

the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2196, 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.

POST-DISASTER REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 528) to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a program for Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 528

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 "Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. POST-DISASTER REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Secretary, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall identify covered lands requiring reforestation and restoration following unplanned disturbances that are unlikely to experience natural regeneration without assistance.

(b) PRIORITY PROJECTS.—In consultation with the heads of covered agencies, the Secretary—

(1) shall propose a list of priority projects for reforestation and restoration for each fiscal year;

(2) may carry out priority projects through—

(A) competitively awarded grants;

(B) contracts;

(C) contracts established under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.); and

(D) cooperative agreements, to be awarded in accordance with applicable requirements established by the Secretary; and

(3) may support any grant contract or cooperative agreement that may be necessary to ensure adequate and appropriate seed and seedling availability to further the objectives of priority projects.

(c) OUTREACH.—To fulfill requirements of this section the heads of covered agencies shall conduct outreach to—

(1) Indian Tribes;

(2) States;

(3) territories;

(4) units of local government;

(5) Alaska Native organizations;

(6) Native Hawaiian organizations;

(7) institutions of higher education;

(8) Federal agencies with jurisdiction over Federal land adjoining or proximal to priority projects; and

(9) other stakeholders as determined by the Secretary.

(d) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the following:

(1) An accounting of all covered lands requiring reforestation and restoration.

(2) A list of priority projects and implementation progress to address reforestation and restoration objectives identified.

(3) An accounting of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements established in furtherance of priority projects.

(4) Outreach efforts by covered agencies to advance priority projects.

(5) Assessments of, and recommendations relating to seed, seedling, and implementation gaps to advance priority projects and opportunities to establish dedicated funding necessary to address any backlog of reforestation and restoration needs.

(e) SUNSET.—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED AGENCY.—The term "covered agency" means the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) COVERED LANDS.—The term "covered lands" means—

(A) any Federal land or interest in land administered by a covered agency; or

(B) Indian Forest Land or Rangeland.

(3) INDIAN FOREST LAND OR RANGELAND.—The term "Indian Forest Land or Rangeland" means land that—

(A) is held in trust by, or with a restriction against alienation by, the United States for an Indian Tribe or a member of an Indian Tribe; and

(B)(i) is Indian forest land (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3103)); or

(ii) has a cover of grasses, brush, or any similar vegetation; or

(iii) formerly had a forest cover or vegetative cover that is capable of restoration.

(4) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term "Indian Tribe" means any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of this Act pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

(5) NATURAL REGENERATION.—The term "natural regeneration" has the meaning given the term in section (e)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (U.S.C. 36 1601).

(6) REFORESTATION.—The term "reforestation" has the meaning given the term in section (e)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (U.S.C. 36 1601).

(7) RESTORATION.—The term "restoration" means assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed, including the reestablishment of appropriate plant species composition and community structure.

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

(9) UNPLANNED DISTURBANCE.—The term "unplanned disturbance" means any unplanned disturbance that disrupts ecosystem structure or composition and may include a wildfire, an infestation of insects or disease, or a weather event.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 528, 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. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 528, the Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act, sponsored by Representative PETERSEN.

Madam Speaker, this bipartisan legislation, which is also part of the Fix Our Forests Act, would create a post-disaster reforestation and restoration program at the Department of the Interior.

Across the country, catastrophic wildfires are burning hotter and more severely, turning once-pristine landscapes into charred moonscapes. Hurricanes, windstorms, mudslides, and other natural disasters can also leave behind millions of acres of land in need of reforestation.

In many cases, if Federal land managers don't move quickly to replant and restore scorched or uprooted lands, once-lush forests can permanently decay into low-lying scrublands that are unproductive and vulnerable to future fire and erosion.

When these forests disappear, they take with them clean water, wildlife habitat, and the livelihoods of communities that depend on them for recreation and employment. With millions of acres of forests lost to catastrophic wildfires and other disasters, our Federal agencies are bearing the strain of an enormous backlog of replanting and restoration work.

In 2021, Congress passed legislation to partially address the Forest Service's priority reforestation needs, although no similar authority was included for the Department of the Interior. H.R. 528 offers a straightforward solution to tackle the crisis and provides consistency across all Federal land management agencies.

This bill directs agencies within the Department of the Interior to identify priority landscapes most in need of reforestation and to proactively partner with States, Tribes, local communities, and institutions of higher learning to advance high-priority restoration projects.

This bill is a practical, bipartisan way to prioritize vital restoration work that requires immediate action. By allowing Federal agencies to work with trusted partners, we can clear the way for reforestation, get to faster restoration, and serve the communities that rely on healthy, resilient forests.

I thank Representative PETERSEN for her work on this bill, as well as for her work on Fix Our Forests Act.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

H.R. 6380

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 5, 2025.
Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 528, the “Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025.” 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. 528 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration

Sincerely,

GLENN “GT” THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 8, 2025.
Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 528, the “Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025,” which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on July 23, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 528 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 528. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

I rise today in strong support of Representative PETTERSEN’s H.R. 528, the Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would establish a program at the Department of the Interior to address ecological damage caused by unforeseen events, including wildfires and weather events, and support efforts to restore ecosystems, particularly those where disruption has hindered the natural recovery.

As the impacts of climate change cause more frequent and intense natural disasters, we must take a whole-

of-government approach to respond to these crises and rebuild. This includes critical investments in predisaster mitigation measures, like strengthening infrastructure and housing, enhancing early detection, supporting our country’s wildland firefighters, and focusing on post-disaster resilience.

These kinds of upfront investments will ensure communities impacted by wildfire can rebuild and recover in a way that makes them more resilient against future natural disasters. This bill is a commonsense step toward better land management and stronger community resilience in the face of climate-driven wildfires and extreme weather.

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Recovery after a wildfire is a lengthy and challenging process, and this bill will help build stronger, more resilient communities that can stand up against the threat of wildfires for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 528, and I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, this bill is a bipartisan, commonsense step to help land managers within the Department of the Interior tackle forest reforestation after wildfires, storms, and floods by working with capable non-Federal partners in the areas that need help the most. This legislation will help restore desolate landscapes to thriving forests.

As I mentioned before, the legislation previously passed the House as part of the bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act. I hope to see that legislation sent to the President’s desk soon so that land managers have every tool they need to restore forest health, prevent wildfires, and protect communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support 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 Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 528, 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.

CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL PARK ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6380) to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

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 “Chiricahua National Park Act”.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL PARK, ARIZONA.

(a) DESIGNATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chiricahua National Monument in the State of Arizona established by Presidential Proclamation 1692 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 43 Stat. 1946) shall be known and designated as “Chiricahua National Park” (referred to in this Act as the “National Park”).

(2) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries of the National Park shall be the boundaries of the Chiricahua National Monument as of the date of enactment of this Act, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Chiricahua National Park Proposed Boundary”, numbered 145/156,356, and dated March 2021.

(3) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, or other record of the United States to the Chiricahua National Monument shall be considered to be a reference to the “Chiricahua National Park”.

(4) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Any funds available for the Chiricahua National Monument shall be available for the National Park.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall administer the National Park in accordance with—

(1) Presidential Proclamation 1692 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 43 Stat. 1946);

(2) Presidential Proclamation 2288 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 52 Stat. 1551); and

(3) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(A) section 100101(a), chapter 1003, and sections 100751(a), 100752, 100753, and 102101 of title 54, United States Code; and

(B) chapter 3201 of title 54, United States Code.

SEC. 3. TRADITIONAL CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SITES.

(a) PROTECTION OF SITES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure the protection of traditional cultural and religious sites in the National Park in accordance with the laws (including regulations) applicable to the Secretary.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with Indian Tribes in accordance with laws applicable to the protection of cultural and religious sites.

(b) ACCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with Public Law 95–341 (42 U.S.C. 1996 et seq.)—

(A) shall provide access to the sites described in subsection (a)(1) by members of Indian Tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses; and

(B) may, on request of an Indian Tribe, temporarily close to general public use one or more specific areas of the National Park to protect traditional cultural and customary uses in the area by members of the Indian Tribe.

(2) LIMITATION.—In closing a portion of a designated area under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall limit the closure to the smallest practicable area for the minimum period necessary for the traditional cultural and religious activities.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

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