

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 759, 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. 759, the Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans Act, sponsored by Senator CRUZ from Texas.

This legislation would require NOAA to make certain data easily accessible to the multiple users of our ocean resources. Recreational and commercial industries operating on America's waterways need large amounts of data, including waterway closures, speed limits, and fishing restrictions.

Senator CRUZ' legislation directs NOAA to work with stakeholders and the public to determine what data to include, then publish it online in a user-friendly format.

I thank Representative FRY of South Carolina, the sponsor of companion legislation in the House of Representatives, for his leadership on this initiative that will enhance safety and improve the recreational experience for ocean users. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 759 would improve access to critical information for ocean users, including recreational boaters and fishers. This bill would direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish standards for NOAA for mapping recreational use of our oceans. This information would include fishing restrictions, vessel access, and navigation information. Area restrictions, such as within the national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments, would be clearly marked on these maps.

The United States' exclusive economic zone covers about 3.4 million square nautical miles and supports 4.5 million recreational fishing vessels. About 11 million registered boats contribute roughly \$170 billion annually to the economy.

Currently, access to geospatial data for recreational use is across multiple databases. This lack of centralized data can make it difficult for millions of recreational boaters to understand the latest regulations and puts both boaters and coastal environments at risk.

S. 759 would improve access, transparency, and usability of critical information. By making regulations easier to understand and follow, this bill will help create safer, more enjoyable experiences on the water. This will strengthen coastal economies and improve environmental protection efforts.

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

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill is a commonsense step that improves public safety and access to our oceans. I thank Senator CRUZ and Representative FRY for their diligent work and attention on this issue.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PATRONIS). 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. 759.

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.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4219) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4219

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 "National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM PROGRAM.

(a) NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to identify and respond to priority invasive species threats within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters in coordination with partners, to be known as the "National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Program".

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary shall—

(A) establish at least 1 invasive species strike team within each region of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service trained in early detection and rapid response for multiple invasive species taxa to—

(i) conserve, manage, and, where appropriate, restore, habitat conditions that help native biological communities flourish within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters;

(ii) conduct appropriate prevention, early detection, rapid response, and management of invasive species;

(iii) use integrated pest management techniques and tools;

(iv) conduct outreach and training, including trainings and table-top exercises, including on the use of the Incident Command System, as part of their planning and operations; and

(v) use risk assessments, research, innovations, management outcomes, monitoring, and evaluation to improve the effectiveness of detection and response activities;

(B) engage in partnerships and collaborations with—

(i) Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments;

(ii) nongovernmental institutions;

(iii) nonprofit organizations; and

(iv) private individuals and entities to advance mutual priorities and promote efficiency and cost-savings;

(C) collaborate in the development of a set of consistent taxonomy standards and work with others to implement such standards among each database of the Department of the Interior;

(D) utilize national and regional standardized reporting platforms, such as—

(i) the National Agricultural Pest Information System;

(ii) the National Data Repository of the National Plant Diagnostic Network;

(iii) the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System;

(iv) the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Database of the United States Geological Survey;

(v) iMapInvasives; and

(vi) State databases; and

(E) ensure that both identification and response to priority invasive species threats on lands and waters adjacent to the National Wildlife Refuge System are carried out only at the request of the owner of such lands or waters.

(3) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may—

(A) conduct outreach as appropriate to Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments and institutions, as well as private individuals and organizations, to address the management of invasive species within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters, including providing or entering into, upon request—

(i) financial assistance, including direct expenditures;

(ii) technical assistance;

(iii) contracts; or

(iv) grants or cooperative agreements; and

(B) upon the request of an entity described in subparagraph (A) and as appropriate, enter into an agreement to provide the expertise and use of an Invasive Species Strike Team established under paragraph (2) to respond to existing or newly detected invasive species.

(4) COORDINATION OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS.—The Secretary shall encourage the National Wildlife Refuge System to coordinate the invasive species management actions of each Invasive Species Strike Team with adjacent landowners and the State or Tribal agencies within the State or Tribal lands on which Invasive Species Strike Team activities may occur.

(5) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and make available to the public on the website of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, a report regarding the Program 2 years after the date of the enactment of this section and 5 years after the date of the enactment of this section.

(B) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Each report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) a summary of the work of each Invasive Species Strike Team to address priority invasive species within the National Wildlife Refuge System; and

(ii) progress made by the Program toward the prevention, detection, control, or eradication of each priority invasive species.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2033.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) EARLY DETECTION.—The term “early detection” means a process of surveying for, reporting, and verifying the presence of an invasive species before the founding population of such invasive species becomes established or spreads so widely that eradication is no longer feasible.

(2) ERADICATION.—The term “eradication” means the removal or destruction of an entire population of specific invasive species, or removal of a group of invasive species at a pre-defined geographic scale, confirmed through species-specific post-treatment monitoring with no or little chance of reinvasion.

(3) INVASIVE SPECIES.—The term “invasive species” means, with respect to a given ecosystem, a non-native organism the introduction of which causes or is likely to cause—

(A) economic or environmental harm; or
(B) harm to human, animal, or plant health.

(4) PREVENTION.—The term “prevention” means actions, such as outreach, education, or inspection stations, associated with stopping invasive species from being introduced or spreading into a new location or ecosystem through various pathways.

(5) PRIORITY INVASIVE SPECIES.—The term “priority invasive species” means an invasive species that is a major concern and necessary to map, monitor, and manage based on the following factors:

(A) Potential impact on other native species.

(B) Ability to alter habitats.

(C) Ability to harm human health.

(D) Severity of economic impact.

(6) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Program authorized under subsection (a)(1).

(7) RAPID RESPONSE.—The term “rapid response” means a process that is employed to eradicate or contain the founding or incipient population of an invasive species from a specific location.

(8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(9) STATE.—The term “State” means—

(A) each of the several States;

(B) the District of Columbia; and

(C) each territory and possession of the United States.

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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4219, 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.

I rise in support of H.R. 4219, the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act of 2025.

Invasive species pose a serious threat to our Nation’s wildlife and natural resources. They can damage habitat, harm native species, and create significant economic and environmental costs. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a crown jewel of American wildlife conservation, and invasive populations in refuges jeopardize the system’s conservation value. We must ensure the Fish and Wildlife Service has the tools it needs to respond quickly to those threats.

The Fish and Wildlife Service currently uses invasive species strike teams to identify and respond to invasive species threats through prevention, early detection, and rapid response. H.R. 4219 strengthens this effort by establishing at least one strike team in each Fish and Wildlife Service region and encouraging coordination with Federal, State, Tribal, local, and private partners.

I support this legislation and reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4219, the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act would codify and build an innovative program within the National Wildlife Refuge System to target and eradicate invasive species.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest network of land and waters in the world dedicated to the conservation of wildlife, but many of these refuges face funding and staffing shortages that make it difficult to keep up with invasive species.

The sooner an invasive species is identified and removed, the more successful and affordable that effort is likely to be. That is where the strike team model comes in. Instead of spreading limited resources thin, strike teams allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to bring large teams into an area and quickly target an invasive species before it can reproduce and spread.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has already demonstrated that this approach works. At the Johnston Atoll, yellow crazy ants had been swarming seabirds and their nests for more than a decade. These ants release a poisonous chemical that can injure birds and cause serious infections.

The Fish and Wildlife Service brought in strike teams to find and eliminate the ants’ nests. After several months of intensive works, the yellow crazy ant was completely eradicated. That success has led the Service to use the strike team model in other regions against other invasive species.

We have also heard from stakeholders that these efforts are sometimes limited by what happens just beyond the refuge boundary. Invasive species do not stop at a property line.

That is why this bill allows the Service, on a voluntary basis, to work with

willing neighboring landowners to address invasive species on adjacent lands. This will allow the Service to take a more coordinated approach and make better use of limited resources.

H.R. 4219 will help protect wildlife habitat, support the recovery of endangered species, and preserve opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreation on our national wildlife refuges.

I thank the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) for his work on this important program, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close and reserve the balance of my time.

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Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE), who is the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today in support of the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act, a bipartisan measure which I am proud to have introduced with my colleague from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN).

A special thanks to the House Natural Resources Committee, on which I was privileged to serve for 6 years, and the chair and ranking member of the subcommittee and full committee, for working with us to develop a mutually acceptable measure and for bringing it to the floor.

As already mentioned, invasive species jeopardize and too often destroy the delicate balance of our ecosystems, as they can outcompete, prey on, or introduce diseases to our native fauna and flora. The consequences of these disruptions are severe, leading to not only extinction of whole species but to declines in biodiversity, diminishment of the resilience of our ecosystems in the face of environmental change, and broader ripple effects economically, socially, and otherwise.

We in Hawaii understand, perhaps better than anyone, just how crucial it is that we remain vigilant in our response to these invasive species. Hawaii’s isolation has led to the evolution of many endemic species that are found nowhere else on Earth.

Unfortunately, these native species often lack the defenses to compete or resist the pressures of the some 5,000 introduced invasive plants and animals, which can rapidly alter ecosystems and displace local species. Invasive species have caused significant ecological damage, threatening the survival of native birds and plants. Protecting Hawaii’s unique biodiversity, through invaluable national wildlife refuges and otherwise, is not just an environmental necessity. It is also a cultural imperative that reflects the identity and heritage of the Native Hawaiian people.

However, invasive species are not just a localized problem. They pose a

significant threat to the integrity of our natural world. Addressing this crisis requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach, focusing first on prevention; second on early detection, which is key; and third on effective and coordinated management strategies to safeguard our vulnerable ecosystems.

Our bill, the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act, will do just that, codifying the existing program currently operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These specialized teams play an essential role in managing emerging invasive species, employing strategies tailored to local conditions across the National Wildlife Refuge System. With 21 teams strategically positioned in various Fish and Wildlife Service regions, they are on the front lines, addressing the unique challenges posed by invasive species.

As another example, the Big Island Invasive Species Committee has been a part of a strike team for over a decade, working with the Hakalau National Wildlife Refuge on the eastern slopes of Mauna Kea to manage little fire ant threats and remove fountain grass and holly plants, which can choke out our native plants. The Big Island Invasive Species Committee is just one of the many great examples of this effective program and reminds us of its crucial and effective work.

This bill also mandates enhanced coordination and reporting through integrated systems and standardized procedures, ensuring transparency and enabling us to track progress with annual reports to Congress and the public. Furthermore, it authorizes \$15 million annually through fiscal year 2029 to support ongoing initiatives.

This legislation is a crucial step forward in protecting our natural resources and enhancing our capacity to respond swiftly to the threats posed by invasive species. I humbly request my colleagues to lend their support to this bill and ensure the preservation of our ecosystems and promote a resilient future for our environment.

Mr. Speaker, "thank you so very much." "Mahalo nui loa."

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 support H.R. 4219, 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. 4219, as amended.

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 pro-

ceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM LONG-TERM LEASE INVESTMENT ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4931) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend certain leases within units of the National Park System without opening the lease to bidding, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4931

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

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND CERTAIN LEASES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—*The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service (in this section referred to as the "Director"), may extend a lease entered into under part 18 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 3, 2025), without issuing a request for bids or a request for proposals, if the Director makes a written determination that—*

(1) *the lessee entered into the lease not less than 5 years before the date on which the extension takes effect;*

(2) *the lessee is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the lease; and*

(3) *an extension of the lease is consistent with the purposes of the applicable unit of the National Park System.*

(b) LIMITATION ON EXTENSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—*The Director may not grant more than one extension under this section without issuing a request for bids or a request for proposals under part 18 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 3, 2025).*

(2) EXTENSION LENGTH.—*The Director shall ensure that, for any lease extended under this section, the cumulative length of such lease complies with part 18 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on January 3, 2025).*

(c) REVISION OF REGULATION.—*Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall revise part 18 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, to reflect the authority granted under subsection (a).*

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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4931, the bill 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. 4931, the National Park System Long-

Term Lease Investment Act, introduced by Representative MURPHY of North Carolina.

Across the National Park System, private businesses and organizations lease buildings and other historic facilities, investing in these properties while providing important services to park visitors. These public-private partnerships can help put underutilized properties to productive use while supporting the long-term stewardship of park assets.

My hometown of Hot Springs National Park is a model for how these public-private partnerships can transform local economies, create jobs, improve access, and enhance the visitor experience. Through historic leasing on Bathhouse Row, once dilapidated bathhouses have been transformed into a brewery, a modern spa and bathhouse facility, and a hotel. Ongoing renovations financed under the Great American Outdoors Act will open up even more opportunities to lease historic bathhouses to more small businesses in this community.

Unfortunately, even when these partnerships work well, existing law can limit the National Park Service's flexibility to extend a successful lease without starting a new competitive process.

H.R. 4931 provides a targeted solution. To qualify for an extension, the original lease must be at least 5 years, the lessee must be in good standing, and the extension must be in the National Park Service's best interests. If those requirements are met, the bill allows a lease to be extended once for up to 10 years without issuing a new request for bids or proposals.

Providing this flexibility will give successful lessees greater certainty to continue investing in park facilities while reducing unnecessary administrative burdens on the National Park Service. Just as importantly, it creates important safeguards by limiting the authority to lessees who have already demonstrated a successful track record.

While this is a good bill, there is more that can be done to ensure the National Park Service fully leverages potential private-sector partners. The Senate version of this legislation includes a commonsense provision allowing leases to extend up to 99 years, which will attract greater investment and create greater economic opportunity nationwide. Although we were unable to reach an agreement in committee with our minority to include a similar provision in the House bill, I look forward to working with my bipartisan and bicameral colleagues on this concept as the bill continues through the legislative process.

I thank Representative MURPHY for his leadership on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4931, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4931 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend certain