

WHIP ADVISORY

NUMBER OF BILL: H.R. 12625

EXPLANATION OF BILL: H.R. 12625 is an amalgamation of the two different versions of H.R. 39, reported by the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs and Merchant Marine and Fisheries. It was developed by the Majority leadership of the two Committees, Mr. Udall, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Leggett and Mr. Seiberling. The bill was introduced on May 9, 1978, by Mr. Udall and co-sponsored by these Members along with Mr. Forsythe, the ranking Minority Member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Subcommittee.

RULE REQUESTED: The leadership of the two Committees have requested an open rule providing that it is in order to consider H.R. 12625, if offered as an amendment in the nature of a substitute, as the original text of H.R. 39 for purposes of reading for amendment in the Committee of the Whole. The leadership of the Committees feel that since H.R. 12625 represents an amalgamation of the two Committee versions it is the best vehicle to work from on the Floor.

BILL SUMMARY: H.R. 12625 would do the following:

1. Designate 42.65 million acres of new and expanded National Parks in Alaska;

designate 54.55 million acres of new and expanded National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska;

designate 2.74 million acres of additions to National Forests in Alaska; and

designate 1.67 million acres of Wild and Scenic Rivers in Alaska.

There would be a total of 101.61 million acres of four systems conservation units established in the State. This represents an increase of 6 million acres over the Interior Committee's version of H.R. 39 and a decrease of 22 million acres from the Merchant Marine Committee version;

2. Establish 65.54 million acres of wilderness within new and existing units of the National Park, National Wildlife Refuge and National Forest Systems in Alaska. This acreage is 8.5 million acres less than the Interior Committee version of H.R.39. The wilderness reductions conform to the amendments adopted by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. The bill deletes the special Arctic Range oil and gas survey proposed in the Interior Committee version;

3. Provide for oil and gas leasing within National Wildlife Refuge System units if the Secretary determines that such development is compatible with the Refuge; prohibit hardrock mining in all Parks, Preserves and Refuges;

4. Allow the State to manage subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands with minimal Federal oversight. The provision provides a preference to subsistence users of fish and wildlife over other consumptive users. The Secretary can recommend changes in the State's subsistence management plan, but he would not be authorized to suspend the State program. The Secretary would be authorized to close public lands to subsistence and non-subsistence uses in order to protect the fish and wildlife resources. The subsistence title is identical to the title adopted by the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries;

5. Provide for the cooperative management of areas seaward of coastal refuges by the Federal Government and the State of Alaska. This provision is identical to the one included in the Merchant Marine version of H.R. 39;

6. Allow aquaculture activities in specified wilderness areas.

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS: The Merchant Marine Committee will offer the following Committee amendments to the consensus bill:

1. The consensus bill deleted the provision adopted by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee which provided for the development of a cooperative land management plan for the Bristol Bay area by the Secretary of Interior and the State of Alaska. The Committee will seek to include this provision in the bill on the Floor;

2. The consensus bill deleted the proposed North Slope National Wildlife Refuge adopted by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. This provision would have established a wildlife refuge in the existing National Petroleum Reserve, but it would not affect oil and gas exploration and the study of the reserve being conducted under the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The Committee will seek to include this provision in the bill on the Floor;

3. The consensus bill deleted the Merchant Marine adopted provision allowing for hardrock mining in refuges under a leasing program if the Secretary determines that such development is compatible with the Refuge. The Committee will seek to include this provision in the bill on the Floor.