

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of the bill included in this bipartisan package for their work to bring this legislation to the floor, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas). 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. 5631, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to promote responsible geothermal energy development on public lands, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ALASKA'S RIGHT TO IVORY SALES AND TRADITION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 254) to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to protect the cultural practices and livelihoods of producers of Alaska Native handicrafts and marine mammal ivory products, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 254

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 "Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act" or the "ARTIST Act".

SEC. 2. ALASKA NATIVE HANDICRAFTS.

Section 101(b) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act Of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1371(b)) is amended to read as follows:

"(b) EXEMPTION FOR ALASKAN NATIVES.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

"(A) AUTHENTIC ALASKA NATIVE ARTICLE OF HANDICRAFTS AND CLOTHING.—The term 'authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing' means an item composed wholly, or in some significant respect, of natural materials and that is produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional Alaska Native handicrafts by an Alaska Native who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean without the use of a pantograph, multiple carvers, or any other mass copying device.

"(B) MARINE MAMMAL IVORY.—The term 'marine mammal ivory' includes a tooth or tusk from a walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) or a species of cetacean.

"(C) TRADITIONAL ALASKA NATIVE HANDICRAFTS.—The term 'traditional Alaska Native handicrafts' includes weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting.

"(2) EXEMPTION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in section 109, the provisions of this Act shall not apply with respect to the taking of any marine mammal by any Alaska Native who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean if such taking—

"(i)(I) is for subsistence purposes; or

"(ii) is done for purposes of creating and selling authentic Alaska Native articles of handicrafts and clothing; and

"(ii) in each case, is not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

"(B) SPECIAL RULES.—

"(i) INTERSTATE COMMERCE OF ITEMS.—An item presented as an authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing may be sold in interstate commerce only if it comports with the definition provided in paragraph (1)(A).

"(ii) EDIBLE PORTION OF MARINE MAMMAL.—Any edible portion of a marine mammal taken for the purpose of creating and selling authentic Alaska Native articles of handicrafts and clothing may be sold for native consumption or in a native village or town in Alaska.

"(3) LIMITATIONS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), if, under this Act, the Secretary determines any species or stock of marine mammal subject to taking by Alaska Natives to be depleted, the Secretary may prescribe regulations upon the taking of such marine mammals by any Alaska Native described in this subsection.

"(B) CONTENT OF REGULATIONS.—The regulations described in subparagraph (A) may be established with reference to species or stocks, geographical area, the season for taking, or any other factors related to the reason for establishing such regulations and consistent with the purposes of this Act.

"(C) NOTICE AND HEARING; REMOVAL OF REGULATIONS.—The regulations described in subparagraph (A) shall be prescribed after notice and hearing required by section 103 of this title and shall be removed as soon as the Secretary determines that the need for their imposition has disappeared.

"(D) REGULATIONS TO BE SUPPORTED BY SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.—In promulgating any regulation or making any assessment pursuant to a hearing or proceeding under this subsection or section 117(b)(2), or in making any determination of depletion under this subsection or finding regarding unmitigable adverse impacts under subsection (a)(5) that affects stocks or persons to which this subsection applies, the Secretary shall demonstrate in writing (and make such writing publicly available on the website of the Secretary) that, in consideration of the whole record, including Indigenous knowledge, such regulation, assessment, determination, or finding is supported by substantial evidence.

"(E) APPLICABILITY.—The requirement under subparagraph (D) shall only be applicable in an action brought by one or more Alaska Native organizations representing persons to which this subsection applies.

"(4) PROHIBITIONS.—No State shall prohibit the interstate commerce, importation, sale, offer for sale, transfer, trade, barter, possession, or possession with the intent to sell, transfer, trade, or barter of marine mammal ivory or marine mammal bone or baleen incorporated under this title by an Alaska Native, into an authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing.

"(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to—

"(A) impact the rights of any Indian Tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)) in effect on the date of enactment of the Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act; or

"(B) undermine any government-to-government consultation or engagement."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY) 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 to S. 254, 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 S. 254, Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act, or the ARTIST Act.

Subsistence harvest of marine mammals is a key aspect of Alaska Native culture. Subsistence hunters harvest marine mammals for both food and to create Native handicrafts, clothing, and artwork.

Many of the millions of Americans that visit Alaska each year purchase these products. However, as States have enacted bans on ivory to prevent the trafficking of elephant tusks, these bans have been incorrectly applied to walrus ivory, a central component of the Alaska Natives' creations. The ARTIST Act fixes this longstanding issue by allowing Alaska Natives' handicraft and artworks to be sold in interstate commerce.

Ultimately, this bill recognizes the immeasurable ways in which Alaska Natives have contributed to the story of Alaska.

I thank Congressman BEGICH for his leadership on this important issue in the House and Senator SULLIVAN for his leadership in the Senate.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 254 would amend section 101(b) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which allows Alaska Native communities to take marine mammals for subsistence purposes.

This proposed amendment would allow Alaska Native communities to take marine mammals for the creation and sale of arts and crafts.

The MMPA already permits the use of marine mammal ivory in Alaska Native art when the animal was taken for subsistence. However, Alaska Native artists have faced barriers to markets due to State-level bans on the sale of ivory. They routinely used whale baleen, bones, and ivory walrus tusks in their artwork, which have been caught up in good faith efforts to curb the trade of elephant and rhinoceros ivory.

This bill would clarify that authentic Alaska Native art made with marine mammal products may be sold nationwide. This will provide greater flexibility and certainty to Alaska Native artists.

Importantly, this bill would maintain the Secretary's authority under

the MMPA to regulate the take of depleted marine mammal stocks based on scientific evidence and the consideration of indigenous knowledge. It also maintains the authority of States to regulate or ban the sale of other ivory, such as elephant ivory. The artwork this bill would support is important to Alaska Native traditions and cultures.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 254, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the lead sponsor of the House companion to the bill.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 254, the Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act, the ARTIST Act.

For generations, Alaska Native artisans along our north Pacific and Arctic coasts have carved walrus ivory into works of extraordinary beauty, a tradition handed down through families, woven into the culture life of entire communities, and for many, a vital source of income.

In recent years, well-meaning efforts to crack down on the illegal elephant ivory trade have swept up something they were never meant to touch: the legal, sustainable, lawfully harvested ivory at the heart of Alaska Native art. Buyers grew confused. Some States moved to ban these handicrafts outright. Alaska Native carvers, who have done nothing wrong, watched their livelihoods and their heritage put at risk.

The ARTIST Act fixes that. It makes it clear that authentic Alaska Native handicrafts may be bought and sold across this country. It stops States from outlawing a responsible tradition that predates them by centuries.

This is about cultural durability and the right of Alaska Native families to practice their traditions and provide for their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Senator DAN S. SULLIVAN for his leadership in carrying this bill through the Senate. With House action, the ARTIST Act will be one step away from restoring the rights of Alaska Native craftsmen.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleague to support S. 254.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, last year, a bipartisan group of members of our committee traveled to Alaska. As part of that visit, we held a roundtable with Alaska Native organizations during which we heard about the importance of subsistence hunting for Alaska Native communities, cultures, and economies.

Enacting this bill will remove a long-standing barrier for the sale of Alaska Native handicrafts and artwork, and I am pleased that Congress is championing policies that are important to the Alaska Native way of life.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of S. 254, 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, S. 254.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1610

REAUTHORIZING THE FORT PECK RESERVATION RURAL WATER SYSTEM ACT OF 2000

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7250) to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7250

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

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 9 of the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-382; 114 Stat. 1457; 123 Stat. 2856; 128 Stat. 164; 132 Stat. 2906) is amended, in each of subsections (a)(1) and (b), by striking "2026" and inserting "2028".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY) 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. 7250, 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. 7250, a bill to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System, sponsored by Representative TROY DOWNING of Montana. The system consists of two interconnected water systems in northeastern Montana, which serve Tribal and non-Tribal communities.

Major features of the system have already been completed, and a substantial portion is operational. Some work remains to complete the project. This legislation would extend the Bureau of Reclamation's authority to carry out

work on the project through fiscal year 2028, which will provide enough time to complete the project using existing funds.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative DOWNING for his leadership on this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7250. This legislation would extend the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System completion date to December 2028. In 2000, Congress authorized the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System to address water quality and supply concerns in northeastern Montana.

This project consists of the Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water System and the Dry Prairie Rural Water System. Together, they will provide safe, reliable water from the Missouri River to over 32,000 residents across the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and communities in northeastern Montana.

Over the years, Congress has provided extensions to account for delays in project construction due to insufficient appropriations and rising construction costs. H.R. 7250 would provide another simple 2-year extension to ensure that construction of the final components of the Assiniboine and Sioux and the Dry Prairie Rural Water Systems can be completed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DOWNING), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. DOWNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 7250, my legislation to reauthorize the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act. Passage of this bill will ensure the completion of a vital piece of water infrastructure for my constituents living in one of the most rural areas of the country.

Northeast Montana faces a variety of significant water access challenges, including regular droughts and contaminated groundwater. Towns, farms, ranches, and Tribes in the region need reliable water treatment facilities and infrastructure in order to overcome these issues.

To address these challenges, the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act of 2000 authorized a major water infrastructure partnership between the Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water Supply System of the Fort Peck Reservation and the Dry Prairie Rural Water System in northeast Montana. It also provided funding and technical support for the project through the Bureau of Reclamation.

In the ensuing two and a half decades, the two water systems have successfully worked together with Federal partners to build an extensive network