

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1092 is a model of efficient public lands policy. It is important to the State of Nevada, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1092, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) 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 direct the Secretary of Agriculture to sell certain parcels of Federal land in Carson City and Douglas County, Nevada."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IRVINE BASIN SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1598) to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in projects within the San Diego Creek Watershed, California, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1598

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 "Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. PROJECT AUTHORIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act (Public Law 102-575, title XVI; 43 U.S.C. 390h et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 1635 the following:

"SEC. 1636. IRVINE BASIN GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

"(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary, in cooperation with the Irvine Ranch Water District, California, is authorized to participate in the design, planning, and construction of projects to naturally treat impaired surface water, reclaim and reuse impaired groundwater, and provide brine disposal within the San Diego Creek Watershed.

"(b) COST SHARE.—The Federal share of the costs of the projects authorized by this section shall not exceed 25 percent of the total cost.

"(c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall not provide funds for the operation or maintenance of a project authorized by this section."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections in section 2 of the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1635 the following:

"1636. Irvine basin groundwater and surface water improvement projects."

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

California (Mr. POMBO) and the gentleman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO).

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

H.R. 1598, sponsored by the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), authorizes Federal assistance for the design and construction of a de-salter and a regional brine line to treat brackish groundwater. The bill also provides for strategic placement of wetlands to naturally clean surface water in the San Diego Creek Watershed. All Federal assistance would be limited to 25 percent of the overall project's cost.

This bill is yet another step towards "drought proofing" southern California and will decrease the region's over-dependence on imported Colorado River water.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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

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

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1598. Communities throughout the Nation are finding technologically advanced and innovative ways to solve their water supply and water quality problems. H.R. 1598 is an excellent example of how we can help those communities.

With only a small amount of financial assistance from the Federal Government, we can save water by building water recycling and desalting projects, and may I add, also recycling projects, that are important to southern California. Not too long ago, Congress would have rushed to support an expensive dam and reservoir project. We now have the option to help our cities who understand that the future to securing a reliable water supply is through the promotion of water recycling, conservation and desalination.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the administration can understand how important these projects are, especially water recycling, and how they can help communities solve their water problems that are so urgently needed, even now, especially in the area where there is tremendous drought.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1598.

Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the time.

The Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act is a bill that, as its author, of course, I am very pleased to see on the floor, but one also that I am very very grateful to the

committee for producing. This is going to make a very important contribution to improving water quality in southern California.

I would especially like to thank and recognize the efforts of the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), the chairman of the Committee on Resources. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), the ranking member, for their support and leadership, and also my colleague from Orange County (Mr. CALVERT), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Water and Power. I thank all of them for their active interest in and support of this important legislation.

This bill authorizes the Federal Government to assist in designing a series of wetlands. As the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) has said, this is an innovative approach, one that has the support of environmentalists and government leaders alike. This series of wetlands is going to clean up polluted surface runoff within the San Diego Creek Watershed in Orange County, California.

For those of my colleagues who are not familiar with southern California, the San Diego Creek is one of our region's major watersheds. It empties into Upper Newport Bay, one of the largest wetlands in the entire coastal region between Los Angeles and San Diego.

The Upper Newport Bay is home to over 75 species of fish, nearly 200 species of birds, and a number of threatened and endangered species, including the light-footed clapper rail, Belding's Savannah sparrow, the American osprey, the California brown pelican and California's least tern. In addition, the Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway for 50,000 migratory birds each year.

Unfortunately, the Upper Newport Bay is threatened by silt and polluted runoff from the San Diego Creek that flows into the Bay. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency has declared the water quality of San Diego Creek and its tributaries to be limited. That is a bureaucratic euphemism for hazardous to swim in or drink. The reason for this designation is that drainage from urban surfaces flows unfiltered into the watershed.

Thankfully, there is a solution on the horizon to save the Upper Newport Bay. This legislation will use a natural treatment system to reduce the amount of silt and pollutants that gets dumped into San Diego Creek and, in turn, into Upper Newport Bay. The plan was developed by environmentalists and local officials, and it relies on wetlands, nature's own system for filtering pollutants out of the water. Specifically, the plan calls for the creation of an entire network of wetlands to be developed along the San Diego Creek basin.

The natural, beneficial bacteria in the soils of these wetlands, along with

plants such as bulrush and cattails, will remove nitrogen and other pollutants from surface runoff. It is expected that this natural treatment system will reduce fecal coliform levels by over 26 percent and each year remove 126,000 pounds of nitrogen and 21,000 pounds of phosphorus from the San Diego Creek.

In this way, the natural treatment system will help prevent unwanted sediment, nutrients and contaminants from polluting and clogging up San Diego Creek and Upper Newport Bay. It will also provide another major benefit. The creation of all these new wetlands will provide considerable additional wildlife habitat and open space, including habitat for the many threatened and endangered species of the Upper Newport Bay.

□ 1600

For all of these reasons, the Natural Treatment System established by this legislation is strongly supported by local environmental groups, including Orange County Coastkeepers and the Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends. This legislation is also fully supported by our local public officials, including the Irvine Ranch Water District, the County of Orange and the cities of Newport Beach, Lake Forest, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, and Tustin.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, will be of tremendous help to our local environmental efforts. By allowing the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which has extensive experience in wetlands restoration, to serve as a partner in this important regional project, H.R. 1598 is an important step toward assuring that the Natural Treatment System moves forward as quickly and cost effectively as possible.

Finally, I would like to point out that the Natural Treatment System will also provide significant cost savings for the Federal Government. Since the Upper Newport Bay is a Federal waterway, the U.S. Corps of Engineers regularly dredges the bay to remove the accumulation of silt and pollutants. By significantly reducing silt runoff into Upper Newport Bay, the Natural Treatment System will reduce both the Corps of Engineers' dredging expenses and the bill to Federal taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1598 so that we can move forward with this important environmental initiative for Southern California.

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1598.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JOHNSTOWN FLOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1521) to provide for additional lands to be included within the boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in the State of Pennsylvania, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1521

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 "Johnstown Flood National Memorial Boundary Adjustment Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. BOUNDARY OF JOHNSTOWN FLOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL.

The boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial ("Memorial") is modified to include the area as generally depicted on the map entitled "Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Cambria County, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania", numbered N.E.R.O. 427/80,008 and dated June, 2003. The map shall be on file and available for inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

SEC. 3. ACQUISITION OF LANDS.

The Secretary of the Interior ("Secretary") is authorized to acquire from willing sellers the land or interests in land as described in section 2 by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF LANDS.

Lands added to the Memorial by section 2 shall be administered by the Secretary as part of the Memorial in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

In addition to amounts otherwise made available for land acquisition, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) and the gentleman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO).

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1521, introduced by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) and amended by the Committee on Resources, would revise the boundaries of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial. The Secretary of the Interior would be authorized to acquire approximately 15 acres of land from willing sellers to be included within the boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial. Acquisition of these additional lands would provide permanent protection for resources that are integral to the historic flood of 1889.

Both property owners, Tom and Ann Furlong and the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Preservation Society, are supportive of the bill and the

acquisition of their properties. One parcel of land originally in the proposal has been removed, as the owner is no longer a willing seller. Therefore, there are no private property conflicts with this legislation.

The Johnstown Flood Memorial comprises nearly 165 acres in western Pennsylvania and tells the story of the events leading up to the 1889 Johnstown flood, of the flood itself, and its effects on Johnstown and the Nation.

My colleagues may be interested to know it was during the Johnstown flood that Clara Barton successfully led the Red Cross in its first disaster relief effort. H.R. 1521, as amended, is supported by the majority and minority of the subcommittee and the administration. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

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

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1521, sponsored by our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), would expand the boundaries of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial. There are several private property owners interested in selling their land for inclusion within the memorial, and this legislation is needed to facilitate these acquisitions.

On the afternoon of May 31, 1889, after several days of torrential rains, the South Fork Dam on Lake Conemaugh in southwest Pennsylvania failed, sending 20 million tons of water into Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The resulting flood killed more than 2,200 people, making it one of the worst natural disasters in American history. The Johnstown Flood Memorial is a powerful tribute to the lives lost during this tragedy, and the parcels which would be added under H.R. 1521 would be important additions to the memorial.

I expressly want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) for his diligence in moving this legislation through the House, and I urge all our House colleagues to support H.R. 1521. I also want to thank the chairman of the Committee on Resources, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), for his assistance in this.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, this bill will authorize the expansion of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial, a National Park Service site in South Fork, Pennsylvania.

Specifically, the bill will enable the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire adjacent properties and historically significant structures that are an integral part of the story of the Johnstown Flood.

The Great Johnstown Flood, which occurred on May 31, 1889, was the largest news story in the era next to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. It swept away an entire city, causing the loss of over 2,209 people. Though members of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, which owned the earthen dam and