

UTAH WEST DESERT LAND
EXCHANGE ACT OF 2000

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4579) to provide for the exchange of certain lands within the State of Utah, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4579

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 "Utah West Desert Land Exchange Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The State of Utah owns approximately 95,095.19 acres of land, as well as approximately 11,187.60 acres of mineral interests, located in the West Desert region of Utah and contained wholly or partially within certain wilderness study areas created pursuant to section 603 of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976, or proposed by the Bureau of Land Management for wilderness study area status pursuant to section 202 of that Act. These lands were granted by the Congress to the State of Utah pursuant to the Utah Enabling Act of 1894 (chapter 138; 23 Stat. 107), to be held in trust for the benefit of the State's public school system and other public institutions. The lands are largely scattered in checkerboard fashion amidst the Federal lands comprising the remainder of such existing and proposed wilderness study areas.

(2) Development of surface and mineral resources on State trust lands within existing or proposed wilderness study areas, or the sale of such lands into private ownership, could be incompatible with management of such lands for nonimpairment of their wilderness characteristics pursuant to section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 or with future congressional designation of the lands as wilderness.

(3) The United States owns lands and interests in lands outside of existing and proposed wilderness study areas that can be transferred to the State of Utah in exchange for the West Desert wilderness inholdings without jeopardizing Federal management objectives or needs.

(4) The large presence of State trust land inholdings in existing and proposed wilderness study areas in the West Desert region makes land and resource management in these areas difficult, costly, and controversial for both the State of Utah and the United States.

(5) It is in the public interest to reach agreement on exchange of such inholdings, on terms fair to both the State of Utah and the United States. Such an agreement, subject to ratification by the Congress, would save much time and delay in meeting the legitimate expectations of the State school and institutional trusts, in simplifying management of Federal lands, and in avoiding the significant time and expense associated with administrative land exchanges.

(6) The State of Utah and the United States have reached an agreement under which the State would exchange certain State trust lands within specified wilderness study areas and areas identified as having wilderness characteristics in the West Desert region for various Federal lands and interests in lands outside of those areas but in the same region of Utah. The agreement also

provides for the State to convey to the United States approximately 483 acres of land in Washington County, Utah, that has been designated as critical habitat for the Desert Tortoise, a threatened species, for inclusion in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve.

(7) Because the inholdings to be acquired by the Federal Government include properties within some of the most spectacular wild areas in the western United States, and because a mission of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration is to produce economic benefits for Utah's public schools and other beneficiary institutions, the exchange of lands called for in this agreement will resolve longstanding environmental conflicts with respect to the existing and proposed wilderness study areas, place important natural lands into public ownership, and further the interests of the State trust lands, the school children of Utah, and these conservation resources.

(8) Under this agreement taken as a whole, the State interests to be conveyed to the United States by the State of Utah, and the Federal interests to be conveyed to the State of Utah by the United States, will be approximately equal in value.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to enact into law and direct prompt implementation of this agreement, and thereby to further the public interest by consolidating State and Federal lands into manageable units while facilitating the protection of lands with significant scientific, cultural, and natural resources.

SEC. 3. RATIFICATION OF THE AGREED EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE STATE OF UTAH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) AGREEMENT.—The State of Utah and the Department of the Interior have agreed to exchange certain Federal lands and mineral interests in the State of Utah for lands and mineral interests of approximately equal value managed by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration wholly or partially within certain existing and proposed wilderness study areas in the West Desert region of Utah.

(b) RATIFICATION.—All terms, conditions, procedures, covenants, reservations, and other provisions set forth in the document entitled "Agreement for Exchange of Lands—West Desert State-Federal Land Consolidation", dated May 30, 2000 (in this Act referred to as "the Agreement"), are hereby incorporated in this Act, are ratified and confirmed, and set forth the obligations of the United States, the State of Utah, and the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, as a matter of Federal law.

(c) CONDITION.—Before exchanging any lands under this Act, the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Utah shall each document in a statement of value how the determination of approximately equal value was made in accordance with section 206(h) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716(h)), provided that the provisions of paragraph (1)(A) of section 206(h) of such Act shall not apply. In addition, the Secretary and the State shall select an independent qualified appraiser who shall review the statements of value as prepared by the Secretary and the State of Utah and all documentation and determine if the lands are of approximately equal value. If there is a finding of a difference in value, then the Secretary and the State shall adjust the exchange to achieve approximately equal value.

SEC. 4. CONVEYANCES.

(a) CONVEYANCES.—All conveyances under sections 2 and 3 of the Agreement shall be

completed within 70 days after the date on which the condition set forth in section 3(c) is met.

(b) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The maps and legal descriptions referred to in the Agreement depict the lands subject to the conveyances under the Agreement.

(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The maps and descriptions referred to in the Agreement shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Secretary of the Interior and the Utah State Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(3) CONFLICT.—In case of any conflict between the maps and the legal descriptions in the Agreement, the legal descriptions shall control.

SEC. 5. COSTS.

The United States and the State of Utah shall each bear its own respective costs incurred in the implementation of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4579 introduced by myself, would facilitate a major land exchange between the Secretary of the Interior and the State of Utah. Within the West Desert of Utah lies hundreds of thousands of acres of wilderness study areas. For decades now, the school trust has owned lands within these WSAs with no ability to generate revenues from these lands, which is their constitutional mandate.

Earlier in this Congress, the Secretary and the school trust began negotiating a land exchange to remove these lands from the WSAs to ensure that those lands would not be developed and to ensure that the school children of Utah could benefit from the lands they have owned since statehood.

This exchange trades approximately 106,000 acres of State land for approximately 106,000 acres of Federal land. This is an equal value exchange that benefits both the conservation of our lands and the school children of Utah. We bring to the floor today an amended version of the legislation which ensures that the values are equal and that the work of the State and the Department of Interior will be independently reviewed. I appreciate the minority working with us and the Department to craft an amendment that guarantees this as an equal value exchange.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4579.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, H.R. 4579, that would ratify an agreement reached May 30 between Interior Secretary Babbitt and Utah Governor LeVitt to exchange Federal

and State lands in the West Desert of Utah. Such legislation is necessary because the proposed exchange does not comply with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy Management Act and other applicable law.

The agreement between the Secretary and the Governor has only recently been finalized, and the hearing held by the Committee on Resources raised several questions. Fortunately, I think we have been able to address the questions that were raised with respect to appraisal of these lands and the process by which the BLM went through this and raised concerns about the general, if you will, BLM appraisal process with respect to land exchanges.

Clearly here the worry was that valuation methods were used that had no basis in law or policy and could not stand up to the appraisal standards. But I think the fact of the matter is that while that process was far from ideal, I think also we have a unique situation here in the sense that there is a benefit in this exchange, especially in the fact that we will have the opportunity to consolidate Federal land holdings in many wilderness study areas and other lands found to have significant wilderness qualities, and I think that is important.

So some of these lands in and of themselves may not have great value, but in terms of management and the consolidation impact, I think that clearly this exchange is needed, and I believe the bill now contains provisions that will provide reasonable process for assessing the value of the proposed land exchange before it is implemented.

The language provides that the Secretary and the State of Utah will each prepare a statement of value for the lands to be exchanged. In addition, the two parties will select an independent qualified appraiser who will review those statements of values and all relevant documentation to determine if the lands are of approximately equal value. I think this in fact will make the bill acceptable.

I really want to thank the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), for all of the effort that he has put into this legislation to address these concerns. I think it is clearly a bill that the House should now support.

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

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for his comments.

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 Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4579, 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.

VALLES CALDERA PRESERVATION ACT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1892) to authorize the acquisition of the Valles Caldera, to provide for an effective land and wildlife management program for this resource within the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1892

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

TITLE I—VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE AND TRUST

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Valles Caldera Preservation Act".

SEC. 102. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Baca ranch comprises most of the Valles Caldera in central New Mexico, and constitutes a unique land mass, with significant scientific, cultural, historic, recreational, ecological, wildlife, fisheries, and productive values;

(2) the Valles Caldera is a large resurgent lava dome with potential geothermal activity;

(3) the land comprising the Baca ranch was originally granted to the heirs of Don Luis Maria Cabeza de Vaca in 1860;

(4) historical evidence, in the form of old logging camps and other artifacts, and the history of territorial New Mexico indicate the importance of this land over many generations for domesticated livestock production and timber supply;

(5) the careful husbandry of the Baca ranch by the current owners, including selective timbering, limited grazing and hunting, and the use of prescribed fire, have preserved a mix of healthy range and timber land with significant species diversity, thereby serving as a model for sustainable land development and use;

(6) the Baca ranch's natural beauty and abundant resources, and its proximity to large municipal populations, could provide numerous recreational opportunities for hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, and hunting;

(7) the Forest Service documented the scenic and natural values of the Baca ranch in its 1993 study entitled "Report on the Study of the Baca Location No. 1, Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico", as directed by Public Law 101-556;

(8) the Baca ranch can be protected for current and future generations by continued operation as a working ranch under a unique management regime which would protect the land and resource values of the property and surrounding ecosystem while allowing and providing for the ranch to eventually become financially self-sustaining;

(9) the current owners have indicated that they wish to sell the Baca ranch, creating an opportunity for Federal acquisition and public access and enjoyment of these lands;

(10) certain features on the Baca ranch have historical and religious significance to Native Americans which can be preserved

and protected through Federal acquisition of the property;

(11) the unique nature of the Valles Caldera and the potential uses of its resources with different resulting impacts warrants a management regime uniquely capable of developing an operational program for appropriate preservation and development of the land and resources of the Baca ranch in the interest of the public;

(12) an experimental management regime should be provided by the establishment of a Trust capable of using new methods of public land management that may prove to be cost-effective and environmentally sensitive; and

(13) the Secretary may promote more efficient management of the Valles Caldera and the watershed of the Santa Clara Creek through the assignment of purchase rights of such watershed to the Pueblo of Santa Clara.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this title are—

(1) to authorize Federal acquisition of the Baca ranch;

(2) to protect and preserve for future generations the scientific, scenic, historic, and natural values of the Baca ranch, including rivers and ecosystems and archaeological, geological, and cultural resources;

(3) to provide opportunities for public recreation;

(4) to establish a demonstration area for an experimental management regime adapted to this unique property which incorporates elements of public and private administration in order to promote long term financial sustainability consistent with the other purposes enumerated in this subsection; and

(5) to provide for sustained yield management of Baca ranch for timber production and domesticated livestock grazing insofar as is consistent with the other purposes stated herein.

SEC. 103. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) BACA RANCH.—The term "Baca ranch" means the lands and facilities described in this section 104(a).

(2) BOARD OF TRUSTEES.—The terms "Board of Trustees" and "Board" mean the Board of Trustees as describe in section 107.

(3) COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term "Committees of Congress" means the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives.

(4) FINANCIALLY SELF-SUSTAINING.—The term "financially self-sustaining" means management and operating expenditures equal to or less than proceeds derived from fees and other receipts for resource use and development and interest on invested funds. Management and operating expenditures shall include Trustee expenses, salaries and benefits of staff, administrative and operating expenses, improvements to and maintenance of lands and facilities of the Preserve, and other similar expenses. Funds appropriated to the Trust by Congress, either directly or through the Secretary, for the purposes of this title shall not be considered.

(5) MULTIPLE USE AND SUSTAINED YIELD.—The term "multiple use and sustained yield" has the combined meaning of the terms "multiple use" and "sustained yield of the several products and services", as defined under the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 531).

(6) PRESERVE.—The term "Preserve" means the Valles Caldera National Preserve established under section 105.

(7) SECRETARY.—Except where otherwise provided, the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture.