

friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE). The Forest Service has requested the contracting authority set forth in this legislation in order to more efficiently manage a restoration project on 8,000 acres of land in the Granite Creek watershed of the Stanislaus National Forest in California.

The details of the restoration work to be conducted pursuant to the contract authorized by this bill will be determined after a public process in compliance with NEPA. It is our understanding that the Forest Service is contemplating restoration activities such as thinning, controlled burning and road decommissioning in order to improve forest conditions and water quality in the Granite watershed.

The legislation also provides that funds from the State of California, including CALFED funds, may also be used by the Forest Service to support these restoration activities in a watershed which is part of the Bay-Delta system.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that this bill provides for consolidated contract authority which is limited to the specific test projects in California, but we on the minority side of the aisle are not prepared to conclude that such authority is necessary or desirable on a nationwide basis. It remains to be seen whether a single contract will result in more efficient and effective restoration work, and we would anticipate continued oversight concerning implementation of this, should it be enacted into law.

The Forest Service has testified before the Committee on Resources in support of consolidated contracting authority for the Granite Creek project. They are satisfied with the bill's text as reported by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance my time.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE).

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

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH), our chairman, and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for their kind remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation, as has been indicated, will allow the Forest Service to develop a resource management contract that evaluates the landscape as a whole rather than, as is present practice, in individual pieces, by streamlining the government contracting process and reducing staff time spent developing a project, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.

H.R. 2886 will provide the Forest Service with new innovative contracting authority for the purpose of developing a comprehensive land management contract for the Granite area.

Conceptually, the proposed project seeks to combine management activities, like forest thinning, with road maintenance, wildlife monitoring, and repair and maintenance, to improve erosion and runoff conditions.

This bill would allow the Forest Service to use the revenue generated from the sale of commercial timber to offset the cost of conducting nonrevenue producing watershed improvement work.

Existing Federal contracting authority prohibits the Forest Service from offering a contract that bundles multiple resource activities under one umbrella. While a combination of forest thinning and repair and restoration work might be needed in an area to improve forest health conditions, existing law requires the Forest Service to offer separate contracts for this type of work.

These limitations often result in tremendous duplication of effort by staff, unnecessary paperwork and higher preparation costs at the expense of the taxpayer. In the end, the result is an overly bureaucratic process that prevents the Forest Service from developing a project that evaluates the landscape as a whole. This bill alters this dynamic by allowing the Forest Service the opportunity to accomplish a greater amount of resource work by simply streamlining the contracting process.

H.R. 2886 looks to meet both environmental and commercial needs by using a stewardship approach to managing our Federal lands and watersheds. By allowing the Forest Service to implement a project that saves taxpayer dollars, reduces the risks of catastrophic wildfire and improves the quality of water flowing through our forest streams, this project will serve as a learning model of how to coordinate and gain efficiency in multipurpose restoration of forested watersheds.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan legislation passed unanimously out of the Committee on Resources, and, as was indicated, it is supported by the administration.

H.R. 2886 includes language that clarifies stewardship contracting authorities of the Forest Service and addresses concerns raised by the environmental community. I would ask for the support of my colleagues, and urge them to pass this legislation today.

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

Mr. Speaker, again I commend the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) for his sponsorship of this legislation. I also want to commend the gentleman from California for his pronunciation of my district. It is not "Somalia," it is not "Sam-o-a," it is "Sa-moa." I really appreciate that.

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2886, 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

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2886, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Idaho?

There was no objection.

MILES LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 1997

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1021) to provide for a land exchange involving certain National Forest System lands within the Routt National Forest in the State of Colorado. The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1021

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 "Miles Land Exchange Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. LAND EXCHANGE, ROUTT NATIONAL FOREST, COLORADO.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF EXCHANGE.—If the non-Federal lands described in subsection (b) are conveyed to the United States in accordance with this section, the Secretary of Agriculture shall convey to the party conveying the non-Federal lands all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to a parcel of land consisting of approximately 84 acres within the Routt National Forest in the State of Colorado, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Miles Land Exchange", Routt National Forest, dated May 1996.

(b) RECEIPT OF NON-FEDERAL LANDS.—The parcel of non-Federal lands referred to in subsection (a) consists of approximately 84 acres, known as the Miles parcel, located adjacent to the Routt National Forest, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Miles Land Exchange", Routt National Forest, dated May 1996. Title to the non-Federal lands must be acceptable to the Secretary, and the conveyance shall be subject to such valid existing rights of record as may be acceptable to the Secretary. The parcel shall conform with the title approval standards applicable to Federal land acquisitions.

(c) APPROXIMATELY EQUAL IN VALUE.—The values of both the Federal and non-Federal lands to be exchanged under this section are deemed to be approximately equal in value, and no additional valuation determinations are required.

(d) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER LAWS.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, the