic development. The CONVEY Act, which passed the Senate today, will help make sure there is sufficient space to continue that growth.

This bill will direct the transfer of Federal land near Clifton, CO, to the local Mesa County government to support their domestic economic development. Specifically, the bill accelerates the sale of 31 acres of land near Interstate 70 in Clifton, CO. It is a parcel of land that was previously set aside for the Bureau of Reclamation's Grand Valley Reclamation Project, but Reclamation has indicated its intent to relinquish the 31 acres considered in the

sale. The county will pay fair market value for those 31 acres of Federal land. The Federal Government has already determined that it no longer needs this land, and Mesa County has plans for ways to put it to work.

This is a win-win for the Federal Government, for Mesa County, for Colorado, and for our country. By passing the CONVEY Act today, we will finally push this land transfer over the finish line.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would just like to say a few words, if I may, about the Senate passing S. 1553. In Wyoming, we refer to it as the RANCH Act, and that stands for Resiliency for Ranching and Natural Conservation Health.

This is an important piece of legislation for my home State of Wyoming and for all Western States. Livestock grazing plays a critical role in my State of Wyoming and in a lot of the Rocky Mountain West. It is important to maintain rangeland health, and this is what this bill does. This also supports ranchers' livelihoods.

Natural disasters and emergencies occur. They can have a huge impact on so many of our rural communities. In fact, this past summer, we had significant wildfires, and this is just one example of how bad it can get and how quickly.

So when ranchers face the loss of the use of their normal public land allotments for grazing, they do need access to emergency pastures in a timely manner for their animals to continue to graze. So the RANCH Act allows for temporary use of vacant grazing allotments during extreme events and disasters, which, regrettably, happen more frequently than we would like.

This bill promotes resilient and healthy rangelands. It also supports effective grazing management for the West. The RANCH Act is going to provide land management agencies the authorities that they need to help ranchers and rural communities facing emergency situations. I am so pleased it has passed the Senate today by unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4772

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, as we know, our colleagues in the House of Representatives are, at the moment, trying to pass a continuing resolution to keep government open. As we also

know, our government is supposed to shut down if the House and the Senate don't act tonight, I think, at midnight.

Part of the efforts of our colleagues in the House would be, of course, not only to keep government open but to extend the National Flood Insurance Program, which is also scheduled to expire, I think, tonight at midnight.

The National Flood Insurance Program, as I think most people know, is hardly perfect, but it is important. It is almost impossible to buy flood insurance in the private sector. Many people, unfortunately, when they buy homeowner's insurance, think their homeowner's insurance covers them for flood. It does not.

Many Americans, unfortunately, found that out, for example, with the horrible flooding in Appalachia. Virtually all of our friends and neighbors in the Appalachia area and in South Carolina and Kentucky and in Florida who were victims of Hurricane Helene did not have flood insurance. I think many of them had homeowner's, but they were not covered for flood.

The private sector—I don't want to overstate this—but for the most part, it is almost impossible to get flood insurance in the private sector. That is why we have a National Flood Insurance Program. The National Flood Insurance Program is not exactly a model of efficiency. Under President Biden, it has been screwed up even more. FEMA, which is in charge of our Flood Insurance Program, implemented something called Risk Rating 2.0. It has been a disaster. It is a mess. It looks like something that my beagle used to hide under my back porch. But it is better than nothing. It is better than nothing.

We are going to have a new chair of our Banking Committee in the Senate, as you know, Madam President, Senator TIM SCOTT. Senator SCOTT has asked Senator MIKE ROUNDS and I to work on trying to start over with our National Flood Insurance Program, maybe even extend to some other hazards. But TIM has asked MIKE and I to try to design a brandnew program that looks like somebody designed it on purpose. And we are going to get started on that. Indeed, we have already started.

But in the meantime, the current program, as bad as it is, expires tonight at midnight, and we want to continue it. What would be the result of that? It would mean that as of 12:01 tonight, the Flood Insurance Program can no longer write new policies.

I don't want to scare people. If you already have flood insurance through what we call the NFIP, which is just an acronym for the national program, your policy won't expire. If it is not at its termination date, you will continue to have coverage. But you can't buy a new policy. That will have a huge impact on the real estate market in America. Many institutions will not loan money to a new homeowner or a homeowner who is trying to buy a

home if they can't get flood insurance because the mortgage companies just don't want to take that risk.

We have already seen, for a variety of reasons, the extraordinary increase in the price of a home in America. I was reading the other day that 10, 15, 20 years ago, the average age of a first-time home buyer in America was 28. Today, it is 38. Why are people having to wait so much longer to buy a home? It is not because they don't want to buy a home. It is because they need time to save up the money for a home.

But my point is that the price of homes, for a variety of reasons—in part because of inflation—the price of a home has just risen dramatically. I don't think any of us want to do anything to make the price of a home go up even further.

I want to say a word about Louisiana. We have about 5 million people who have flood insurance in our Flood Insurance Program. About 10 percent of those are in Louisiana. Those who have flood insurance in Louisiana are, for the most part—I am trying to think of a stronger way of saying it—the vast majority of the people in Louisiana who have flood insurance are working men and working women. Our coast, for example, is a working coast. Some people like to paint the picture of the National Flood Insurance Program serving multimillionaires with multimillion-dollar homes on the coast. That is not Louisiana, I can assure you.

My people are working people. We don't even have a coast like some States that have those type of homes. If you travel to Grand Isle or Port Fourchon in my State, you would see that. These are middle-class Americans that depend on the National Flood Insurance Program.

I worked very hard—many of us have—to try to improve the National Flood Insurance Program through the years. I have been working on it since the first day I came to the U.S. Senate. Frankly, I didn't get a lot of cooperation from leadership of the Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over the National Flood Insurance Program.

I don't want to make a promise I can't keep, but our Banking Committee is going to be under new leadership, as I just said. And Senator SCOTT, the new chairman, has directed Senator ROUNDS and I to try to come up with a program that is a vast improvement over what we have.

I sum up by saying, what I am going to propose to do here in a moment is to extend the status quo until September 30. It will extend the National Flood Insurance Program that we have right now, imperfect as it may be, ugly as it may be. And it is. It really does look like something my beagle used to hide under the back porch. The American people deserve better, but it is better than nothing. Without it, it will have a huge impact on the real estate market.

So my bill would extend the program—no changes—until September 30,