

For too many of our public lands and parks, after Federal employees have been fired, let go, or pushed toward retirement, private entities are managing these parks, so the America the Beautiful pass is not able to allow free access to these public servants and people who have put their lives on the line to protect and serve our country.

Madam Speaker, I would love to work with everyone on that, as well. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, I will make a comment that the Republican Party will always defend the police, not defund them.

Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, as has been noted, H.R. 183 simply extends the lifetime national parks pass to the frontline public safety officers who risk their lives every day to protect our families and communities. It is the same courtesy we already extend to U.S. military members and their families, to our veterans, and to our Gold Star families. The CBO estimates its cost at about \$500,000 a year.

These men and women, just like those who serve our military, put their lives on the line to protect our families. It seems fitting that we should extend this small courtesy to them. It is simply a way to say thank you to them, a simple but tangible token of our gratitude and esteem.

I first introduced this legislation during the George Floyd riots, when BLM rioters were chanting: "Pigs in a blanket, fry 'em like bacon," and leftist politicians were calling for defunding local police departments. We recently expanded it to include firefighters and wildland firefighters, to whom we owe so much for protecting our homes, towns, and communities, as well.

The bill was proposed to me by Janine D'Agostini, the wife of then-El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini, as a small token of appreciation for law enforcement officers who were taking so much abuse when they were trying so hard to protect our families from those who would prey upon them.

Madam Speaker, it seems that, in those years, the wheel has come full circle. Once again, law enforcement personnel are the target of doxing, violent demonstrations, and leftist officials who so often seem to take the side of the lawless against the law-abiding.

Our hearts go out to the many officers of ICE and CBP and their families who have recently been subjected to violence and intimidation, often fanned by the extremist rhetoric of elected officials who ought to know better.

In fact, just 2 weeks ago, while ICE was serving a court-ordered warrant in Carpinteria, a sitting Member of this House doxed an ICE agent to a violent mob. That mob then took off after the

agent and physically attacked him with rocks, injuring him seriously enough to require treatment in a hospital emergency room.

This has to stop. We want these brave men and women and their families to know that the vast majority of the American people, the majority of this Congress, and, of course, this President stand behind them, appreciate them, and honor their work. We depend upon them not only for our safety but for the very rule of law itself.

After all, without law enforcement, there is no law. Without law, there is no civilization, as people in sanctuary cities like Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York are learning all too well once again.

This bill was first introduced in 2021. It received a hearing in 2023 but was never marked up. It is long overdue, and I appreciate the House finally considering it today.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues that we should defend the police and firefighters. I come from a family of police and firefighters who put their lives on the line every day when they went to work. I will happily work with my Republican colleagues to defend police and firefighters and make sure not to defund them by protecting their public pensions, collective bargaining rights, cancer prevention, training grants, and grants to our local police departments that are now being frozen, putting us in limbo.

This is a very real issue that I know I can work with my Republican colleagues on to make sure that our public lands are not being operated by private entities that refuse to recognize the benefits provided for in this law. This is happening across the country, and in my district, I know specifically, where they refuse to grant free entry for veterans and military personnel. They say that they don't have to because they are a private entity.

I would love to make sure that whoever is operating our public parks is keeping them public and that these people who earned our trust and earned this benefit and every benefit that we can give them are actually able to get that.

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

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Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying that 2 weeks ago, in the One Big Beautiful Bill, there were 18,000 law enforcement officers that were to be hired. Not one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle voted for it.

Mr. Speaker, ahead of our Nation's 250th anniversary next year, this bill ensures meaningful access to our national parks and public lands and recognizes the immense service and sacrifice of our Nation's law enforcement officers and firefighters.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 183, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a free annual National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for law enforcement officers and firefighters."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FINISH THE ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT ACT

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 131) to make certain modifications to the repayment for the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the State of Colorado, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 131

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 "Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act".

SEC. 2. ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT, COLORADO.

Public Law 87-590 (76 Stat. 389; 123 Stat. 1320) is amended—

(1) in the first section—

(A) in subsection (c), in the second sentence, by striking "or in the case of the Arkansas Valley Conduit, payment in an amount equal to 35 percent of the cost of the conduit that is comprised of revenue generated by payments pursuant to a repayment contract and revenue that may be derived from contracts for the use of Fryngpan-Arkansas project excess capacity or exchange contracts using Fryngpan-Arkansas project facilities,"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(d) ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT.—

"(1) REPAYMENT CONTRACT.—To provide domestic water supplies to communities and households that do not have reliable access to domestic water supplies, the contract for the Arkansas Valley Conduit shall provide for payment in an amount equal to 35 percent of the cost of the conduit, notwithstanding the reclamation laws or any other provision of this Act. The contract payments shall consist of—

"(A) funding provided during construction from any entity other than the Secretary; and

"(B) based on a demonstration of financial hardship, as determined by the Secretary, repayment of the balance not covered under subparagraph (A) for a period of not more than 75 years with simple interest at a rate that is equal to 50 percent of the interest rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 2(c), including revenue derived from contracts for the use of excess capacity or exchange contracts using Fryngpan-Arkansas project facilities.

"(2) OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE.—The contract for the Arkansas Valley Conduit shall provide for the assumption by the contracting parties of the care, operation, maintenance, and replacement of the conduit."; and

(2) in section 2(b)(3)(A), by striking “this section” and inserting “subsection (d) of the first section”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOSAR. 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. 131, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 131, the Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act, sponsored by Representative BOEBERT of Colorado.

The Arkansas Valley Conduit, or AVC is a 130-mile pipeline that serves 39 communities and 50,000 people east of Pueblo, Colorado. Once completed, it will deliver water to an area of the State that faces severe water quality issues.

The AVC was authorized by Congress as part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project in 1962. Over 60 years later, construction on this project has barely started, largely due to cost increases that have outpaced the community's ability to pay.

In 2009, Congress amended the original legislation to help address the project's increasing price tag. Unfortunately, rising construction costs over the past few years have continued to delay this critical water project.

The legislation before us today would further modify the repayment contract to ensure that these communities have reliable access to domestic water supplies. These communities have been waiting for over six decades for a reliable water source. H.R. 131 will ensure this project can finally be completed.

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

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

H.R. 131 seeks to address a long-standing water challenge in southeastern Colorado. The Arkansas Valley Conduit is a 130-mile pipeline first authorized in 1962 to deliver water from the Pueblo Reservoir to communities facing ongoing water supply and quality issues. Despite decades of work, the project remains unfinished, primarily due to financial constraints.

This bill would revise certain repayment terms to provide additional flexibility for local stakeholders to help finance the project and begin delivering clean, reliable water to rural communities.

My Democratic colleagues and I are committed to addressing the barrier

that rural communities face in securing clean water. That is why we passed historic water infrastructure investments under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Since 2022, the IIJA has provided \$500 million for the Arkansas Valley Conduit. These investments are critical for ensuring communities across the West have reliable access to clean drinking water, especially as climate change is continuing to make drought conditions worse.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Representative BOEBERT, for bringing this forward. I urge support for H.R. 131, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support on this bill.

I rise to speak in favor of my bill, H.R. 131, Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act, to help complete construction of a critical infrastructure project that will provide tens of thousands of southeast Colorado residents with access to clean water.

Southeast Coloradans have waited decades for the completion of the Arkansas Valley Conduit. While we have made a lot of progress in the recent years and the first two segments of the project are under construction, we still have a long way to go.

This bipartisan and bicameral legislation will help the Bureau of Reclamation and local governments finally complete this major water project. Rural communities in southeastern Colorado need and deserve access to clean, reliable, and affordable water they can utilize on a daily basis.

Once completed, the Arkansas Valley Conduit will provide 7,500-acre-feet of water per year to as many as 50,000 Coloradans across 40 different communities in Pueblo, Otero, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca Counties.

The Arkansas Valley Conduit was originally approved for construction as a part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project that was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy in 1962. Congress amended this law in 2009 to tackle water quality concerns and make clear that 35 percent of total project costs would be repaid with interest from miscellaneous revenues.

The original 1962 law also made clear that the costs of annual operation and maintenance for this important project would be paid for by the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

Radium, uranium, and other naturally occurring elements are found in the surface and groundwater in southeastern Colorado, and the water quality is problematic year-round because of its salinity, selenium, sulfate, hardness, and manganese levels.

The Bureau of Reclamation has found these contamination levels are so se-

vere that local communities could see the costs of their drinking water triple without this legislation.

The Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act will ease the burden of inflation costs that have caused the original \$640 million estimate of construction in 2019 to rise to more than \$1.3 billion. There have been a number of modifications to the proposed Arkansas Valley Conduit over the years that have reduced the cost by as much as \$200 million.

I thank the Bureau of Reclamation and the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District for working with us in drafting this critical legislation. I am grateful to have their support as we work to get this bill signed into law.

Access to clean water is not a luxury. It is a necessity. Southeast Colorado families and businesses deserve a reliable and sustainable water supply.

It is time we fully and finally fulfill the promises the Federal Government made to the communities I represent in Colorado and finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair for his support and I urge adoption.

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

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, this bill provides increased financial flexibility for the construction of the long-overdue water infrastructure improvements in rural Colorado. I thank Ms. BOEBERT for her diligent work and attention to these issues.

Arizona is no second citizen to this. We want to see this happen and help everybody.

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 Arizona (Mr. GOSAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 131, 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.

LA PAZ COUNTY SOLAR ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1043) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land in Arizona to La Paz County, Arizona, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1043

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 “La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act”.