

I voted Yes on H.R. 2578, the Conservation and Economic Growth Act.

This legislation is a compilation of 14 separate bills dealing with the use of federal property. Included in this package, is legislation that would waive certain bureaucratic red tape requirements to allow for expedited construction of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) infrastructure within 100 miles of international land borders. This would help enable more timely access to federal lands along our borders in order to conduct critical security activities. This waiver authority would expire five years following enactment.

Importantly for communities in the Southern Tier and Central New York, the bill requires the development of an management plan for restoration activities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Specifically, it would require a report detailing current federal and state restoration activities taking place within the area and any prospective future restoration activities being planned.

Additionally, the bill would seek to protect endangered fish populations in the Pacific Northwest, permit greater use of federal funds to establish public target shooting ranges, and double the duration of grazing permits on federal lands. This bill would also designate the 2007 interim management plan for the Cape Hatteras Seashore Recreational Area in North Carolina as the rules governing management of the area. This would lift controversial current restrictions regarding the use of off-road vehicles in the area.

Overall, the Conservation and Economic Growth Act would help create new jobs, grow the U.S. economy, protect the environment and wildlife, while promoting new sources of renewable energy, like hydropower.

The bill was approved by a vote of 232 – 188.