

this program, and do so without further delay.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 24, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on October 24, 2007, at 7:49 pm:

Appointments: United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

□ 1015

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 2262, HARDBLOCK MINING
AND RECLAMATION ACT OF 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 780 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 780

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2262) to modify the requirements applicable to locatable minerals on public domain lands, consistent with the principles of self-initiation of mining claims, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be

considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 2262 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 780.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 780 provides for consideration of H.R. 2262, the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act, under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. It also makes in order an amendment in the nature of a substitute reported by the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. My home State of California is what it is today because of the business of mining. When James Marshall discovered gold in the American River in my area more than two centuries ago, California was not yet a State.

The economic boom that followed the discovery of gold helped to remake the West. It infused our young Nation with renewed energy and capital. It began one of the most well-known episodes in our country's history: the Gold Rush.

Without mining, the City of Sacramento, which I represent proudly, would probably not be the capital of the largest State in the Union. Without mining, States like Nevada and Utah would be without the economic basis upon which they are now growing.

Without mining, the western half of the United States would be a different place.

But in the West, Mr. Speaker, we have more than hardrock minerals. We also have rivers, streams, mountain ranges, and millions upon millions of people. These are natural resources just like gold and silver, and they must be protected from environmental harm.

Unfortunately, the law that currently governs mining operations is extremely outdated. It was signed by President Ulysses S. Grant. This was during the time when miners used shovels and pickaxes. Now, huge machines and industrial equipment are the tools of the mining trade.

Times have changed, Mr. Speaker. In the year 2007, we recognize that the term "natural resources" includes more than what we extract from the Earth. Its definition now encompasses the whole environment in which we live, from the water we drink, to the land we farm, to the air we breathe.

All Americans have a stake in preserving this environment, Mr. Speaker, and mining companies should contribute their fair share. However, they currently enjoy access to Federal land that no other industry does, not natural gas, not oil shale, not coal.

Under the 1872 law, mining companies pay next to nothing to extract metal from publicly owned lands. American taxpayers foot the bill for the extensive environmental remediation that many abandoned mines require.

Other old mines simply never get cleaned up. They sit empty and vacant, leaching chemicals into groundwater, polluting watersheds, and posing safety hazards for the public. After 135 years' worth of this subsidy, it is long past time for mining companies to pay their fair share.

This bill received three subcommittee hearings and a full committee hearing that stretched over 2 days. The rule makes in order seven total amendments, five of which are Republican.

This legislation has been considered and debated in the best tradition of the U.S. Congress. It is good environmental policy in the very same tradition. It is also good social policy. The bill also takes into account industry concerns and provides economic assistance to mining communities. One-third of the revenue created by this bill will go to a community assistance fund to help mitigate the social and economic impacts of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, my hometown of Sacramento grew up around a place called Sutter's Fort. It was originally built to be a base for agricultural trade. The discovery of gold in the foothills northeast of Sutter's Fort changed its history and the history of our Nation forever. Because of gold, what was once Mexican territory soon became our 31st and most prosperous State.