

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop, Chairman
Markup Memorandum

October 5, 2015

To: All Natural Resources Committee Staff

From: Majority Committee Staff , Federal Lands Subcommittee Republican Staff,
x-67736

Markup: Markup of H.R. 1452 (Rep. Jeff Miller), To authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance.
October 7 and 8, 2015

Bill Summary

H.R. 1452, introduced by Congressman Jeff Miller [R-FL-01], authorizes Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance.

Background

On January 15, 1947 the federal government removed the Santa Rosa National Monument from the jurisdiction of the National Park Service and deeded the land located on Santa Rosa Island to Escambia County, Florida. Under the terms of the conveyance, Escambia County was given the authority to transfer property on Santa Rosa Island, however, they were not allowed to issue title on the property. After taking custody of the land, Escambia County began offering leases for businesses and homeowners who would pay a lease fee, but not be charged property taxes. This arrangement continues today.

Santa Rosa Island has grown enormously in the intervening years, and the Board of Commissioners of both Escambia County and Santa Rosa County passed resolutions asking for a federal solution to allow current Santa Rosa Island leaseholders the option of attaining fee simple title while protecting public access to the beaches and conservation areas on the island.

An identical version of this bill, introduced in the 113th Congress as H.R. 2954, was favorably reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on December 16, 2013. The bill was subsequently included in a package of lands bills that was adopted by the House of Representatives.

Major Provisions

- Authorizes Escambia County, Florida, at its discretion, to convey or dispose of all of its interest in any part of the property on Santa Rosa Island that was conveyed to it by the federal government pursuant to a specified Act and deed to any person or entity, free from any restriction on conveyance or reconveyance in such Act or deed.
- Prohibits persons or entities holding a leasehold interest in such property from being required to involuntarily accept a fee interest in lieu of their leasehold interest.
- Requires Escambia County within two years of enactment of this Act, to convey to Santa Rosa County, Florida, all interest held in any part of the property that falls within the jurisdictional boundaries of such county. Bars Santa Rosa County from being required to pay any sum for such property other than the actual costs associated with such conveyance.
- Permits Santa Rosa County or any other person to which property is conveyed under this Act to reconvey such property or any part of it.
- Instructs Escambia County and Santa Rosa County to preserve in perpetuity those areas on Santa Rosa Island currently dedicated to conservation, preservation, the public, recreation, access, and public parking.

Cost

In the 113th Congress, CBO estimated that implementing H.R. 2954, a bill identical to H.R. 1452, would have no significant impact on the federal budget.

Administration Position

Unknown at this time