

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE HISTORIC LANDS REACQUISITION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 226) to take certain Federal lands in Tennessee into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 226

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 “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act”.

SEC. 2. LAND TAKEN INTO TRUST FOR THE EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS.

(a) LANDS INTO TRUST.—Subject to such rights of record as may be vested in third parties to rights-of-way or other easements or rights-of-record for roads, utilities, or other purposes, the following Federal lands managed by the Tennessee Valley Authority and located on or above the 820-foot (MSL) contour elevation in Monroe County, Tennessee, on the shores of Tellico Reservoir, are declared to be held in trust by the United States for the use and benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians:

(1) SEQUOYAH MUSEUM PROPERTY.—Approximately 46.0 acres of land generally depicted as “Sequoyah Museum”, “Parcel 1”, and “Parcel 2” on the map titled “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Map 1” and dated April 30, 2015.

(2) SUPPORT PROPERTY.—Approximately 11.9 acres of land generally depicted as “Support Parcel” on the map titled “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Map 2” and dated April 30, 2015.

(3) CHOTA MEMORIAL PROPERTY AND TANASI MEMORIAL PROPERTY.—Approximately 18.2 acres of land generally depicted as “Chota Memorial 1” and “Tanasi Memorial” on the map titled “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Map 3” and dated April 30, 2015, and including the Chota Memorial and all land within a circle with a radius of 86 feet measured from the center of the Chota Memorial without regard to the elevation of the land within the circle.

(b) PROPERTY ON LANDS.—In addition to the land taken into trust by subsection (a), the improvements on and appurtenances thereto, including memorials, are and shall remain the property of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

(c) REVISED MAPS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of a land transaction made pursuant to this section, the Tennessee Valley Authority, after consultation with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit revised maps that depict the land taken into trust under this section, including any corrections made to the maps described in this section to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate.

(d) CONTOUR ELEVATION CLARIFICATION.—The contour elevations referred to in this Act are based on MSL Datum as established

by the NGS Southeastern Supplementary Adjustment of 1936 (NGVD29).

(e) CONDITIONS.—The lands taken into trust under this section shall be subject to the conditions described in section 5.

SEC. 3. PERMANENT EASEMENTS TAKEN INTO TRUST FOR THE EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS.

(a) PERMANENT EASEMENTS.—The following permanent easements for land below the 820-foot (MSL) contour elevation for the following Federal lands in Monroe County, Tennessee, on the shores of Tellico Reservoir, are declared to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians:

(1) CHOTA PENINSULA.—Approximately 8.5 acres of land generally depicted as “Chota Memorial 2” on the map titled “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Map 3” and dated April 30, 2015.

(2) CHOTA-TANASI TRAIL.—Approximately 11.4 acres of land generally depicted as “Chota-Tanasi Trail” on the map titled “Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Map 3” and dated April 30, 2015.

(b) REVISED MAPS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of a land transaction made pursuant to this section, the Tennessee Valley Authority, after consultation with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate revised maps that depict the lands subject to easements taken into trust under this section, including any corrections necessary to the maps described in this section.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The lands subject to easements taken into trust under this section shall be subject to the use rights and conditions described in section 5.

SEC. 4. TRUST ADMINISTRATION AND PURPOSES.

(a) APPLICABLE LAWS.—Except as described in section 5, the lands subject to this Act shall be administered under the laws and regulations generally applicable to lands and interests in lands held in trust on behalf of Indian tribes.

(b) USE OF LAND.—Except the lands described in section 2(a)(2), the lands subject to this Act shall be used principally for memorializing and interpreting the history and culture of Indians and recreational activities, including management, operation, and conduct of programs of and for—

(1) the Sequoyah birthplace memorial and museum;

(2) the memorials to Chota and Tanasi as former capitals of the Cherokees;

(3) the memorial and place of reinterment for remains of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and other Cherokee tribes, including those transferred to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and other Cherokee tribes and those human remains and cultural items transferred by the Tennessee Valley Authority to those Cherokee tribes under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.); and

(4) interpreting the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

(c) USE OF SUPPORT PROPERTY.—The land described in section 2(a)(2) shall be used principally for the support of lands subject to this Act and the programs offered by the Tribe relating to such lands and their purposes including—

(1) classrooms and conference rooms;

(2) cultural interpretation and education programs;

(3) temporary housing of guests participating in such programs or the management of the properties and programs; and

(4) headquarters offices and support space for the trust properties and programs.

(d) LAND USE.—The principal purposes of the use of the land described in section 3(a)—

(1) paragraph (1), shall be for a recreational trail from the general vicinity of the parking lot to the area of the Chota Memorial and beyond to the southern portion of the peninsula, including interpretive signs, benches, and other compatible improvements; and

(2) paragraph (2), shall be for a recreational trail between the Chota and Tanasi Memorials, including interpretive signs, benches, and other compatible improvements.

SEC. 5. USE RIGHTS, CONDITIONS.

(a) FLOODING OF LAND AND ROADS.—The Tennessee Valley Authority may temporarily and intermittently flood the lands subject to this Act that lie below the 824-foot (MSL) contour elevation and the road access to such lands that lie below the 824-foot (MSL) contour elevation.

(b) FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES.—The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians may construct, own, operate, and maintain—

(1) water use facilities and nonhabitable structures, facilities, and improvements not subject to serious damage if temporarily flooded on the land adjoining the Tellico Reservoir side of the lands subject to this Act that lie between the 815-foot and 820-foot (MSL) contour elevations, but only after having received written consent from the Tennessee Valley Authority and subject to the terms of such approval; and

(2) water use facilities between the 815-foot (MSL) contour elevations on the Tellico Reservoir side of the lands subject to this Act and the adjacent waters of Tellico Reservoir and in and on such waters after having received written consent from the Tennessee Valley Authority and subject to the terms of such approval, but may not construct, own, operate, or maintain other nonhabitable structures, facilities, and improvements on such lands.

(c) INGRESS AND EGRESS.—The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians may use the lands subject to this Act and Tellico Reservoir for ingress and egress to and from such land and the waters of the Tellico Reservoir and to and from all structures, facilities, and improvements maintained in, on, or over such land or waters.

(d) RIVER CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT.—The use rights under this section may not be exercised so as to interfere in any way with the Tennessee Valley Authority’s statutory program for river control and development.

(e) TVA AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect the right of the Tennessee Valley Authority to—

(1) draw down Tellico Reservoir;

(2) fluctuate the water level thereof as may be necessary for its management of the Reservoir; or

(3) permanently flood lands adjacent to lands subject to this Act that lie below the 815-foot (MSL) contour elevation.

(f) RIGHT OF ENTRY.—The lands subject to this Act shall be subject to a reasonable right of entry by the personnel of the Tennessee Valley Authority and agents of the Tennessee Valley Authority operating in their official capacities as necessary for purposes of carrying out the Tennessee Valley Authority’s statutory program for river control and development.

(g) ENTRY ONTO LAND.—To the extent that the Tennessee Valley Authority’s operations on the lands subject to this Act do not unreasonably interfere with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ maintenance of an appropriate setting for the memorialization of Cherokee history or culture on the lands and its operations on the lands, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians shall allow the Tennessee Valley Authority to enter the lands to clear, ditch, dredge, and drain said lands

and apply larvicides and chemicals thereon or to conduct bank protection work and erect structures necessary in the promotion and furtherance of public health, flood control, and navigation.

(h) **LOSS OF HYDROPOWER CAPACITY.**—All future development of the lands subject to this Act shall be subject to compensation to the Tennessee Valley Authority for loss of hydropower capacity as provided in the Tennessee Valley Authority Flood Control Storage Loss Guideline, unless agreed to otherwise by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

(i) **PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY.**—The United States shall not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from—

(1) the temporary and intermittent flooding of lands subject to this Act;

(2) the permanent flooding of adjacent lands as provided in this section;

(3) wave action in Tellico Reservoir; or

(4) fluctuation of water levels for purposes of managing Tellico Reservoir.

(j) **CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Tennessee Valley Authority shall—

(1) retain sole and exclusive Federal responsibility and liability to fund and implement any environmental remediation requirements that are required under applicable Federal or State law for any land or interest in land to be taken into trust under this Act, as well as the assessments under paragraph (2) to identify the type and quantity of any potential hazardous substances on the lands;

(2) prior to the acquisition in trust, carry out an assessment and notify the Secretary of the Interior and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians whether any hazardous substances were stored on the lands and, if so, whether those substances—

(A) were stored for 1 year or more on the lands;

(B) were known to have been released on the lands; or

(C) were known to have been disposed of on the lands; and

(3) if the assessment under paragraph (2) shows that hazardous substances were stored, released, or disposed of on the lands, include in its notice under paragraph (2) to the Secretary of the Interior and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians—

(A) the type and quantity of such hazardous substances;

(B) the time at which such storage, release, or disposal took place on the lands; and

(C) a description of any remedial actions, if any, taken on the lands.

SEC. 6. LANDS SUBJECT TO THE ACT.

For the purposes of this Act, the term “lands subject to this Act” means lands and interests in lands (including easements) taken into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians pursuant to or under this Act.

SEC. 7. GAMING PROHIBITION.

No class II or class III gaming, as defined in the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.), shall be conducted on lands subject to this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 226, 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. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 226, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act, introduced by my friend from Tennessee, Congressman FLEISCHMANN.

H.R. 226 places approximately 96 acres of Tennessee Valley Authority land and permanent easements along the shores of the Little Tennessee River and Tellico Reservoir in Monroe County, Tennessee, into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

These areas include the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, the Chota Memorial, the Tanasi Memorial, and lands to support these properties and cultural programs.

The parcels placed into trust under the bill will be used to memorialize and interpret the history of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is one of three federally recognized Cherokee Tribes. Their ancestral homeland includes substantial parts of seven eastern States, including Tennessee, and the 57,000-acre Qualla Boundary Cherokee Indian Reservation in North Carolina.

In 1979 after the TVA completed the Tellico Dam, the Tribe approached the TVA about lands that were historically significant to the Tribe and impacted by the dam. In 1984 and 1986, the Tribe and the TVA reached an informal agreement that allowed the Tribe to manage two easements, including the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum.

H.R. 226 helps this cause by transferring approximately 76 acres of historically significant lands from the TVA to the U.S. Government to be held in trust for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

It also creates two permanent easements over TVA property, held in trust for the Tribe, to create recreational trails between the sites.

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This legislation will give the Eastern Band greater control over the historic homelands and the opportunity to memorialize the history and culture of the Cherokee people.

Pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, gaming will be prohibited on the land. The bill also ensures that the TVA will be able to continue its river control and development activities to power the Tennessee Valley region.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure and commend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN) for his continued work on this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act introduced by Representative FLEISCHMANN of Tennessee.

This bill would place specified lands and easements in Monroe County, Tennessee, into trust for the benefit of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. These lands include the Sequoyah Museum, the Chota Memorial, the Tanasi Memorial, and land that supports these properties and the Tribe's cultural programs.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, one of three federally recognized Cherokee Tribes and the only federally recognized Tribe in North Carolina, has ancestral homelands spanning across seven Eastern States, including Tennessee.

In 1979, the construction of the Tellico Dam by the Tennessee Valley Authority, or TVA, flooded large portions of the Tribe's ancestral lands along the Little Tennessee River, submerging sacred sites and archeological remains. Among the losses were the historic Overhill Cherokee towns, which served as the Cherokee capitals during the 1700s.

While the Eastern Band can never reclaim the land and sacred sites lost to flooding, other historically significant locations in the region remain in need of protection and preservation.

This bill would address this critical need by transferring approximately 76 acres of culturally significant lands from the TVA to the U.S. Government to be held in trust for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

The bill would also establish two permanent easements over TVA property to be held in trust for the Tribe, facilitating the creation of recreational trails that will be between these important sites.

Passing this legislation would grant the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians greater control over their historic homelands, enabling them to preserve and honor their rich history and culture. It would represent an essential step toward safeguarding these culturally significant sites for future generations.

I do remind my colleagues, though, that these kinds of land arrangements don't happen by magic when we pass a bill like this one. Even if this bill becomes law, we will need actual staffing in the executive branch to carry it out. Unfortunately, in the past week, we have already seen basic government functions halted or put at risk from reckless orders to freeze spending, fire or place government workers on administrative leave, and more. These orders are, in many cases, unconstitutional and illegal.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this bill, but I also urge them to join Democrats in calling for an end to the paralyzing chaos we have been seeing from the White House.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 226, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their kind words in support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, this legislation has passed this House four times and must pass again today. It needs to go to the United States Senate, and it needs to go to President Trump's desk for signature.

It has been far too long. The Eastern Band of Cherokee have been waiting and had a lot of promises made to them over the years, which have been broken.

This is a great bill for America, and it is a great bill that will honor our wonderful Eastern Band of Cherokee. In my home State, the great State of Tennessee, it takes its name from Tanasi, a historic Overhill Cherokee settlement in present-day Monroe County, Tennessee, in the Third District of Tennessee, which I am privileged to represent.

Tanasi served as the Cherokee capital as early as 1721. Unfortunately, due to misguided Federal policies, the Cherokee were forced from their homes in Tennessee and surrounding States. This tragic period in American history led to the Trail of Tears, a journey in which 15,000 Cherokees were forcibly marched to the Indian territory.

My bill returns important historic sites back to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Tribal Nation comprised of descendants of those Cherokees who resisted removal in the Great Smoky Mountains and escaped the Trail of Tears.

It is on these same lands where the Eastern Band of Cherokees have, for decades, honored the birthplace of Sequoyah, whose likeness we all in this House have the opportunity to pass as we make our way from the rotunda in our Capitol to the House floor.

Let me be clear. My bill, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act, is limited and targeted. It restores 76.1 acres of federally owned Tennessee Valley Authority land to the Eastern Band of Cherokees and will grant two permanent easements over TVA property to be held in trust for the Tribe to create recreational trails between the sites.

Madam Speaker, this is about honoring history and keeping our promises. I strongly urge Members of both Chambers to understand the importance of the Cherokee Tribal land preservation and support H.R. 226 so it may be brought to President Trump's desk promptly.

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

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legisla-

tion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 226 is a commonsense bill that facilitates greater control for the Eastern Band of Cherokee over their sacred and historic homelands in Tennessee. It ensures the protection of their timeless heritage, culture, and tradition and allows them to memorialize the history and culture of the Cherokee people.

This Tribe has worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority for over three decades on this issue, and this legislation is long overdue.

I will echo the words of my colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN), and say that the Senate needs to take this bill up and act on it when we pass it again.

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. FLEISCHMANN for his leadership on the matter. 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. 226.

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 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 776) 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. 776

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 2025".

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 gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. ANSARI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to re-

visé and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 776, 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. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Representative HARDER's legislation, which would reauthorize the nutria eradication program at existing funding levels through 2030.

This bill is identical to the one passed in the House during the last week of the 118th Congress. Unfortunately, it failed to receive a vote in the Senate. I am glad to have the opportunity to speak again in support of this important legislation.

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, and the Louisiana bayous, as well as the Chesapeake Bay and Eastern Shore ecosystems.

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 70 percent of the Chesapeake Bay's marshlands had already 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 432,000 acres were damaged or destroyed by nutria from 2002 to 2021, over 5 million nutria have been taken. Passing the legislation would allow these successful efforts to continue.

I thank Representative VALADAO for co-leading this legislation, which will benefit California's Central Valley in its work to eradicate nutria.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 776, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ANSARI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act through fiscal year 2030, to ensure that Maryland, Louisiana, and California can manage and eradicate this destructive, invasive species.

Nutria are an invasive species of large, semiaquatic rodents found in coastal wetlands along the Gulf of Mexico, the East Coast, California, and other wetland areas within the United States.

Nutria were initially introduced into the United States in the 1930s for fur production. However, their rapid breeding and destructive tendencies toward native wetland vegetation have led to extensive erosion, displacement of native species, breached levees, and the