

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.

□ 1520

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.—

(1) CONVEYANCE.—The non-Federal land to which Chugach Alaska may convey to the Secretary all right, title, and interest, that the Secretary determines to be applicable, includes—

(A) the approximately 130,469.93 subsurface acres, which comprises—

(i) T. 13 S., R. 1 W., sec. 19, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 467 acres;

(ii) T. 13 S., R. 2 W., secs. 23 through 27, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,627 acres;

(iii) T. 15 S., R. 2 W., secs. 3 through 9, 17 through 19, and 29 through 33, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 8,277.36 acres;

(iv) T. 16 S., R. 2 W., secs. 1 through 4, and 6, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,373.34 acres;

(v) T. 14 S., R. 3 W., secs. 32 and 33, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 240 acres;

(vi) T. 15 S., R. 3 W., secs. 3 through 7, portions of secs. 8 and 9, and secs. 12, 13, 18, 19, 24, 25, 35, and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 3,486.36 acres;

(vii) T. 16 S., R. 3 W., secs. 1, 11, and 15, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 962 acres;

(viii) T. 13 S., R. 4 W., secs. 26, 27, and 32 through 34, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,494.05 acres;

(ix) T. 14 S., R. 4 W., secs. 1 through 11, 15 through 21, 25, 30, and 31, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 6,750.98 acres;

(x) T. 15 S., R. 4 W., secs. 8 through 12, 16 through 22, and 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 5,839.15 acres;

(xi) T. 13 S., R. 5 W., secs. 3, 9 through 11, 14 through 20, a portion of sec. 21, and secs. 31 and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 4,216.36 acres;

(xii) T. 14 S., R. 5 W., sec. 1, a portion of sec. 2, secs. 6 through 12, 14 through 21, 29, and 30, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 9,057.6 acres;

(xiii) T. 15 S., R. 5 W., secs. 23 and 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 292.97 acres;

(xiv) T. 12 S., R. 6 W., secs. 11, 13, 14, 23, and 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,980.69 acres;

(xv) T. 12 S., R. 7 W., secs. 32, 34, 35, and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 343 acres;

(xvi) T. 13 S., R. 7 W., secs. 1 through 22, 24, 25, and 27 through 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 17,234.88 acres;

(xvii) T. 14 S., R. 7 W., secs. 2, 3, and 6, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 203 acres;

(xviii) T. 13 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1, 9 through 11, 13 through 29, and 32 through 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 9,282.25 acres;

(xix) T. 14 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1 through 5, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 629.25 acres;

(xx) T. 13 S., R. 9 W., sec. 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 10 acres;

(xxi) T. 10 S., R. 10 W., sec. 32, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1.19 acres;

(xxii) T. 3 N., R. 7 E., secs. 1 through 4, 8 through 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, and 29, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 9,314 acres;

(xxiii) T. 4 N., R. 7 E., secs. 11, 14, 15, 21 through 28, and 33 through 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 8,684.96 acres;

(xxiv) T. 3 N., R. 8 E., secs. 4 through 7, 18, and 19, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,120.50 acres;

(xxv) T. 4 N., R. 8 E., secs. 29 through 32, and 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,404.25 acres;

(xxvi) T. 1 N., R. 10 E., secs. 5 and 8, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 743 acres;

(xxvii) T. 3 S., R. 2 W., secs. 22, 23, 25, 26, 33, 35, and 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 2,125 acres;

(xxviii) T. 4 S., R. 2 W., secs. 2, 3, 4, and 11, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,225 acres;

(xxix) T. 5 S., R. 3 W., secs. 18, 19, 20, 23, 26 through 29, and 32 through 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 3,670 acres;

(xxx) T. 5 S., R. 4 W., sec. 13, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 380 acres;

(xxxi) T. 6 S., R. 4 W., sec. 7, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 613 acres;

(xxxii) T. 5 S., R. 5 W., sec. 33, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 620 acres;

(xxxiii) T. 6 S., R. 5 W., secs. 4, 9, 28, 29, 32, and 33, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 3,205 acres;

(xxxiv) T. 7 S., R. 5 W., sec. 4, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 230 acres;

(xxxv) T. 8 S., R. 6 W., secs. 7 through 12, 14 through 22, and 27 through 34, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 6,797.39 acres;

(xxxvi) T. 7 S., R. 7 W., secs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 through 14, 16, 17, 23, and 24, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 6,031.78 acres;

(xxxvii) T. 8 S., R. 7 W., secs. 24, 25, 35, and 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 705.65 acres; and

(xxxviii) T. 7 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 26 (lots 1 through 4), 27, 28, and 29, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 6,831.97 acres;

(B) the approximately 24,911.65 subsurface acres in which the fee title to the surface estate has been acquired by the State, and a conservation easement in the surface estate has been acquired by the United States, pursuant to the Program, which comprises—

(i) T. 16 S., R. 4 W., sec. 6, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 157.49 acres;

(ii) T. 15 S., R. 5 W., secs. 35 and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,280 acres;

(iii) T. 16 S., R. 5 W., secs. 3, 4, 10, 11, and 12, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,479 acres;

(iv) T. 11 S., R. 8 W., secs. 4 and 9, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 579 acres;

(v) T. 12 S., R. 8 W., sec. 1, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 130 acres;

(vi) T. 9 S., R. 9 W., secs. 26, 27, 33, 34, and 35, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,524.26 acres;

(vii) T. 10 S., R. 10 W., secs. 15, 16, 22, 23, 27, 28, 32, and 33, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,183.65 acres;

(viii) T. 4 N., R. 7 E., secs. 12 and 13, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,145 acres;

(ix) T. 3 N., R. 8 E., secs. 12 and 13, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 304 acres;

(x) T. 4 N., R. 8 E., secs. 1 through 5, 7 through 30, and 33 through 35, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 14,712.25 acres; and

(xi) T. 4 N., R. 9 E., secs. 6, 7, 17, 18, and 19, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,417 acres; and

(C) the approximately 75,655.4 subsurface acres in which a conservation easement in the surface estate has been acquired by the United States pursuant to the Program, which comprises—

(i) T. 13 S., R. 2 W., secs. 33 and 34, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,131.75 acres;

(ii) T. 14 S., R. 2 W., secs. 4 through 8, and 31, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,104.92 acres;

(iii) T. 14 S., R. 3 W., secs. 12 through 16, 21 through 23, and 28 through 31, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 5,319.37 acres;

(iv) T. 14 S., R. 3 W., secs. 6 through 8, and 17 through 20, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 3,899.44 acres;

(v) T. 15 S., R. 3 W., secs. 8 and 9, and the southern part of sec. 13, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 125 acres;

(vi) T. 16 S., R. 3 W., secs. 1, 11, 12, 14, and 15, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 506 acres;

(vii) T. 14 S., R. 4 W., secs. 28 and 29, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 660.15 acres;

(viii) T. 14 S., R. 4 W., secs. 1, 5 through 8, 10 through 15, 22 through 27, and 34 through 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 3,516 acres;

(ix) T. 15 S., R. 5 W., secs. 27, 28, 33, and 34, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,455.63 acres;

(x) T. 11 S., R. 6 W., secs. 25, 26, and 34 through 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,088.26 acres;

(xi) T. 12 S., R. 6 W., secs. 1 through 3, 8 through 10, and 16 through 19, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,777.5 acres;

(xii) T. 11 S., R. 7 W., sec. 31, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 577.8 acres;

(xiii) T. 12 S., R. 7 W., sec. 5 through 7, 10 through 15, and 18 through 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 6,596.93 acres;

(xiv) T. 13 S., R. 7 W., secs. 18 and 19, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 700 acres;

(xv) T. 10 S., R. 8 W., secs. 33 and 34, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,197 acres;

(xvi) T. 11 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1 through 4, 10 through 16, 21 through 26, 31, 35, and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 7,647.41 acres;

(xvii) T. 12 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1, 12 through 14, and 24, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 591.75 acres;

(xviii) T. 12 S., R. 8 W., secs. 1 through 3, 10, 11, 14 through 16, 21 and 22, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 2,112 acres;

(xix) T. 12 S., R. 8 W., secs. 5 through 8, 18, and 19, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,220.5 acres;

(xx) T. 13 S., R. 8 W., secs. 13, 14, 17, 19 through 21, 23, 24, and 28 through 30, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,400 acres;

(xxi) T. 11 S., R. 9 W., secs. 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 1,157.75 acres;

(xxii) T. 12 S., R. 9 W., secs. 1 through 4, 9 through 15, 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 6,445.71 acres;

(xxiii) T. 13 S., R. 9 W., secs. 24 and 25, Copper River Meridian, comprising approximately 345.33 acres;

(xxiv) T. 2 N., R. 7 E., sec. 1, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 64.16 acres;

(xxv) T. 3 N., R. 7 E., secs. 24, 25, and 36, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 385.75 acres;

(xxvi) T. 1 N., R. 8 E., secs. 11, 14, 15, 22, 23, 26, and 27, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,667.65 acres;

(xxvii) T. 2 N., R. 8 E., secs. 2 through 11, 26, 30, 31, 32, and 35, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 4,339.84 acres;

(xxviii) T. 3 N., R. 8 E., secs. 1 through 4, 8 through 11, 14 through 17, 19 through 23, and 26 through 35, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 11,339.4 acres;

(xxix) T. 4 N., R. 8 E., sec. 35, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1.5 acres;

(xxx) T. 1 N., R. 9 E., secs. 1, 2, 11 through 14, and 24, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 1,560.25 acres; and

(xxxi) T. 1 N., R. 10 E., secs. 6, 7, 17 through 20, 29 and 30, Seward Meridian, comprising approximately 2,720.65 acres.

(2) MANAGEMENT.—Land acquired by the Secretary under this subsection shall—

(A) become part of the unit of Federal land in which the land acquired by the Secretary is located; and

(B) be administered in accordance with that unit of Federal land.

(3) EXCLUSION OF VILLAGE CORPORATION DEVELOPMENT AND SHAREHOLDER SITES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), Chugach Alaska shall

exclude from the conveyance of non-Federal land all right, title, and interest in any land, not to exceed a total of 209 acres, that—

(A) a Village Corporation has retained development rights, other than timber development rights; or

(B) has been designated for a shareholder homesite program.

SEC. 5. MAPS, ESTIMATES, AND DESCRIPTIONS.

(a) *MINOR ERRORS.*—The Secretary and Chugach Alaska may correct, by mutual agreement, any minor errors in any map, acreage estimate, or description of any land conveyed or exchanged under this Act.

(b) *CONFLICT.*—If there is a conflict between a map, an acreage estimate, or a description of land in this Act, the map shall control unless the Secretary and Chugach Alaska mutually agree otherwise.

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. 3903, 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. 3903, the Chugach Alaska Land Exchange Oil Spill Recovery Act of 2025, sponsored by Congressman BEGICH, would authorize the exchange of 231,000 subsurface acres currently held by the Chugach Alaska Corporation for approximately 65,374 acres of Federal land in the Chugach region.

Following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound, extensive conservation land acquisitions created split-estate ownership in which the Federal Government holds surface ownership while the Chugach Alaska Corporation holds subsurface ownership.

The split-estate ownership precluded the Chugach Alaska Corporation from exercising its property rights, restricted shareholder economic opportunities, and complicated Federal land management by dividing subsurface and surface ownership.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3903 authorizes a negotiated exchange to consolidate Federal ownership of surface and subsurface estate, while conveying culturally significant, economically viable, and accessible lands to the Chugach Alaska Corporation.

The bill will streamline Federal land management and reduce checkerboard land ownership while promoting self-determination and economic development for Alaska Natives.

Ms. Sheri Buretta, chairman of the board of the Chugach Alaska Corporation, testified last year to the Committee on Natural Resources that this

bill is “. . . a solution rooted in fairness, parity, and respect. It is the fulfillment of a promise made half a century ago: that Alaska Native Corporations like Chugach would be able to use our lands as a foundation for economic growth and cultural preservation.”

She went on to say: “For Alaska Native peoples, land is not a commodity—it is our identity, our history, and our future.”

I appreciate Ms. Buretta and the Chugach people for their work to address this matter. I also applaud Mr. BEGICH for working diligently with his constituents to develop and move this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, 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, I rise in support of H.R. 3903, a bill to address the longstanding split-estate challenges in the Chugach region of Alaska.

Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Alaska Native corporations, including the Chugach Alaska Corporation, were promised lands of cultural and economic importance. However, Chugach only received a fraction of their traditional lands along with the subsurface rights beneath lands conveyed to the village corporations.

Following the devastating Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, which released more than 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska’s coastline, the Federal Government established the Trustee Council to manage settlement funds. These funds were used to purchase surface lands from the village corporations for conservation purposes.

While the Federal Government acquired surface rights, the Chugach retained the subsurface rights for approximately 230,000 acres, creating a split estate that has complicated land management and restricted Chugach’s ability to manage their resources and land.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3903 would authorize a land exchange between Chugach and the United States, allowing Chugach to exchange their current subsurface rights for surface and subsurface rights to approximately 65,000 acres of Federal lands within the region.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was enacted to resolve Alaska Native land claims and support self-determination. This bill would advance these goals by consolidating land ownership, improving conservation management, and providing Chugach greater control over their lands and resources.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the lead sponsor on this bill.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3903, the Chu-

gach Alaska Land Exchange Oil Spill Recovery Act, a bill I introduced to right a historic wrong that has gone unresolved for more than three decades.

Nearly 40 years ago, an oil tanker ran aground in Prince William Sound, spilling over 11 million gallons of crude oil across 1,300 miles of pristine Alaskan coastline. In the aftermath, the Federal Government used settlement funds to acquire roughly 231,000 acres of surface land for conservation, but it never acquired the subsurface rights underneath. Those belong to Chugach Alaska Corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The result was a split estate. The Federal Government owned the surface. Chugach owned the subsurface, and neither side could act. Conservation goals were incomplete, and Chugach’s Alaska Native shareholders were locked out of their lands.

This bill fixes that. Under H.R. 3903, Chugach trades its approximately 231,000 acres of unusable subsurface estate, land beneath Federal conservation holdings that cannot be practically developed, in exchange for approximately 65,000 acres of fee simple land identified by the Bureau of Land Management as economically viable and culturally significant.

Through this action, the Federal footprint in Alaska is actually reduced by approximately 65,000 acres. Not 1 acre is added to the Federal estate. This is a true win-win. It perfects the conservation purpose of the original oil spill recovery program by unifying the surface and subsurface estates, and it finally gives Chugach Alaska Corporation and its Native shareholders the opportunity for the foundation that ANCSA intended.

Congress recognized this problem in 2019, when it directed the Department of the Interior to study this issue. BLM delivered its report in 2022, confirming the conflict and identifying lands for exchange.

This legislation is built on those findings, the product of years of work by Chugach Alaska Corporation, by the Alaska delegation, through bipartisan work in the House Natural Resources Committee, and this body.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Chugach region have waited 36 years for this resolution, and this bill delivers it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3903. I thank the House Natural Resources Committee for its unanimous bipartisan support.

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. 3903 aligns Federal surface and subsurface ownership of conservation lands while resolving a decades-old program by authorizing a land exchange between the Chugach Alaska Corporation and the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the 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. 3903, 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.

□ 1530

ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS FOR BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5419) to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a plan for ensuring timely review of communications use authorizations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5419

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 "Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act".

SEC. 2. ENSURING TIMELY REVIEW OF BROADBAND LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) *STUDY.*—The Secretaries concerned shall each conduct, with respect to the relevant covered department, a study to determine—

(A) if there are programmatic or administrative barriers to the timely review of requests for broadband land use authorizations;

(B) if there are revisions to rules or regulations that could be implemented to improve efficiency with respect to reviewing requests for broadband land use authorizations; and

(C) if there are processes for prioritizing the review of requests for broadband land use authorizations.

(2) *REPORT.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries concerned shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(A) describes the results of the studies conducted under paragraph (1), including any barriers, revisions, or processes identified under subparagraphs (A) through (C) of such paragraph; and

(B) includes a plan for providing, with respect to the organizational units of the relevant covered departments, the staffing necessary to ensure timely review of broadband land use authorizations.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.*—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means the—

(A) Committees on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(B) Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

(2) *BROADBAND LAND USE AUTHORIZATION.*—The term "broadband land use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such covered land for communications use.

(3) *COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.*—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term "communications facility installation" in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) *COMMUNICATIONS USE.*—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) *COVERED LAND.*—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(6) *NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.*—The term "National Forest System" has the meaning given that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(7) *ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT.*—The term "organizational unit" means—

(A) with respect to the Department of the Interior—

(i) a State office of the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) a district office of the Bureau of Land Management; or

(iii) a field office of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(B) with respect to the Department of Agriculture—

(i) a regional office of the Forest Service;

(ii) a management unit of the Forest Service;

or

(iii) a ranger district office of the Forest Service.

(8) *PUBLIC LANDS.*—The term "public lands" has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702).

(9) *RELEVANT COVERED DEPARTMENT.*—The term "relevant covered department" means—

(A) with respect to the Secretary of the Interior, the Department of the Interior; and

(B) with respect to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture.

(10) *SECRETARIES CONCERNED.*—The term "Secretaries concerned" means—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

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 in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on H.R. 5419, 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 in support of H.R. 5419, the Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act, introduced by Representative KEAN.

In today's economy, broadband is a necessity, not a luxury. An affordable connection to high-speed internet is

critical, particularly for rural communities that rely on the internet for telehealth appointments, public safety updates, and online learning. Yet in too many rural and Tribal communities, reliable broadband is still costly, rare, or even nonexistent.

Building networks across rural America presents many challenges due to low population density, vast distances, and rugged terrain. To reach these areas, broadband developers must install infrastructure on Federal lands managed by the Department of the Interior or the U.S. Forest Service. Too often the Federal permitting process adds unnecessary costs and years of delay, sometimes taking 5 to 10 years to complete a single broadband project.

That is because broadband providers seeking to connect households and businesses face layered permitting requirements, redundant reviews, and spotty coordination among Federal land management agencies when applying for broadband land-use authorizations. This uncertainty drives up costs and causes rural areas to lag behind urban and suburban areas in connectivity, exacerbating the digital divide.

H.R. 5419 takes a practical approach to this problem. Representative KEAN's legislation recognizes that funding alone cannot connect our rural communities when the permitting process is still broken. This bill focuses on fixing what is actually delaying broadband deployment by requiring agencies to identify and report on permitting bottlenecks, coordination deficiencies, and bureaucratic redundancies that impede the efficient processing of broadband land-use authorizations.

This bill is an important first step in making the Federal Government a better partner in getting modern infrastructure to the communities that need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative KEAN for his leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5419, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,

Washington, DC, February 17, 2026.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

Dear MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 5419, the "Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act." Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 5419 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the