

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HELIUM EXTRACTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3279) to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3279

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 “Helium Extraction Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. MAINTENANCE OF FEDERAL MINERAL LEASES BASED ON EXTRACTION OF HELIUM.

The first section of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181) is amended in the fifth paragraph by inserting after “purchaser thereof” the following: “, and that extraction of helium from gas produced from such lands shall maintain the lease as if the extracted helium were oil and gas”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COOK. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3279, the Helium Extraction Act of 2017. This straightforward piece of legislation will incentivize helium production on Federal lands, help ensure the future of America’s helium supply, and provide a fair return to the taxpayer.

Under existing law, the Mineral Leasing Act only permits helium extraction as a by-product of an existing oil or natural gas lease. As a result, if oil and gas production on a Federal site is not economically viable, the lease will expire, regardless of the revenue brought in by helium sales. The Helium Extraction Act of 2017 would correct this error and authorize helium production activities where economically viable.

Helium is used for much more than balloons. It is a rare and unique element which has become an indispensable part of our medical, space, and defense industries, such as its use in

MRI machines, semiconductors, and air-to-air missile guidance systems.

Unfortunately, the future of our domestic helium supply is uncertain. The Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, which details a commonsense privatization process of the Federal helium reserve, also specifies that all helium in the Federal reserve must be auctioned off by September 30, 2021, and the facility closed.

This crucial source of helium has been relied upon for almost half a century, but in a few short years, it will no longer be available. Our country needs another way to access this critical natural resource; otherwise, we will be relying on hostile interests such as Qatar, Algeria, and Russia. Each of these countries presents security and geopolitical challenges made even more apparent by recent unrest among Qatar and its regional neighbors.

Unless something changes, foreign facilities are predicted to become our chief source of helium by the end of the decade. This is why H.R. 3279 is such a necessary piece of legislation.

By authorizing the Bureau of Land Management to lease land for this valuable nonrenewable resource, this legislation will raise \$9 million for the American taxpayer and help secure our supply of helium for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

H.R. 3279 would correct a problem in our Federal oil and gas leasing laws that makes it more difficult for companies to commercially produce helium from Federal lands. Helium is a critical element for high-tech research and modern medicine, and because of its unique properties, there are simply no substitutes.

On the Natural Resources Committee, we have spent many years overseeing the Federal Helium Program, culminating in the bipartisan Helium Stewardship Act signed into law 4 years ago.

While the Helium Stewardship Act improved the management and sale of Federal helium, it didn’t do much to promote the development of new sources of helium, which are in high demand. By allowing companies to hold onto Federal oil and gas leases if they are producing commercial quantities of helium and only helium, then the problem that kept potentially valuable helium resources under lock and key is resolved. This is only one small step, but it is a very useful one.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsor of this legislation for introducing it.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3279, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COOK. 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. COOK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3279.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1445

REPEALING THE ACT TO CONFER JURISDICTION ON THE STATE OF IOWA OVER OFFENSES COMMITTED BY OR AGAINST INDIANS ON THE SAC AND FOX INDIAN RESERVATION

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1074) to repeal the Act entitled “An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation”.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1074

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act of June 30, 1948, entitled “An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation” (62 Stat. 1161, chapter 759) is repealed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COOK) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COOK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1074. This bill would rescind criminal jurisdiction from the State of Iowa over crimes committed by or against members of the Sac and Fox Tribe on their lands. In doing so, the Tribe or the Federal Government would exercise exclusive jurisdiction under the Major Crimes Act. This is the most common legal situation for most tribes in America today.

In 1948, Congress granted jurisdiction over all crimes committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Reservation to the State of Iowa. In 1949, there was no mechanism in the Federal Government concerning criminal jurisdiction on the Tribe’s land, and up until that point, the Tribe had largely policed themselves.

Today, the Federal Government has criminal statutory authority on Indian lands, the Tribe is again ready to police itself, and the State of Iowa has