

floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution presented by the gentleman from South Carolina will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

WINTERGREEN EMERGENCY EGRESS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6365) to require the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way for an emergency exit on certain National Park Service land in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6365

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 "Wintergreen Emergency Egress Act".

SEC. 2. RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR EMERGENCY EXIT, BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY.

Section 2 of the Act of June 30, 1936 (49 Stat. 2041, chapter 883; 54 Stat. 250, chapter 277; 16 U.S.C. 460a-3), is amended—

(1) by striking "Secretary of the Interior may issue" and inserting the following: "Secretary of the Interior—

"(1) may issue";

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) shall issue the right-of-way generally depicted as 'Proposed Egress' on the map entitled 'Blue Ridge Parkway, Proposed Wintergreen Emergency Egress Near Milepost 9.6', numbered 601/194,694, and dated September 2024, if the Secretary reports to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate that—

"(A) an evaluation has been completed of alternatives to the right-of-way for egress that do not cross Federal land that includes evaluating whether existing trails can be converted to roads;

"(B) an analysis of expected fire ecology behavior in the event of a fire emergency has been completed with respect to the right-of-way; and

"(C) any required reviews with respect to the right-of-way have been completed in accordance with—

"(i) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

"(ii) division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code.".

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. 6365, 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 today in support of H.R. 6365, the Wintergreen Emergency Egress Act, introduced by Representative JOHN MCGUIRE of Virginia.

This bill accomplishes something very simple and very important. It directs the Department of the Interior to issue a narrow right-of-way so the Wintergreen community in Virginia can complete an emergency-only evacuation route.

Wintergreen is a mountain community located near the Blue Ridge Parkway, with one road in and one road out. That single access point serves year-round residents, seasonal visitors, and first responders.

Over the past decade, the community has grown from 150 to 500 residents, not including seasonal visitors, and the risk tied to having only one exit has grown along with it.

In recent years, we have seen what happens when communities lack sufficient options to escape during emergencies. Fires in places like Paradise, California, and Lahaina, Hawaii, demonstrate how quickly evacuation routes can become overwhelmed and congested, endangering residents and first responders alike.

For Wintergreen, this is not about building a new public road. The community is proposing a second, emergency-only route that follows an existing dirt path on National Park Service land. It would only require a short 30 feet of gravel to make the road useable for emergency vehicles.

The community has already built the road on non-Federal land and has spent years working through the Federal process. The only remaining piece is a small segment on Federal land that cannot move forward under current National Park Service regulations.

H.R. 6365 offers a straightforward solution by directing the Secretary of the Interior to issue this vital right-of-way after required reviews are completed and reported to Congress. This is a targeted fix to a real safety problem. Representative MCGUIRE's legislation im-

proves evacuation planning, helps first responders, and does so with very minimal impact to Federal land.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative MCGUIRE for his leadership on this issue and advocacy on behalf of his constituents. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting 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.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Wintergreen, Virginia, is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains, next to the popular Wintergreen Resort. It has a year-round population of 500 and a seasonal peak of almost 10,000. However, Wintergreen has only one road that leads in and out of the community and in an emergency situation, this is a major safety risk that could be catastrophic for Wintergreen's residents and visitors.

H.R. 6365 addresses this problem by allowing a 400-foot-long single-lane gravel road connecting Wintergreen to the Blue Ridge Parkway, providing a secondary exit route in the case of an emergency.

After completing the relevant environmental reviews, the National Park Service will be authorized to issue a right-of-way for the road.

This is a commonsense bill that will improve public safety and make minimal changes to the surrounding and natural area. I extend my gratitude to Representative MCGUIRE and the Senators from Virginia for introducing this legislation to help Wintergreen's residents and visitors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 6365, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCGUIRE), the lead sponsor of the bill.

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Mr. MCGUIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 6365, the Wintergreen Emergency Egress Act.

Wintergreen, Virginia, is a popular tourist destination located in my district. Wintergreen is one of the largest planned communities in Virginia, with over 3,000 properties situated on 11,000 acres. The risk of wildfires was not top of mind when this mountaintop community was designed in the 1970s.

The original developers did not reserve an emergency egress corridor before conveying a few thousand acres of unneeded land to the Appalachian Trail commission. Because of this, Wintergreen only has one entrance and one exit route.

As awareness of wildfire risk grew, the community of Wintergreen was placed on the Virginia Department of Forestry's radar as a wildland-urban interface community with a high risk of a devastating fire. Since becoming aware of the increased risk of wildfire, the community has worked steadily to mitigate that risk. However, an emergency egress is still needed.

For over 25 years, and working with five other Members of Congress, the Wintergreen community has fought to complete an emergency evacuation route. The town of Wintergreen has already constructed all portions of the road that are not on Federal land. Unfortunately, the only thing that has stood in their way all these years is a small section of land controlled by the National Park Service, approximately 400 feet, that separates the unfinished road from being connected to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The recent wildfires in California and Maui highlight the danger posed by limited evacuation routes. People lost their lives in those fires because they were trapped in their vehicles with no way to escape.

My bill is a proactive response to the very real threat to public safety that the town of Wintergreen currently faces if it needed to evacuate due to a natural disaster. We cannot wait until a tragedy occurs to make a change. Public safety and lives are at risk.

The Wintergreen community, including Chief Curtis Sheets of Wintergreen Fire and Rescue, has spent over 25 years fighting for the completion of this emergency evacuation route. I am proud to assist the entire Wintergreen community in continuing and finishing this fight.

I am proud to have bipartisan support of seven of my colleagues in the Virginia delegation. This bill is not political. It is a commonsense solution that is vital to preventing a tragedy in my district.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his friendship and leadership in helping me address this important issue for my district, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 6365.

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, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank Representative MCGUIRE for his leadership on the Wintergreen Emergency Egress Act. Again, the bill addresses a clear safety risk with a narrow 30-foot-wide easement and a practical solution.

It allows a small emergency-only connection to move forward, while keeping environmental reviews and oversight in place. This will help keep every resident and tourist who appreciates the beauty of Wintergreen, Virginia, safe in the event of a natural disaster.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6365, 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. 6365, 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.

FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBE LEASING AUTHORITY

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5910) to authorize leases of up to 99 years for land held in trust for federally recognized Indian Tribes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5910

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBE LEASING AUTHORITY.

Subsection (a) of the first section of the Act of August 9, 1955 (69 Stat. 539, chapter 615; 25 U.S.C. 415(a)), is amended, in the second sentence, by inserting “, land held in trust for any other Indian Tribe included on the list published by the Secretary pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131)” after “Chehalis Reservation”.

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. 5910, 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, H.R. 5910, introduced by Representative HAGEMAN of Wyoming, would amend the Long-Term Leasing Act to authorize all federally recognized Indian Tribes to lease land held in trust for up to 99 years.

Under current law, Indian trust lands may generally be leased for up to 25 years, with one additional 25-year renewal term.

While Congress has repeatedly amended the act to authorize specific Tribes to enter 99-year leases, this authority is not uniformly available across Indian Country. As a result, Tribes must often seek separate legislation to obtain the same long-term leasing authority that others already possess.

Lease terms of up to 99 years are frequently necessary to support major commercial development and secure private financing. Without long-term certainty, lenders and investors may be reluctant to commit capital to projects on trust land.

H.R. 5910 addresses this issue by extending 99-year leasing authority to all federally recognized Tribes, elimi-

nating the need for Tribe-by-Tribe amendments, while maintaining the Secretary of the Interior's approval requirement. This approach promotes parity, reduces administrative delays, and supports economic development in Tribal communities.

I commend Ms. HAGEMAN for advancing legislation that promotes consistency and opportunity across Indian Country, and I support the bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has a long history of restricting the autonomy of Tribal nations, and it is reflected throughout Federal Indian law. Many laws on the books, even if they were well intended, have created barriers to Tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

The Long-Term Leasing Act is one of these laws. It authorizes Tribal nations to enter into lease agreements for up to 25 years, with the option to renew for an additional 25 years.

A 25-year lease is often too short to provide the certainty necessary for development in Indian Country, where long-term investments in housing and infrastructure are critical to supporting Tribal communities.

Congress has repeatedly recognized this problem and addressed it piecemeal, passing individual bills for over 50 Tribes to authorize lease terms of up to 99 years.

H.R. 5910 would extend the authority to enter into 99-year lease agreements to all federally recognized Tribes. This will provide a uniform standard that better respects Tribal sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. HAGEMAN), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 5910, which amends the Long-Term Leasing Act to authorize any federally recognized Indian Tribe to lease land held in trust for its benefit for up to 99 years.

With the enactment of the Indian Nonintercourse Act in 1834, Tribal land transactions have generally required congressional authorization. In 1955, however, Congress passed the Long-Term Leasing Act, authorizing Tribal lands held in trust to be leased by the Tribal owner for nongrazing purposes for up to 25 years, subject to approval from the Secretary of the Interior. These leases may be renewed for one additional term of up to 25 years, which could allow for a total lease time of up to 50 years.

It is becoming abundantly clear that longer term leasing is needed to assist with Tribal economic development.

For example, lease terms of 99 years are often needed for long-term commercial projects and financing arrangements. Requiring Tribes to come to