

“yes” on H.R. 309, 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. 309, 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.

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED ADVANCEMENT FOR TRAINING, EDUCATION, RESTORATION, AND SCIENCE (WATERS) ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6893) to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6893

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 “Chesapeake Bay Watershed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration, and Science (WATERS) Act”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION CHESAPEAKE BAY OFFICE.

Section 307 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act of 1992 (15 U.S.C. 1511d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “(in this section)” and all that follows and inserting a period;

(B) in paragraph (2), to read as follows:

“(2) The Office shall be headed by a Director, who—

“(A) shall have knowledge and experience in research or resource management efforts in the Chesapeake Bay; and

“(B) shall be responsible for the administration and operation of the Office and the implementation of this section.”; and

(C) by striking paragraph (3);

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “Secretary of Commerce” and inserting “Administrator”;

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by inserting “with and represent” after “coordinate”;

(ii) by striking “, the Chesapeake Bay Regional Sea Grant Programs, and the Chesapeake Bay units of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System,” and inserting “for the Chesapeake Bay Program and that relate to the Chesapeake Bay watershed in furtherance of such Administration’s coastal resource stewardship mission.”;

(iii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clauses (vi) and (vii), by striking “and” at the end; and

(II) by adding at the end the following:

“(viii) coastal hazards; and

“(ix) education; and”;

(iv) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (iii), by striking “and” at the end;

(II) in clause (iv), by inserting “and” after the semicolon; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

“(v) integrated ecosystem assessments.”;

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking “Environmental Protection Agency” and inserting “Chesapeake Executive Council”; and

(ii) by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: “as appropriate to further the purposes of this section”;

(D) by striking paragraphs (5) and (7);

(E) by redesignating paragraph (6) as paragraph (5); and

(F) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) perform any functions necessary to support the programs referred to in paragraph (3).”;

(3) by striking subsections (c), (d), and (e); and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, shall implement the program activities authorized by this section to support the activity of the Chesapeake Executive Council and to further the purposes of this section.

“(2) ENSURING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MERIT.—The Director shall—

“(A) establish and use an effective and transparent mechanism to ensure that projects funded under this section have undergone appropriate peer review; and

“(B) provide other appropriate means to determine that such projects have acceptable scientific and technical merit for the purpose of achieving maximum use of available funds and resources to benefit the Chesapeake Bay area.

“(3) CONSULTATION WITH CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.—The Director shall, in the implementation of the program activities authorized under this section, consult with the Chesapeake Executive Council, to ensure that the activities of the Office are consistent with the purposes and priorities of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and plans developed pursuant to the such agreement.

“(4) INTEGRATED COASTAL OBSERVATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, may collaborate with scientific and academic institutions, State and Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other constituents in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to support an integrated observations system for the Chesapeake Bay consistent with the purposes of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).

“(B) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.—To support the system referred to in subparagraph (A) and provide a complete set of environmental information for the Chesapeake Bay, the Director shall—

“(i) coordinate monitoring with Federal and State agencies in the tidal portions of the Chesapeake Bay to understand impacts of water quality on living marine resources;

“(ii) identify new data collection needs and deploy new technologies, as appropriate;

“(iii) collect and analyze the scientific information necessary for the management of living marine resources and the marine habitat associated with such resources; and

“(iv) organize the information described in clause (iii) into products that are useful to policy makers, resource managers, scientists, and the public.

“(C) CHESAPEAKE BAY INTERPRETIVE BUOY SYSTEM.—To further the development and implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System and associated monitoring assets to improve weather and ecological forecasts, monitor habitat conditions for living marine resources, the Director may—

“(i) support the establishment and implementation of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail;

“(ii) delineate key waypoints along the trail and provide appropriate real-time data and information for trail users;

“(iii) interpret data and information for use by educators and students to inspire stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay; and

“(iv) incorporate the observational data from the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System into the Integrated Ocean Observing System regional observing system network.

“(5) CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, may establish a Chesapeake Bay watershed education and training program. The program shall—

“(i) continue and expand the Chesapeake Bay watershed education programs offered by the Office immediately before the enactment of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration, and Science (WATERS) Act;

“(ii) improve the understanding of elementary and secondary school students and teachers of the living resources of the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay;

“(iii) provide education and career pathway internships; and

“(iv) meet the educational goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

“(B) GRANT PROGRAM.—The Director may award grants for the purposes of this paragraph. Grants awarded under this subparagraph may be used to support education and training projects that enhance understanding and assessment of a specific environmental problem in the Chesapeake Bay watershed or a goal of the Chesapeake Bay Program, or protect or restore living resources of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including projects that—

“(i) provide classroom education, including the development and use of distance learning and other innovative technologies, related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed;

“(ii) provide meaningful watershed educational experiences in the Chesapeake Bay watershed;

“(iii) provide professional development for teachers related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the dissemination of pertinent education materials oriented to varying grade levels;

“(iv) demonstrate or disseminate environmental educational tools and materials related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed;

“(v) demonstrate field methods, practices, and techniques including assessment of environmental and ecological conditions and analysis of environmental problems; and

“(vi) build the capacity of school districts and their partners to deliver high quality environmental education programs.

“(C) COORDINATION.—The Director shall implement the education and training program in coordination with the heads of other Federal agencies, as the Director determines appropriate.

“(6) COASTAL AND LIVING RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, may establish a Chesapeake Bay Coastal Living Resources Management and Habitat Program to support coordinated management, protection, characterization, and restoration of priority Chesapeake Bay habitats and living resources, including oysters, blue crabs, salt marshes, submerged aquatic vegetation, and economically and ecologically important fish species such as striped bass and menhaden.

“(B) ACTIVITIES.—Under the Chesapeake Bay Coastal Living Resources Management and Habitat Program, the Director may

carry out or enter into grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements and provide technical assistance to support—

“(i) native oyster research and restoration;

“(ii) fish and shellfish aquaculture that is carried out in accordance with a valid Federal or State permit;

“(iii) establishment of submerged aquatic vegetation restoration programs;

“(iv) the development of programs that restore, protect, and build the resilience of critical coastal habitats and communities;

“(v) habitat mapping, characterization, and assessment techniques necessary to identify, assess, and monitor Chesapeake Bay conditions and restoration actions;

“(vi) application and transfer of applied scientific research and ecosystem management tools to fisheries and habitat managers;

“(vii) collection, synthesis, and sharing of information to inform and influence coastal and living resource management issues;

“(viii) ecologically and economically important fish and shellfish research; and

“(ix) other activities that the director determines are appropriate to carry out the purposes of such program.

“(d) DELEGATION.—

“(1) AUTHORITY.—The Administrator shall delegate to the Director such authority as may be necessary to carry out this section.

“(2) STAFF.—The Administrator shall assign to the Director appropriate staff representing expertise that covers the breadth of the duties of the Office.

“(e) REPORTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, shall submit a biennial report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Secretary of Commerce on the activities of the Office and on progress made in protecting and restoring the living resources and habitat of the Chesapeake Bay.

“(2) ACTION PLAN.—Each such report shall include an action plan for the 2-year period following submission of the report, consisting of—

“(A) a list of recommended research, monitoring, and data collection activities necessary to continue implementation of the strategy under subsection (b)(2); and

“(B) recommendations to integrate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration activities with the activities of the partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program to meet the commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and subsequent agreements.

“(f) AGREEMENTS.—The Administrator, acting through the Director, may enter into and perform such contracts, leases, grants, or cooperative agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Administrator’ means the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“(2) CHESAPEAKE BAY AGREEMENT; CHESAPEAKE BAY ECOSYSTEM; CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM; CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.—The terms ‘Chesapeake Bay Agreement’, ‘Chesapeake Bay ecosystem’, ‘Chesapeake Bay Program’, and ‘Chesapeake Executive Council’ have the meanings given those terms in section 117(a) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267(a)).

“(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Office.

“(4) OFFICE.—The term ‘Office’ means the Chesapeake Bay Office established under this section.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ar-

kansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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 to include extraneous material on H.R. 6893, 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. 6893, the Chesapeake Bay WATERS Act.

The Chesapeake Bay is one of the most important resources in the mid-Atlantic region, including for the commercial seafood sector and the recreational boating and fishing community. I know that my colleague from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) feels even more so about that statement.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Chesapeake Bay Office is an important partner for the Chesapeake Bay region by contributing scientific research, protecting habitat, and advancing oyster restoration.

H.R. 6893 reauthorizes this office and several of its training and workforce programs. It also requires the office to submit a report to the Secretary of Commerce and Congress on its progress in conserving the Chesapeake Bay and the ways NOAA can work with other Chesapeake Bay Program partners.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6893 is, in fact, near and dear to my heart and to my district. The Chesapeake Bay watershed is one of our Nation's most priceless natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, 18 million people live in the watershed, which is shared by six States and the District of Columbia. The Chesapeake Bay supports, as was said, fishing, tourism, real estate, and countless industries, generating billions of dollars in economic activity each year. It is, frankly, essential to the culture of those six States and the District.

The bay is also a critical habitat for many keystone species. Its oyster reefs, seagrass meadows, and marshes protect nearby communities from coastal hazards and provide critical nurseries for fish and wildlife. You will even spot a few dolphins hanging out there.

As a co-chair of the Chesapeake Bay Task Force, I was proud to co-lead H.R. 6893 to reauthorize key, science-backed programs at NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office, which is headquartered near my

office in Annapolis, Maryland. This bill would better position the office to collaborate with universities, nonprofits, and other stakeholders in carrying out science, monitoring, and observation activities.

The bill also strengthens collaboration by supporting the coordinated management and conservation of Chesapeake Bay habitats, fish, and wildlife, ensuring that limited Federal resources are used as effectively as possible.

Finally, the bill would, for the first time, authorize the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training program, otherwise known affectionately as B-WET, which provides grants for environmental education and watershed restoration experiences for local school kids.

Reauthorizing this office in the Chesapeake Bay will help maintain a steady Federal presence within the region's collaborative scientific infrastructure, benefiting the six States and the District of Columbia.

We must ensure that the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed remain abundant, healthy resources for generations to come.

If you talk to folks back in my district, they will say that the bay transcends politics, and it is almost like a religion. I could not agree more.

I applaud Representative SCOTT and the bipartisan Chesapeake Bay delegation not just for their dedication to this bill but for their dedication throughout every President and tumultuous politics to remain steady and steadfast in our support of this program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6893, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), someone who is also passionate about the Chesapeake Bay, fisheries, and clean water.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6893, the Chesapeake Bay WATERS Act, and I am very proud to co-lead this bipartisan bill with Representative KIGGANS.

The Chesapeake Bay is one of our Nation's most important natural resources, and this bill will ensure the bay remains healthy for generations to come.

H.R. 6893 reauthorizes the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Program office, which has been a leading partner in bay restoration efforts. Working alongside universities, State and local governments, and other stakeholders, this office supports the science and coordination necessary to understand the health of the bay and make informed decisions about the future.

Importantly, this bill supports the observation, monitoring, collection, and analysis of marine resource data, an area I was committed to for over 27 years with the Commonwealth of Virginia. That information is used by policymakers, resource managers, and the

public to better understand and protect the bay and its living resources.

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The bill also supports training and education programs, and strengthens coordinated efforts to manage, protect, and restore bay habitats and living resources.

For communities across Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay is far more than a natural resource. It is part of our way of life. It supports our watermen, farmers, small businesses, and families throughout the Commonwealth.

The bay is a major economic driver, supporting tens of thousands of jobs and generating billions of dollars in economic activity. Protecting the bay means protecting those jobs, strengthening our local economies, and preserving the natural resources that our communities depend upon.

By continuing to invest in sound science, monitoring, education, and coordinated restoration efforts, we can ensure the Chesapeake Bay remains healthy for generations to come.

This is truly a Federal role because this truly is what interstate commerce is all about. The bay is that economic engine that involves all of the States in the bay watershed. It is our responsibility as a group of States to make sure we continue to improve the water quality there and, in turn, the economic resources that come to us from the bay.

The bay is an incredible economic driver for the seafood and tourism economies. All of those things are key. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office allows us to coordinate and make sure that all of us in the bay watershed are doing our part to make sure the bay continues to get cleaner and cleaner.

I am very proud to support this bipartisan effort to protect one of our Nation's most vital resources, and I encourage my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 6893.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, we brought out half the Bay Caucus for this effort, and I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I rise in support of my legislation, H.R. 6893, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration, and Science, the WATERS Act.

The Chesapeake Bay is a natural treasure and a critical resource for the millions of Americans who live within its watershed, including my constituents in Hampton Roads. The Chesapeake Bay's fisheries sustain the region's centuries-old fisheries and seafood industry, which generates about \$8 billion in economic activity every year. The bay's unparalleled recreational opportunities not only support tens of thousands of jobs and generate more than \$14 billion annually, but are also critical to the well-being

and happiness of all that live throughout the watershed.

The Federal Government has helped our efforts to restore and protect the bay by devoting the resources and staff of multiple departments and agencies, including NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office. This office provides scientific and technical support to government, industry, and nonprofits with the goal of advancing strategies that improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. This is an effort that has been going on for decades. We are making slow but steady progress.

Among its many responsibilities, NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office manages the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System that provides researchers and watermen with near real-time data on weather and water quality conditions. The Chesapeake Bay Office also oversees the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training, or B-WET, program. This competitive grant program supports environmental education opportunities throughout the watershed that not only teach students about the bay but also connect them to it through experiential programming.

The Chesapeake Bay Waters Act reauthorizes NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office. This ensures the agency can continue supporting the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and restoring the Chesapeake Bay. My bill also authorizes the Chesapeake B-WET program for the first time in its history, ensuring that future generations can continue to engage with the Chesapeake Bay.

I thank my fellow co-leads, Virginia Representatives WITTMAN and KIGGANS and Maryland Representative ELFRETH, for their support of this legislation. I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and Ranking Member HUFFMAN for their leadership in getting this bill to the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the bill.

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

I could go on and on, but I know we have one last bill. Representative SCOTT got it right: It has been slow and steady progress since 1983, before I was even born, to make sure that we not just protect and preserve for future generations, but take strides to be a model as we have been in the Chesapeake Bay region for other watersheds, not just in the United States but across the world.

Mr. Speaker, there is so much more work to do. This bill reauthorizes that work. Again, I thank my bipartisan colleagues for prioritizing not just this bill but this program within the budget itself. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank everybody for their bipartisan support on H.R. 6893. I support its passage and 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. 6893, 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.

NORTHERN NEVADA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION ACT OF 2026

Mr. AMODEI of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2317) to provide for transfer of ownership of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada, to authorize the disposal of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada for economic development, to promote conservation in northern Nevada, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2317

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2026".

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—DOUGLAS COUNTY

Sec. 101. Purpose.

Sec. 102. Definitions.

Subtitle A—Land Conveyances and Sales

Sec. 111. Conveyance to State of Nevada.

Sec. 112. Conveyance to Douglas County, Nevada.

Sec. 113. Sale of certain Federal land.

Sec. 114. Open Space Recreation Area.

Subtitle B—Tribal Cultural Resources

Sec. 121. Transfer of land to be held in trust for Tribe.

Subtitle C—Resolution of Burbank Canyons Wilderness Study Area

Sec. 131. Addition to National Wilderness Preservation System.

Sec. 132. Administration.

Sec. 133. Fish and wildlife management.

Sec. 134. Release of wilderness study area.

Sec. 135. Native American cultural and religious uses.

Subtitle D—Convey Forest Service Land for Public Purposes

Sec. 141. Authority of Forest Service to convey to State or county for public purposes.

Sec. 142. Special use authorizations for recreation and other purposes.

TITLE II—INCLINE VILLAGE FIRE PROTECTION

Sec. 201. Purpose.

Sec. 202. Definitions.

Sec. 203. Land conveyances for public purposes.

TITLE III—NORTHERN NEVADA FLOOD PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Sec. 301. Purpose.

Sec. 302. Definitions.

Sec. 303. Land conveyances for flood protection.

TITLE IV—CARSON CITY PUBLIC LANDS CORRECTION

Sec. 401. Definitions.