

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

Congress for enactment of a new authorization slows the process to the detriment of the Tribe.

Although Congress has acted more than 50 times to allow for lease terms greater than 25 years, more autonomy and flexibility are needed. H.R. 5910 amends the Long-Term Leasing Act to grant 99-year lease authority over trust lands for any Tribe that desires this ability.

Tribes know best what is in their interest, and this bill gives them additional authority to meet those needs. By proactively extending this long-term leasing authority to Tribes, Congress can empower them to pursue longer agreements that drive long-term investment, job creation, and economic opportunity in their communities. These goals simply cannot be achieved under the current statute.

At its core, H.R. 5910 would update existing law to better align with modern business practices, reduce time-consuming bureaucracy Tribes must go through, and allow each federally recognized Tribe to determine what lease authorities are best for them and their members.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LEGER FERNANDEZ for her continued co-leadership on this important piece of legislation and Chairman WESTERMAN for our Natural Resources Committee's focus on Tribal autonomy and economic development. I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 5910.

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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, H.R. 5910 ensures that all federally recognized Tribes have equal access to long-term leasing authority necessary for economic development and financing. By extending 99-year leasing authority across all of Indian Country, this bill promotes fairness, efficiency, and investment in Tribal communities.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HAGEMAN for her leadership on this issue. I urge the passage of H.R. 5910, 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. 5910.

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.

#### CHUGACH ALASKA LAND EXCHANGE OIL SPILL RECOVERY ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3903) to exchange non-Federal

land held by the Chugach Alaska Corporation for certain Federal Land in the Chugach Region, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3903

*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 "Chugach Alaska Land Exchange Oil Spill Recovery Act of 2025".*

#### SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

*The purposes of this Act are—*

(1) to authorize, direct, and expedite the exchange of land and interests in land between Chugach Alaska and the United States; and

(2) to consolidate Federal ownership of the surface and subsurface estate of Federal land and interests acquired under the Program.

#### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

*In this Act:*

(1) ANSCA TERMS.—The terms "Native Corporation", "Regional Corporation", and "Village Corporation" have the meanings given those terms in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602).

(2) CHUGACH ALASKA.—The term "Chugach Alaska" means the Chugach Alaska Corporation, a Regional Corporation.

(3) CHUGACH REGION LAND STUDY REPORT.—The term "Chugach Region Land Study Report" means the report and recommendations submitted to Congress by the Secretary pursuant to section 1113 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Public Law 116–9; 133 Stat. 614).

(4) FEDERAL EXCHANGE LAND.—The term "Federal exchange land" means the approximately 65,374 acres of fee simple land located in the Chugach Region as described in section 4(e).

(5) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term "non-Federal land" means the parcels of subsurface land comprising approximately 231,000 acres—

(A) owned by Chugach Alaska and conveyed to Chugach Alaska pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.);

(B) described in section 4(f); and

(C) for which—

(i) the United States has acquired fee title to the surface estate or a conservation easement on the surface estate pursuant to the Program; or

(ii) the State has acquired fee title to, and the United States has acquired a conservation easement in, the surface estate pursuant to the Program.

(6) PROGRAM.—The term "Program" means the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Habitat Protection and Acquisition Program of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.

(7) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of Alaska.

#### SEC. 4. LAND EXCHANGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, if Chugach Alaska offers to convey to the Secretary all right, title, and interest in and to the non-Federal land, the Secretary shall accept the offer and convey, pursuant to section 22(j)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1621(j)(1)), all right, title, and interest of the Federal Government in and to the Federal exchange land subject to the reservation of public easements required under section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1616(b)).

(b) CONDITION ON ACCEPTANCE.—Title to the non-Federal land exchanged in subsection (a) shall be in a form that is acceptable to the Secretary.

(c) TREATMENT OF LAND CONVEYED.—Except as otherwise provided, any land conveyed to Chugach Alaska under subsection (a) shall be considered to be land conveyed by the Secretary under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(d) VALID EXISTING RIGHTS.—The conveyances under subsection (a) shall be subject to any valid existing rights, reservations, rights-of-way, or other encumbrances of third parties in, to, or on the Federal exchange land or the non-Federal land as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) CONVEYANCE OF FEDERAL EXCHANGE LAND.—The Secretary shall, as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, convey to Chugach Alaska—

(1) all right, title, and interest in and to the National Forest System land of the Forest Service identified in the Chugach Regional Land Study and Report, comprising approximately 63,414 total acres, comprising—

(A) T. 3 N., R. 10 E., Seward Meridian, Drier Bay Parcel, comprising approximately 2,996 acres of surface estate;

(B) T. 17 and 18 S., R. 7 and 8 E., Copper River Meridian, Kushtaka Lake Parcel, comprising approximately 7,876 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(C) T. 2 N., R. 1 and 2 E., Seward Meridian, Snow River Parcel, comprising approximately 11,462 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(D) T. 17 and 18 S., R. 8 W., Copper River Meridian, Hinchinbrook Island Parcel, comprising approximately 2,617 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(E) T. 17 S., R. 7 E., secs. 5, 8, 18, 19, and 30 through 33, Copper River Meridian, Kushtaka Lake Parcel, comprising approximately 6,375 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(F) T. 18 S., R. 7 E., secs. 6 and 7, Copper River Meridian, Kushtaka Lake Parcel, comprising approximately 1,280 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(G) T. 16 S., R. 5 E., secs. 24 through 26 and 36, Copper River Meridian, Martin River Parcel, comprising approximately 2,240 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(H) T. 16 S., R. 6 E., secs. 16, 19 through 21, and 25 through 36, Copper River Meridian, Martin River Parcel, comprising approximately 8,305 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(I) T. 17 S., R. 6 E., secs. 1 through 4, and 10, Copper River Meridian, Martin River Parcel, comprising approximately 3,170 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(J) T. 16 S., R. 4 E., secs. 1 through 4, 9 through 13, and 24, Copper River Meridian, Johnson River Parcel, comprising approximately 5,200 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(K) T. 16 S., R. 5 E., secs. 5 through 9, and 15 through 22, Copper River Meridian, Johnson River Parcel, comprising approximately 6,165 acres of surface and subsurface estate; and

(L) T. 19 S., R. 15 E., secs. 12 through 14, 23, 24, 26, 27, 33, and 34, Copper River Meridian, Robinson Mountains Parcel, comprising approximately 5,728 acres of surface and subsurface estate; and

(2) all right, title, and interest in and to the Federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service identified in the Chugach Regional Land Study and Report, comprising approximately 1,960 total acres, comprising—

(A) T. 21 S., R. 24 E., Copper River Meridian, Taan Fjord Parcel, comprising approximately 450 acres of surface and subsurface estate;

(B) T. 21 and 22 S., R. 24 E., Copper River Meridian, Kageet Point Parcel, comprising approximately 310 acres of surface and subsurface estate; and

(C) T. 9 S., R. 2 W., secs. 5 and 6, Copper River Meridian, Thompson Pass Parcel, comprising 1,200 acres of surface and subsurface estate.

(f) CONVEYANCE OF NON-FEDERAL LAND.—