

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss H.R. 3579, a bill to convey Ranch A to the State of Wyoming. This bill was introduced by our colleague, BARBARA CUBIN, on June 5 of this year. Under the terms of this bill, the Secretary shall convey property to the State, within 180 days of enactment and without reimbursement, all right, title, and interest in the property commonly known as Ranch A to be used for fish and wildlife management and education. The State of Wyoming is directed to allow access to the property for institutions of higher education at a rate of compensation mutually agreed upon. Furthermore, the proposal stipulates that the property will revert to the Federal Government if it is used for something other than the authorized purpose.

This is a noncontroversial and meritorious bill. I urge all Members to support it.

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

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of no objection to the bill at this time. Many concerns were raised about this legislation when it was first introduced, and several of those issues were addressed by the amendments in committee.

One issue, however, does remain outstanding. While there seems to be no disagreement over the transfer to the State of the buildings and facilities that compose the ranch itself, there is not agreement with respect to the transfer and future management of the surrounding land which totals, I think, about 680 acres. It is our understanding that the interested parties are continuing to work to address this disagreement and that the problem will be addressed in the other body when they consider this legislation. For that reason we do not object to the passage of this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that on both sides of the aisle there are a number of staff members who are here present today who have a lot to do from time to time and on an ongoing basis, as a matter of fact, with the fact that we are able to address matters on a bipartisan basis on the Committee on Resources. So I would just like to take this opportunity to thank them.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3579, a bill to transfer the property known as Ranch A to the State of Wyoming, was introduced by Congresswoman BARBARA CUBIN on June 5, 1996.

Ranch A consists of a lodge, a barn, and associated buildings and includes approximately 680 acres. The property is located in

Crook County, WY, which is within Sand Creek Canyon and includes the headwaters of Sand Creek.

The Fish and Wildlife Service acquired the Ranch A property in 1963, but has had little, to no, oversight of the property since 1986. The Wyoming Department of Game and Fish currently manages the majority of the Ranch A property and, up until 1995, raised trout and transplanted the trout to waters around the State of Wyoming. Currently, there is limited game bird hunting, and a select area of Sand Creek is open to fishing. In addition, the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology has been using the facilities for educational purposes.

H.R. 3579 is similar to measures the House of Representatives has approved to transfer certain Federal fish hatcheries to non-Federal control, and it contains the standard language requiring that the property revert to the Federal Government, if it is used for something other than the authorized purposes, which in this case include fish and wildlife management and educational endeavors.

I urge my colleagues to support this non-controversial piece of legislation and I compliment our distinguished colleague, BARBARA CUBIN, for her effective leadership on behalf of her Wyoming constituents.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I support the chairman's substitute to H.R. 3579, which will transfer property known as Ranch A to the State of Wyoming.

The changes that are incorporated in this amendment directly reflect those changes brought to me by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during subcommittee hearings on this bill.

This bill is very important to Wyoming and anyone who enjoys the beauty of open spaces and historical buildings. Under the management of the Federal Government, the buildings at Ranch A have become run down and fallen into disrepair.

It is time for the State of Wyoming to become involved in the management of the buildings and the class one trout stream that runs through the property. The State management of the stream will continue to be the same quality that it has been for the past 16 years.

John Twiss, Superintendent of Black Hills National Forest, acknowledged the fact that the Forest Service could not afford to put any money toward restoration of the ranch's historical buildings. The Forest Service should not be in the business of restoring historical sites and spending much needed resources maintaining these buildings. The cost for the restoration is projected to be about \$2 million.

The State of Wyoming is looking forward to and is committed to restoring and even making marked improvements to the facility by creating lodging for visitor groups and maintaining the historic significance of the ranch. Private donations brought about by the efforts of the Ranch A Restoration Foundation will give the State of Wyoming the ability to do restoration on the buildings without burdening the taxpayers of my home State.

As we all know, during this time of budget restraints and fiscal conservatism, it is not a good time for agencies like the Forest Service to begin acquiring property. These agencies already have difficulty managing what they have. The State of Wyoming is in a better position to manage the facility properly and will

take in private donations to effectively do so. The ability of the Ranch A Restoration Foundation to acquire donations will increase when the facility is turned over to the State.

Even though the South Dakota School of Mines, and the State of South Dakota as a whole, will continue to use the facility they have not been committed to giving financial backing toward the restoration or acquisition of Ranch A. In fact, in a May 1995 letter, South Dakota Governor Bill Janklow acknowledged he had no desire to purchase the Ranch A facility and the South Dakota Game and Fish Department reached that same conclusion.

Since the facility is currently scheduled for disposal by the General Service Administration in the next few months, it is my hope this non-controversial piece of legislation will move quickly through the House, along with a companion bill introduced in the Senate by CRAIG THOMAS, to assure an expeditious transfer of this property to the State of Wyoming.

Mr. Speaker, it is my desire and it is the State of Wyoming's desire to ensure that Ranch A is kept whole and in public ownership; this legislation does just that. H.R. 3579, with the USFWS amendments, ensures access to Forest Service land through the property and protects the blue ribbon fishery that the State of Wyoming holds very close to its heart.

Once again, thank you Mr. Speaker. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 3579 and look forward to the passage of this legislation.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3579, 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.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on all bills just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 5 p.m.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WICKER) at 5 p.m.