

Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives. I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on May 11, 1998 at 3:40 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits the 1996 National Institute of Building Sciences annual report.

With warm regards,

ROBIN H. CARLE,
Clerk.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SCIENCES ANNUAL REPORT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the requirements of section 809 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1701j-2(j)), I transmit herewith the annual report of the National Institute of Building Sciences for fiscal year 1996.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON,

THE WHITE HOUSE, May 11, 1998.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

GRANITE WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2886) to provide for a demonstration project in the Stanislaus National Forest, California, under which a private contractor will perform multiple resource management activities for that unit of the National Forest system, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2886

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 "Granite Watershed Enhancement and Protection Act of 1998".

SEC. 2. DEMONSTRATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT, STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST, CALIFORNIA, TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE GRANITE WATERSHED.

(a) RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Agriculture may

enter into a contract with a single private contractor to perform multiple resource management activities on Federal lands within the Stanislaus National Forest in the State of California for the purpose of demonstrating enhanced ecosystem health and water quality, and significantly reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, in the Granite watershed at a reduced cost to the Government. The contract shall be for a term of five years.

(b) AUTHORIZED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.—The types of resource management activities performed under the contract shall include the following:

(1) Reduction of forest fuel loads through the use of precommercial and commercial thinning and prescribed burns.

(2) Monitoring of ecosystem health and water quality in the Granite watershed.

(3) Monitoring of the presence of wildlife in the area in which management activities are performed and the effect of the activities on wildlife presence.

(4) Such other resource management activities as the Secretary considers appropriate to demonstrate enhanced ecosystem health and water quality in the Granite watershed.

(c) COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW AND SPOTTED OWL GUIDELINES.—All resource management activities performed under the contract shall be performed in a manner consistent with applicable Federal law and the standards and guidelines for the conservation of the California spotted owl (as set forth in the California Spotted Owl Sierran Province Interim Guidelines or the subsequently issued final guidelines, whichever is in effect).

(d) FUNDING.—

(1) SOURCES OF FUNDS.—To provide funds for the resource management activities to be performed under the contract, the Secretary may use—

(A) funds appropriated to carry out this section;

(B) funds specifically provided to the Forest Service to implement projects to demonstrate enhanced water quality and protect aquatic and upland resources;

(C) excess funds that are allocated for the administration and management of the Stanislaus National Forest, California;

(D) hazardous fuels reduction funds allocated for Region 5 of the Forest Service; and

(E) a contract provision allowing the cost of performing authorized management activities described in subsection (b) to be offset by the values owed to the United States for any forest products removed by the contractor.

(2) PROHIBITION ON USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS.—Except as provided in paragraph (1), the Secretary may not carry out the contract using funds appropriated for any other unit of the National Forest System.

(3) CONDITIONS ON FUNDS TRANSFERS.—Any transfer of funds under paragraph (1) may be made only in accordance with the procedures concerning notice to, and review by, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate that are applied by the Secretary in the case of a transfer of funds between appropriations.

(e) ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF STATE FUNDS.—The Secretary may accept and use funds provided by the State of California to assist in the implementation of the contract under this section.

(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than February 28 of each year during the term of the contract, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing—

(1) the resource management activities performed under the contract during the period covered by the report;

(2) the source and amount of funds used under subsection (d) to carry out the contract; and

(3) the resource management activities to be performed under the contract during the calendar year in which the report is submitted.

(g) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.—Nothing in this section exempts the contract, or resource management activities to be performed under the contract, from any Federal environmental law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH).

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

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

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, the Granite Watershed Enhancement and Protection Act is an excellent bill that will enable the Forest Service to accomplish multiple resource objectives aimed at reducing fire risk and improving water quality under a single contract. H.R. 2886 provides for a pilot project on approximately 8,000 acres of National Forest land located in and around the 1993 Granite Burn on the Groveland District of the Stanislaus National Forest.

Major meadow restoration, thinning, fuels reductions and road maintenance work is needed in order to improve watershed and runoff conditions for this river canyon. Current law does not allow the Forest Service to offer such a multiple services contract. The legislation provides the necessary authority, and specifies that the project will be subject to all applicable environmental rules and standards.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), for his work on this bill. He has done an admirable job in moving the bill forward with the support of the administration. The legislation reported by the Committee on Resources includes language requested by the administration to clarify the contracting authority, and it addresses concerns that were raised by the environmental community in the district of the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE). The meadow restoration, the thinning, the fuels reduction and road maintenance work authorized by the bill will greatly improve the conditions of the Granite watershed.

Now, 25 years after the Granite fire, I urge my colleagues to give their support to H.R. 2886, so that this much-needed work can finally be done.

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

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

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH) for her management of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill which is sponsored by my good