

without compromising opportunities for outdoor recreation in a remote area. I urge Members to support H.R. 417.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing a vote on H.R. 417, necessary to right a past error by the Department of Interior in designating the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Frank Dokter, a former constituent whose family business depends on the outcome of this legislation, testified before this panel last year on a similar bill. Although it passed the House, the Senate unfortunately could not act before the end of the 107th Congress.

Mr. Dokter and his family operate Walter's Camp, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) concession on land near the lower Colorado River in Imperial County, California, near and within the Cibola Refuge. The facility provides visitors with a family-friendly outdoors experience, which includes camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, birdwatching and rock-hounding. In an increasingly crowded Southern California, Mr. Dokter and his family have provided a welcome diversion from city life to many of the region's outdoors enthusiasts.

Walter's Camp was first authorized in 1962, and in August 1964, Public Land Order 3442 withdrew 16,627 acres along the Colorado River to create the Refuge. The withdrawal erroneously included the 140.32 acre Walter's Camp, but neither the BLM or the Fish and Wildlife Service immediately recognized the mistake. The BLM continued to renew the original permit, allowing the recreational concession use to continue unbroken until the present time. However, given the discovery of the past mistake, the BLM does not have the authority to continue issuing the concession contracts to Walter's Camp.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM agree that the land has "insignificant, if any, existing . . . or potential . . . wildlife habitat value," as stated in a Department of Interior memo. Therefore, I have introduced H.R. 417 to correct this mistake and allow the BLM to continue to issue contracts to Walter's Camp.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my sincere recommendation that this land to taken out of the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, and that Mr. Dokter's family be allowed to continue such a valuable and productive service to our region. Respectfully, I urge my colleagues' support on final passage.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). 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. 417.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. POMBO. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### RATHDRUM PRAIRIE/SPOKANE VALLEY AQUIFER STUDY

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 699) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a comprehensive study of the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane Valley Aquifer, located in Idaho and Washington.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 699

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

#### SECTION 1. COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE RATHDRUM PRAIRIE/SPOKANE VALLEY AQUIFER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the State of Idaho and the State of Washington, shall conduct a comprehensive study of the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane Valley Aquifer for the purpose of preparing a model of the aquifer and establishing for those States a mutually acceptable understanding of the aquifer as a ground water resource.

(b) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Congress a report on the findings and conclusions of the study by not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

For conducting the study under this Act there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$3,500,000.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) and the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) 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. 699, authored by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT), directs the Secretary of the Interior to work with the State of Idaho and the State of Washington to conduct a comprehensive study for the Rathdrum Prairie/Spokane Valley Aquifer by preparing a groundwater model to help establish a mutually acceptable understanding of the aquifer as a groundwater resource. The tools developed by this legislation will help to better coordinate and understand the various factors that influence the quantity and quality of the aquifer and encourage better cooperation between the two States charged with its maintenance operations. I urge adoption of the measure.

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

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

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 699. This bill simply directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the groundwater resources in certain areas of the States of Washington and Idaho. We support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

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

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure, 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. 699.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. POMBO. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### SAN GABRIEL RIVER WATERSHED STUDY ACT

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 519) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the San Gabriel River Watershed, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 519

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

#### SECTION 1. SAN GABRIEL RIVER WATERSHED STUDY.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act".

(b) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (hereafter in this section referred to as the "Secretary") shall conduct a special resource study of the following areas:

(A) The San Gabriel River and its tributaries north of and including the city of Santa Fe Springs.

(B) The San Gabriel Mountains within the territory of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (as defined in section 32603(c)(1)(C) of the State of California Public Resource Code).

(2) STUDY CONDUCT AND COMPLETION.—Section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)) shall apply to the conduct and completion of the study conducted under this section.

(3) CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—In conducting the study under this section, the Secretary shall consult with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and other appropriate Federal, State, and local governmental entities.

(4) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the study under this section, the Secretary shall consider regional flood control and drainage needs and publicly owned infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after funds are made available for this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

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

California (Mr. POMBO) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) 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. 519, introduced by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the San Gabriel River Watershed in the State of California.

While I will defer to the minority and the bill's sponsor to explain the merits of the legislation, I would express that we greatly appreciate the efforts of the bill's sponsors and the minority to address some early concerns about this bill. These concerns were addressed during the last Congress, and the bill successfully passed the body as part of a larger package, although it ultimately did not become law. This bill now enjoys the broad support of both the majority and the minority, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 519, sponsored by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS), authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility and suitability of establishing a unit of the National Park System which would include parts of the San Gabriel River, as well as a portion of the San Gabriel Mountains. The study would include parts of Los Angeles County, as well as a part of the City of Los Angeles itself.

During the hearings on this measure held during the previous Congress, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) provided testimony and photographs demonstrating that, although this proposed study area is in the midst of a very urban area, some green space has been preserved and might be appropriate for a park unit.

Clearly, such an urban setting raises conservation and management challenges, and we look forward to the results of this study regarding these issues. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) on her legislation and her diligence in moving her bill through the legislative process. She has been extremely patient while working very hard to move the bill forward. I urge Members to approve H.R. 519.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for working with us. I also thank the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), and the gentleman from Cali-

fornia (Chairman Pombo) and the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH). When we were discussing the bill last year, we went through different versions of the bill. We did try to accommodate the concerns of all Members who were involved in this effort.

I truly think this is a hallmark because it is a bipartisan bill that was working its way through last year, but unfortunately met some barriers on the Senate side. I know this is something that many people in urban areas are looking for as a model. We hear from Members on both sides of the aisle talking about providing open space in urban areas.

This will hopefully provide some type of relief for over 2 million people that reside along the San Gabriel River. I grew up there as a child and spent many Saturday afternoons and vacations in this area. Something that we like to talk about is the fact that so many people in that area come from largely low-income, underrepresented areas, and do not have the ability or economic means to go to Sequoia, to go to Yosemite, to even go to the beach. Some people in my district have never had the luxury of going to the beach. Their recreation occurs in their particular geographic area.

The San Gabriel Mountains are only 20 minutes away from a lot of the residents that I represent. The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) and I have worked on this issue. Many of his constituents feel very strongly about the need to provide open space for all communities. This is a step in the right direction. The Department of the Interior will conduct a study, and hopefully they will come up with some good planning so we can move forward. I thank all of the Members for working with me.

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

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

(Mr. CARTER asked and was given permission to speak out of order and to revise and extend his remarks.)

#### GIVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FAIR TAXES

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, over the course of our Presidents' Day work period, I held nine town hall meetings and listened to over 800 of my constituents express their opinions about issues important to them. Time and again they mentioned fair taxes. The American people want an economy that is sound and that can offer them jobs. We can give the people what they want by passing the President's growth plan.

The double taxation of dividends is not only unfair, it is obscene. Every year, nearly 2 million Texans and 35 million Americans are being cheated by their own government. By simply eliminating the second tax, investments will increase, resulting in 2.1 million jobs being created within the next 3 years and could potentially boost the national wealth by nearly \$1 trillion.

Instead of giving the American people a \$300 payoff, let us give them a real plan, a plan that will result in jobs, a steady economy, and dollars back in the hands of the taxpayers. For those who say we cannot afford the President's growth plan, I say we cannot afford to not pass his plan.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my California colleague for all of the hard work the gentlewoman put into this legislation over the past couple of years, thank her again for working with the majority and the minority in order to work this bill out. I think it is a good piece of legislation that deserves the support of the House, and I urge an "aye" vote.

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 California (Mr. POMBO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 519.

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.

□ 1045

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 417, H.R. 699 and H.R. 519, the three bills just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### ARMED FORCES TAX FAIRNESS ACT OF 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1307) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for members of the uniformed services in determining the exclusion of gain from the sale of a principal residence and to restore the tax exempt status of death gratuity payments to members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1307

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2003".

(b) AMENDMENT OF 1986 CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a