

These non-Federal dollars come through in kind, local, State, and private sources, which are utilized by the local program leaders in accordance with their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans. The NEP allows the locals to lead and address the water quality issues because they know best.

Projects carried out using NEP funds cover a wide range of possibilities but always keep the locals in the driver's seat. They may include protecting shoreline habitats, increasing the ecological integrity of estuaries, or building coastal resilience. Projects may also aim to improve water quality or encourage community access to coastal ecosystems.

In other instances, funds may support estuaries in a broader scope, such as supporting adjacent land acquisitions or upgrading nearby wastewater or stormwater infrastructure.

Regardless, these decisions are made locally and based on the specific NEP program and its unique location and specific needs.

Currently, there are 28 active NEP initiatives nationwide. This includes all corners of the country, from the Puget Sound in Washington to Santa Monica Bay in California, my home in Mobile, Alabama, all the way up to Casco Bay in Maine.

I will always champion efforts like the National Estuary Program, which protect and restore our critical natural resources while utilizing local knowledge and ensuring the efficient use of Federal funds.

This is a program that is working. It is popular, and it deserves our support. I urge passage of the ESTUARIES Act, as amended, and ask all my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FIGURES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative FIGURES for yielding.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3962, the Enhancing, Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems Act, or ESTUARIES Act.

Estuaries rank among the most productive ecosystems in the country, where freshwater meets saltwater, and entire communities benefit from that key meeting point.

Families depend on estuaries for clean water. Fishers depend on them for healthy stocks. Small businesses depend on them for tourism, recreation, and the natural beauty that draws people to our coasts. When estuaries thrive, local communities thrive. The National Estuary Program makes that possible.

For more than three decades, NEP partnerships have restored wetlands, improved water quality, reduced toxic

pollutants, strengthened fish habitat, and built natural buffers that protect homes and businesses from flooding and storm surge.

These partnerships unite scientists, local governments, Tribal nations, fishers and anglers, farmers, and community leaders around a shared plan, and those plans deliver results.

In Tillamook Bay in Oregon, in the district I am honored to represent, the NEP helped restore hundreds of acres of tidal wetland which improved salmon runs, protected dairy farms from flooding, and created new recreational corridors.

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On the Gulf Coast, NEP projects rebuilt marshes that shield front-line communities from hurricanes. In New England, estuary programs helped revive the shellfish beds that sustain entire working waterfronts.

This bill continues the NEP's successful legacy. The ESTUARIES Act reauthorizes competitive grants from 2031 so every estuary of national significance can implement science-driven conservation, respond to emerging threats, and support long-term economic resilience.

This bill upholds a simple principle: When we give local experts the tools they need, they protect the ecosystems that protect us.

This legislation reflects a strong bipartisan, bicameral commitment to support these critical ecosystems and recognize their significance.

I thank Representative FIGURES for leading this effort. I thank, as well, Representative JOHNSON for his support. Also, I thank my fellow co-chairs of the Bipartisan Estuary Caucus for their partnership: Representatives HARIDOPOLOS, MAST, and Ranking Member LARSEN. Together we can continue decades of success in estuary restoration and resilience.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the ESTUARIES Act.

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

Mr. Speaker, to date, the National Estuary Program has restored more than 2½ million acres of coastal habitat nationwide. The 28 programs, soon to be 29 with the addition of the Mississippi Sound, and partnerships will work hard to address challenges we are all familiar with, like harmful algal blooms, coastal erosion, and runoff pollution.

Keeping our estuaries healthy means keeping our coastal communities strong. Estuaries protect these communities from flooding, store clean water, support commercial fish habitats, and provide recreational opportunities. Let's keep working together to restore and protect these essential ecosystems. Reauthorizing the national estuary program will allow us to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 3962, as amended, the ESTUARIES Act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the American people can be forgiven if they are watching cable news and assume the only thing we do around here is fight, but I think the last three bills on the floor are a good example that, indeed, is not the case.

Now, let's be honest. None of these bills have been silver bullets slaying the biggest policy challenges facing our Nation, but they are real attempts at governing. The Save Our Seas Act, FMC reauthorization, and this, the ESTUARIES Act, are attempts by serious legislators, people like Mr. MAST, Mr. HARIDOPOLOS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. LARSEN, and Mr. FIGURES, to address real problems facing our country.

Indeed, this bill is a bipartisan attempt to reauthorize the longstanding, nonregulatory EPA grant program that does empower locals to solve these problems far more powerfully than if we just had the experts in D.C. do it.

This is a good bill. It is a continuation of a theme on the floor today of serious legislators doing serious work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support 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 South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3962, 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.

#### UNIVERSITY OF UTAH RESEARCH PARK ACT

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2876) to confirm the use of certain non-Federal land in Salt Lake City, Utah, for public purposes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2876

*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 "University of Utah Research Park Act".

#### SEC. 2. CONFIRMATION OF USE OF CERTAIN NON-FEDERAL LAND IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, FOR VALID PUBLIC PURPOSES.

(a) CONFIRMATION OF USES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The use by the University of Utah of the land described in subsection (b) as a University research park, as approved by the letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the University of Utah dated December 10, 1970, and any modifications of the approved plan of development and management approved by the Department of the Interior prior to the date of enactment of this Act, is confirmed as a valid public purpose consistent with the requirements of the

Act of June 14, 1926 (commonly known as the "Recreation and Public Purposes Act") (44 Stat. 741, chapter 578; 43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.), subject to the terms and conditions included in the letter and approvals.

(2) OTHER USES.—Any other uses of the land described in subsection (b) by the University of Utah that are consistent with use as a University research park and related university purposes (including development of student housing and a transit hub) are confirmed as valid public purposes consistent with the requirements of the Act of June 14, 1926 (commonly known as the "Recreation and Public Purposes Act") (44 Stat. 741, chapter 578; 43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.).

(b) DESCRIPTION OF NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The land referred to in subsection (a) is the approximately 593.54 acres of land conveyed to the University of Utah under the Act of June 14, 1926 (commonly known as the "Recreation and Public Purposes Act") (44 Stat. 741, chapter 578; 43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.), by patent numbered 43-99-0012 and dated October 18, 1968, and more particularly described as tracts D (excluding parcels numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), G, and J, T. 1 S., R. 1 E., Salt Lake Meridian.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STAUBER. 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. 2876, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2876, the University of Utah Research Park Act, led by Representative BLAKE MOORE of Utah.

H.R. 2876 resolves legal uncertainty surrounding the University of Utah's ownership of 593 acres of land in the heart of Salt Lake City. This uncertainty comprises the university's flagship research park, a key educational and economic development center.

Since its conveyance under the Research and Public Purposes Act in 1968, this parcel has grown into a nationally recognized hub for innovation, home to 81 university departments and more than 50 pharmaceutical, medical research, and biotechnology companies. Today, Research Park employs over 14,000 Utahns and provides invaluable educational opportunities for students preparing to lead in the fields of science and medicine.

Despite this long record of success, a recent BLM review raised questions about whether the park's use of the land aligns with the terms of the original patent.

H.R. 2876 clears up this ambiguity by affirming the park's current use is valid and consistent with the public purpose envisioned at the time of the conveyance.

This is a simple, bipartisan bill that cuts red tape and ensures the University of Utah can continue building on nearly six decades of scientific discovery, economic growth, and global impact. I commend Representative MOORE for leading this effort in the House and the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator LEE, for championing this bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2876, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the University of Utah's Research Park Act.

The University of Utah's Research Park is comprised of 593 acres that were originally issued as a land patent in 1968 through the Bureau of Land Management. The area was later conveyed under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act for academic expansion of the university. Today, Research Park supports a multitude of uses, including technology, education, and medical facilities.

Although the parcel was conveyed to the university, a reversionary clause remains in place to ensure continued public use. While reversionary clauses are standard practice, in this case it has created challenges for the university in pursuing new opportunities that fall outside the traditional sense of public purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, even though the site was previously approved for university expansion.

H.R. 2876 would clarify and affirm that Research Park is consistent with the original application, so that the university can continue to grow Research Park.

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

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE), who is the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, to my colleague and friend from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), it is worth actually noting that the area focus of this bill, the location, is a stone's throw from the very cauldron that the Miracle on Ice team lit during the 2002 Winter Olympics. I congratulate the gentleman for getting that bill signed into law, the Congressional Gold Medal Act for those amazing patriots.

I actually watched that movie with my kids over the weekend and saw the patriotism start to brew, really an amazing feat. I thank my friend for that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the University of Utah Research Park Act, which passed unanimously out of the Natural Resources Committee in September.

This legislation addresses legal uncertainties surrounding the University of Utah's use of land initially conveyed to the school by the Bureau of Land Management back in 1968. At that

time, the university requested land on the Fort Douglas Military Reservation for academic and research use, a request approved and granted by the BLM. Since then, the university has built a nationally recognized research park housing over 50 companies and employing nearly 14,000 Utahns.

Research Park has been instrumental in establishing Utah as a leader in innovation. Last year, I was proud to welcome my colleagues to the Ways and Means Committee to Research Park for a field hearing to show them first-hand how Utah continues to lead the way in biotech innovation.

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Unfortunately, after decades of cooperative engagement between the University of Utah and the Federal Government, there have been questions as to whether the longstanding activities at Research Park are consistent with the original land patent under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The University of Utah Research Park Act addresses these concerns and makes it clear that the school is operating within the parameters of the law.

With the assurance that the university can continue to operate the park, they will have increased ability to invest institutional resources and improve the park without the worry of additional red tape and regulatory restrictions or, worse, the area reverting back to Federal control.

My bill will provide the university with needed stability and confirm the original intent and approval of the land transfer, allowing the university to plan strategically to meet the needs of its students, the community, and industry.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and my colleagues of the Utah House and Senate delegation for joining me in this effort to ensure that the University of Utah's Research Park can continue to serve as a premier research incubator.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2876. Go Utes.

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

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2876 resolves an unnecessary cloud over this property by confirming the valid use of the University of Utah's prized Research Park, which has served the public for decades.

This commonsense bill will allow the park to keep driving innovation, supporting thousands of good jobs, and giving students hands-on opportunities to learn and grow.

I thank once again Representative MOORE, Senator LEE, and the entire Utah congressional delegation for their work on this important effort. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting 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 Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2876.

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.

## SLOAN CANYON CONSERVATION AND LATERAL PIPELINE ACT

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 972) to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 972

*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 "Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act".

### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CONSERVATION AREA.—The term "Conservation Area" means the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

### SEC. 3. SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—

(1) MAP.—Section 603(4) of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-1(4)) is amended by striking "map entitled 'Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act' and dated October 1, 2002" and inserting "map entitled 'Proposed Sloan Canyon Expansion' and dated May 20, 2024".

(2) ACREAGE.—Section 604(b) of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-2(b)) is amended by striking "48,438" and inserting "57,728".

(b) RIGHT-OF-WAY.—Section 605 of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-3) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(h) HORIZON LATERAL PIPELINE RIGHT-OF-WAY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 202 and 503 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712, 1763) and subject to valid existing rights and paragraph (3), the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (referred to in this subsection as the 'Secretary'), shall, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this subsection, grant to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (referred to in this subsection as the 'Authority'), not subject to the payment of rents or other charges, the temporary and permanent water pipeline infrastructure, and outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area, powerline, facility, and access road rights-of-way depicted on the map for the purposes of—

"(A) performing geotechnical investigations within the rights-of-way; and

"(B) constructing and operating water transmission and related facilities.

"(2) EXCAVATION AND DISPOSAL.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Authority may, without consideration, excavate and use or dispose of sand, gravel, minerals, or other materials from the tunneling of the water pipeline necessary to fulfill the purpose of the rights-of-way granted under paragraph (1).

"(B) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the rights-of-way are granted under paragraph (1), the Secretary and the Authority shall enter into a memorandum of understanding identifying Federal land on which the Authority may dispose of materials under subparagraph (A) to further the interests of the Bureau of Land Management.

"(3) REQUIREMENTS.—A right-of-way issued under this subsection shall be subject to the following requirements:

"(A) The Secretary may include reasonable terms and conditions, consistent with section 505 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1765), as are necessary to protect Conservation Area resources.

"(B) Construction of the water pipeline shall not permanently adversely affect conservation area surface resources.

"(C) The right-of-way shall not be located through or under any area designated as wilderness."

(c) PRESERVATION OF TRANSMISSION AND UTILITY CORRIDORS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY.—The expansion of the Conservation Area boundary under the amendment made by subsection (a)—

(1) shall be subject to valid existing rights, including land within a designated utility transmission corridor or a transmission line right-of-way grant approved by the Secretary in a record of decision issued before the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) shall not preclude—

(A) any activity authorized in accordance with a designated corridor or right-of-way referred to in paragraph (1), including the operation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of any authorized utility facility within the corridor or right-of-way; or

(B) the Secretary from authorizing the establishment of a new utility facility right-of-way within an existing designated transportation and utility corridor referred to in paragraph (1)—

(i) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and other applicable laws; and

(ii) subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(d) MANAGEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.—Except as provided in the amendment made by subsection (b), nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall modify the management of the Conservation Area pursuant to section 605 of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-3).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER) and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 972, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 972, the Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act, introduced by Representative TITUS.

Southern Nevada is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, and with growth comes increased demand for critical resources like drinking water.

Right now, nearly 40 percent of the Las Vegas Valley's water is carried through a single pipeline that was built in the 1990s. That is a huge vulnerability. If that line goes down, whether for repairs or due to an outage, the entire region could face a water supply crisis.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority has done its homework. After years of study and work with local stakeholders, it has proposed the Horizon Lateral pipeline to ensure a resilient and reliable water supply for families and businesses across the Las Vegas Valley. The preferred southern route of this pipeline passes under the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area. Compared to other alternatives, this alignment minimizes impacts on neighborhoods and is estimated to save taxpayers nearly \$200 million.

H.R. 972 authorizes the preferred route for this pipeline through the national conservation area. This bill also expands the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area by more than 9,000 acres. The Bureau of Land Management already manages these lands, so the expansion would not add to the Federal estate.

The bill also allows materials excavated from the tunneling to be reused for infrastructure and public improvements.

This legislation is about balance. It provides the infrastructure southern Nevada needs to keep pace with growth and ensure reliable water deliveries without compromising conservation. That is the kind of practical, forward-looking management we need more of.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 972, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 972, the Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act, introduced by the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS). This bill would expand the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area and authorize the Horizon Lateral water pipeline.

The Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area contains over 48,000 acres of the Mojave Desert, including petroglyphs, wilderness areas, and a variety of key wildlife species. The national conservation area forms the mountainous southern edge of Las Vegas and Henderson, Nevada.

Representative TITUS' bill balances conservation with the needs of the growing Las Vegas community. Under