

snail mail or email, which can lead to delays and challenges in submitting and processing.

H.R. 1665 complements ongoing agency efforts to modernize the Federal permitting system by requiring the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to establish online portals for processing applications to locate or modify communications or broadband equipment and infrastructure on Federal lands.

This is a bipartisan solution to address delays in the permitting process appropriately, while also supporting expanded digital connectivity across our public lands in the year 2026.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Representatives for bringing this commonsense solution. It is about time we bring internet access to every corner of our country. I also thank the bill's sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 1665, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, legislation that I introduced to modernize how our Federal agencies process applications for communications infrastructure on Federal lands.

At its core, this bill is about something very simple: bringing outdated government processes into the digital age.

Today, companies seeking to deploy broadband infrastructure on Federal lands must often submit a form 299 to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture to obtain authorization for communication facilities, such as towers or related equipment. These authorizations can take the form of easements, right-of-ways, leases, or licenses.

Despite the importance of these projects, particularly when connectivity is needed more than ever, and public safety is a priority, the application process itself is far too paper-based, fragmented, and slow. In 2026, that just doesn't make sense.

The DIGITAL Applications Act fixes that by requiring the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and manage these forms. These portals will allow applicants to submit materials electronically, track the progress, and improve coordination across agencies. It is a straightforward reform, but one with real impact.

For communities across the country, especially rural communities like the ones I represent in Florida, delays in permitting infrastructure can mean delays in access, weaker wireless coverage, and slower deployment of technologies that are critical to support economic growth and public safety.

When we talk about closing the digital divide, it is not just about funding

new networks. It is also about removing unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic barriers that slow down this progress.

This bill does exactly that. By digitizing the application process, we can reduce these administrative delays, increase transparency, and provide applicants with a clear path forward when seeking a path to build infrastructure on these lands.

The DIGITAL Applications Act also reflects strong bipartisan cooperation, and I thank my colleague, Representative MATSUI, for working so hard with me on this to advance a commonsense solution.

At a time when Americans expect government to operate with the same efficiency they experience in the private sector, modernizing outdated systems should be something that we can all agree on.

This bill improves government operations, supports broadband, and helps ensure that our communications infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of the 21st century.

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

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again thank Representative CAMMACK for her leadership on the DIGITAL Applications Act. This legislation will help get rural America online to support students, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and families. It will help constituents in my home State of Arkansas, as well as Americans across the country, who live in remote areas near Federal lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1665, 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. 1665.

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.

#### REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2294) to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2294

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

#### SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009.

The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking “Council” each place it appears and inserting “Committee”;

(2) in section 12303 (33 U.S.C. 3602)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) by striking “National Ocean Research Leadership Council” and inserting “Ocean Policy Committee”; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by inserting “conduct operational oceanography measurements and” after “in order to”;

(3) in section 12304 (33 U.S.C. 3603)—

(A) by inserting “and ocean” after “weather” each place it appears; and

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the heading of paragraph (1), by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(I) by redesignating clauses (vi) through (x) as clauses (vii) through (xi), respectively; and

(II) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

“(vi) develop requirements and processes for regional offices and federally funded projects of the agencies of the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee to collaborate with the regional coastal observing systems for data sharing at regional levels;”;

(4) in section 12311 (33 U.S.C. 3610)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) \$47,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2294, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2294, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, sponsored by Representative EZELL from Mississippi.

The Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS, is a public-private partnership of coastal observation systems that provide local decisionmakers with the latest science to prepare for and protect coastal communities from disasters, while also supporting numerous industries that operate in our marine waters.

The legislation before us would authorize the program through fiscal year 2030, ensuring continued support for fisheries, maritime industries, and coastal communities.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative EZELL for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2294. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support H.R. 2294, bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act, or IOOS, a commonsense, science-based solution that brings together my colleagues on both sides of the aisle around our shared commitment to protecting our coastal communities.

I am proud to work with my colleague, Representative EZELL, as one of the bipartisan group of 25 cosponsors on this critical issue.

Timely ocean and coastal data is essential to keeping our coastal economies, like the one I represent, running and to protecting our communities.

H.R. 2294 reauthorizes the IOOS program that delivers that invaluable data and that helps us with everything from our emergency preparedness to our fisheries management programs in the States that we represent. IOOS helps to track changing ocean temperatures, measure wave activity, predict harmful algal blooms, monitor sea level rise, and improve storm surge forecasts that help emergency managers make life-saving evacuation decisions.

IOOS provides data to States, ports, the Coast Guard, FEMA, and any other business or agency that needs real-time access to ocean conditions.

With natural disasters causing an estimated \$12 billion in average annual damages, sustained investment in IOOS remains essential to ensure accurate weather and climate forecasts that protect our infrastructure, public safety, and economic resilience.

This bipartisan bill extends IOOS through 2030, strengthening partnerships with regional ocean observation systems and ensuring that critical ocean data continues to flow to Federal, State, and local decisionmakers who depend on it.

From the Gulf Coast to the golden coast of the Chesapeake Bay, when Republicans and Democrats work together on science-based solutions, we can protect both our natural resources and the communities that depend on them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1640

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. EZELL), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of my bill H.R. 2294, the Reauthorization of Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

This bill ensures the continued operation of the Integrated Ocean Observing System, which is a nationwide network of buoys, radars, underwater glid-

ers, and forecasting models that collect critical ocean and coastal data. These tools help provide real-time information on ocean conditions, weather patterns, coastal hazards, and marine ecosystems.

This information is essential for a wide range of Americans who rely on our oceans and coastlines every single day. It supports commercial fishermen, shipping and maritime operations, offshore energy development, hurricane forecasting, and coastal disaster preparedness. It also helps Federal, State, and local officials make informed decisions to protect both lives and livelihoods along our coasts.

For coastal States like mine, Mississippi, and many others across the country, accurate and timely ocean data is not a luxury. It is a necessity. When hurricanes threaten our shores, when fishermen head out to work, or when communities are preparing for coastal flooding, the data collected through the Integrated Ocean Observing System helps ensure they have the best information available to stay safe and make informed decisions.

My bill simply reauthorizes this important program and strengthens coordination between Federal agencies and regional observing systems so that the data being collected is more accessible and more reliable and more useful for the communities that depend on it.

This is a bipartisan commonsense measure that supports science, strengthens coastal resilience, and ensures we continue to have the tools necessary to understand and respond to changing ocean conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues and Chairman WESTERMAN for helping get this bill on the floor. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FONG).

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Save Our Sequoias Act. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his leadership and collaboration.

I introduced this legislation with my California colleague Representative SCOTT PETERS to safeguard our remaining giant Sequoia groves, the most in my district, by cutting red tape and restoring resilience to our forests.

Giant sequoias, the world's largest trees, are only naturally found in 70 groves across 37,000 acres in California.

Unfortunately, over the last century, fire suppression practices and forest mismanagement have led to a dangerous buildup of fuels, which, in combination with increasingly intense wildfires, has caused the unparalleled destruction of these iconic trees.

In the last 5 years alone, there has been a nearly 20 percent loss of our giant sequoias. That is not to mention that at its current pace it would take

the U.S. Forest Service 52 years to treat just the 19 most at-risk giant sequoia groves.

Our giant sequoias are a true national treasure. We cannot afford to let burdensome regulations prevent us from safeguarding them.

My bipartisan bill would enhance interagency coordination between State, Federal, and Tribal partners, accelerate forest restoration efforts, and provide important science-based resources to land managers to protect these ancient trees from further destruction.

The world's only giant sequoia groves provide critical economic, scientific, and cultural benefits for our local Tribes, researchers, and our communities. Speeding up fuels reductions and wildfire mitigation practices in these remaining groves will boost the resilience of our forests and protect these giants for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the 29 Members from both sides of the aisle who cosponsored this bill, as well as the staff on the House Committee on Natural Resources for helping to pass this important bipartisan bill, which would ensure California's remaining sequoias endure for generations to come.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This bill provides communities with real-time data and information about the ocean and coastal areas and the Great Lakes. This helps them remain strong and resilient even in the face of natural disasters.

Once again, I thank Mr. EZELL for his diligent work and attention to this issue. It is incredibly important to coastal communities and incredibly important to those who rely on the data and scientific information that comes from our great waterways.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 2294, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2294, 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.

#### SHIVWITS BAND OF PAIUTES JURISDICTIONAL CLARITY ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3073) to confer jurisdiction on the State of Utah with respect to civil causes of action arising on or within the Indian lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.