

Mr. Speaker, I encourage a “yes” vote on 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 Ohio (Mr. LATTI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3657, 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.

□ 1620

SINKHOLE MAPPING ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 900) to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 900

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 “Sinkhole Mapping Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. SINKHOLE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall establish a program to—

(1) *study the short-term and long-term mechanisms that cause sinkholes, including extreme storm events, prolonged droughts causing shifts in water management practices, aquifer depletion, and other major changes in water use; and*

(2) *develop maps that depict zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation.*

(b) *USE OF CERTAIN DATA.*—In developing maps under subsection (a)(2), the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall utilize 3D elevation data (as that term is defined in section 2 of the National Landslide Preparedness Act (43 U.S.C. 3101)) collected pursuant to section 5 of that Act (43 U.S.C. 3104).

(c) *REVIEW OF MAPS.*—Once during each 5-year period, or more often as the Director of the United States Geological Survey determines is necessary, the Director shall assess the need to revise and update the maps developed under this section.

(d) *WEBSITE.*—The Director of the United States Geological Survey shall establish and maintain a public website that displays the maps developed under this section and other relevant information critical for use by community planners and emergency managers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) 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. 900, 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 SOTO’s bill, H.R. 900, the Sinkhole Mapping Act of 2025.

Sinkholes are a natural hazard that cost the United States Government approximately \$300 million per year and pose a serious threat to public safety.

Sinkholes occur when there is a lack of proper external surface drainage so when a heavy rainstorm comes through and the ground cannot drain the water properly a void may form underground. From that point on, it is often simply a waiting game until the ground gives out and a dangerous sinkhole develops.

This bill would require the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program that examines the short- and long-term causes of sinkholes. This research would provide the government with more accurate data on the costs incurred from these hazards.

The program would also create maps of areas most at risk of sinkholes, analyze the areas with the greatest risk of experiencing a sudden sinkhole and make maps publicly available to help community planners and government agencies prepare for and avoid these catastrophes.

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the such time as I may consume.

I am excited to see Representative DARREN SOTO’s Sinkhole Mapping Act on the floor today. This bipartisan legislation will direct the U.S. Geological Survey to study both the short- and long-term causes of sinkholes, including extreme weather events, droughts, and groundwater depletion.

Right now, there is no national, comprehensive mapping to track and predict sinkholes, leaving communities across the country more vulnerable to sudden and serious damage. Sinkholes can open without warning and wreak havoc on our infrastructure, damaging roads, bridges, buildings, and utilities and putting people’s lives and livelihoods at risk.

We have seen this firsthand on the Oregon coast at Cape Kiwanda, where ocean wave erosion has carved into the sandstone. In 2023, two sinkholes appeared there measuring up to 25-foot wide and 30-foot deep each.

Thankfully, State and local officials acted quickly, identified the problem, and put safety precautions in place to protect the public.

With effective sinkhole mapping, we can do even more. We can identify at-risk areas before disaster strikes and take preventive action, like ground stabilization, to protect lives and reduce the cost of damage.

This bill is a commonsense, forward-looking investment in our commu-

nities and infrastructure, especially as climate change increases the risk of sinkholes across the country.

I thank my colleagues, Representatives SOTO and BILIRAKIS, for introducing this bill and their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 900, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) for her leadership.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 900, the Sinkhole Mapping Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation which I introduced with my fellow Floridian, GUS BILIRAKIS.

Mr. Speaker, sinkholes pose a significant problem for Florida and many States, yet we don’t have a comprehensive mapping system to help first responders and community planners, as was mentioned by our chairman, Chairman WESTERMAN. I thank him for bringing this bill today.

Sinkholes cost over \$300 million a year. We see that in Florida homes, community centers, and businesses being affected by this. Having a database that displays potential sinkholes in our Sunshine State and across the Nation would absolutely be critical. That is what this bill does.

This bill directs the U.S. Geological Survey to study the short- and long-term mechanisms that trigger sinkholes. This includes extreme storms, prolonged droughts, shifts in water management practices, ongoing aquifer depletion, and other major water uses. It is all about having a public website displaying maps depicting zones at greater risk of sinkhole formation, helping save lives and helping us have more resilient communities.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, Ranking Members HUFFMAN and HOYLE, as well as Representatives BILIRAKIS, FROST, CASTOR, WILSON, COSTA, HARDER, FITZPATRICK, and BELL for joining me.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “yes” vote.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. SOTO’s bill will help leverage modern technology and mapping data to gain a better understanding of the sinkhole hazards facing the country and empower local communities to prepare for and mitigate these hazards.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the 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. 900, 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.

WETLANDS CONSERVATION AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2316) to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to provide that interest on obligations held in the Federal aid to wildlife restoration fund shall become available for apportionment at the beginning of fiscal year 2033.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2316

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 "Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF INTEREST ON OBLIGATIONS HELD IN FEDERAL AID TO WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUND.

Section 3(b)(2)(C) of the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 669b(b)(2)(C)) is amended by striking "2026" and inserting "2033".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) 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. 2316, 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 H.R. 2316, the Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025.

This bill is sponsored by Representative HURD of Colorado, and it would ensure that the interest from unallocated Pittman-Robertson funds continue to go to North America Wetlands Conservation Act, or NAWCA.

NAWCA is one of the most successful conservation programs administered by the Federal Government and has proven to be invaluable all over the country as well as in my home State of Arkansas.

Over 100,000 people visit Arkansas each year to hunt waterfowl in the pristine flyways of The Natural State. Across North America, NAWCA projects have conserved nearly 34 mil-

lion acres of wetland habitat for migratory waterfowl.

Funds generated under Pittman-Robertson come from excise taxes on the sale of hunting equipment and firearms. Various State and wildlife agencies, as represented by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, are on record supporting this approach, further confirming its viability and effectiveness.

I commend my colleague from Colorado (Mr. HURD) for being a champion for sportsmen and -women, and I thank him for his work on this bill.

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025 would extend critical wetlands conservation funding through 2033.

Many of my constituents live and breathe wetlands conservation. Whether you are a duck hunter on the river or a birder exploring the coastal marshes or a family counting on clean water and flood protection, wetlands deliver for everyone.

Since 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act has created successful conservation models where hunters and sportsmen support wildlife restoration through excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment.

□ 1630

Currently, the interest earned from these funds supports wetlands protection through 2026, and this bill ensures that funding continues uninterrupted through 2033.

This is conservation funding that works. It is user funded, results driven, and focuses on protecting habitats that benefit all Americans. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act has helped to protect millions of acres of wetlands and grasslands across North America.

I commend Representatives Hurd and Elfreth for their bipartisan leadership in advancing this proven funding mechanism and ensuring that future generations inherit healthy wetlands and thriving wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2316, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HURD), the lead sponsor on the bill.

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, H.R. 2316, the Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025.

This bipartisan legislation ensures that the interest earned on unallocated Pittman-Robertson funds will continue to support wetlands restoration through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act for years to come.

For nearly a century, the Pittman-Robertson Act has stood as one of the most successful conservation funding models in the world. It works because sportsmen and sportswomen pay a dedicated excise tax on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. That money is then invested in habitat restoration, public access, and in hunter education.

Since 2004, interest generated from these funds has added an average of nearly \$11 million per year to support wetland and waterfowl conservation across North America. That funding is leveraged by nonprofit and State partners, often doubling or tripling the Federal investment, delivering high-impact results.

This bill is about safeguarding that model. It is about making sure that the dollars contributed by sportsmen and sportswomen continue to be put to work by conserving the wetlands that sustain wildlife, outdoor access, and rural economies, including in places like Colorado's San Luis Valley, where thousands of acres of wetlands benefit from these funds.

There is no better conservationist than the American sportsman, and this legislation honors their legacy by protecting the very lands and waters that they have long fought to preserve.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and the staff of the House Committee on Natural Resources for working with my office to get this bill introduced. I thank my colleague from across the aisle, Representative ELFRETH, for co-leading this legislation with me. I also thank all of the organizations who are supporting this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask my House colleagues to join me in supporting this commonsense, bipartisan bill.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this really great legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, by passing this commonsense legislation, the House will ensure that we can continue conserving vital waterfowl habitats for years to come.

This is important for sportsmen and -women who depend on healthy wetland habitats for hunting, fishing, and other forms of wildlife-centered recreation. H.R. 2316 is a win for conservation and the sportsmen and -women communities alike. NAWCA has proven to be a very successful program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support 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. 2316.

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.