

OPB File copy

AUTHORIZING THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TO PURCHASE LAND IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, ARIZONA

JULY 28, 1983.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. HAWKINS, from the Committee on House Administration, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 930]

The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred the bill (S. 930) to authorize the Smithsonian Institution to purchase land in Santa Cruz County, Ariz., having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

COMMITTEE ACTION

S. 930, introduced by Mr. Goldwater, Mr. Garn, and Mr. Jackson, passed the Senate on May 25, 1983, and was referred to the Committee on House Administration on May 26, 1983.

In a meeting on July 26, 1983, a quorum being present, the Committee favorably reported S. 930 by unanimous voice vote. The Committee noted that similar legislation had been introduced in the House in the form of H.R. 2313, introduced by Mr. Boland, Mr. Conte, and Mr. Mineta.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the bill is to authorize the Smithsonian Institution to purchase four acres of land which it has been leasing so that permanent headquarter facilities can be constructed for the astronomical observatory which is maintained and operated by the Smithsonian on Mt. Hopkins, near Amado, Arizona, in Santa Cruz County.

The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$150,000 for purchase of land.

BACKGROUND

The Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory (formerly known as the Mt. Hopkins Observatory) is located on Mt. Hopkins, 18 miles from the town of Amado, Arizona. It occupies a 4,744 acre site leased from the U.S. Forest Service and is the largest field installation of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. The location of the Whipple Observatory provides excellent physical conditions for astronomical



observations and the Observatory houses a large multiple mirror telescope (MMT), which has been described as "one of the finest telescopes at one of the best sites in the world."

The Whipple Observatory has developed in the last decade from a small field observing station into one of the Nation's foremost astronomical research facilities, attracting public visitors and professional astronomers from around the world. For the last 13 years the Smithsonian has leased four acres of land at the foot of Mt. Hopkins as the base camp and staging area for research activities on the mountain. Two acres are owned by the Tubac School District and two acres by private owners. On the property is a one-level school building and residence which have been converted to office use; a small, informal Visitors' Center; and various automotive service, repair, and storage buildings.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Increased public interest in astronomy and interest in the unusual MMT has resulted in a growing demand for access to the Observatory and a need for expanded facilities to serve the public. Smithsonian ownership of the Amado site would allow the planned and coordinated development of permanent facilities that would be cost efficient. Current and projected needs of the Observatory necessitate a larger headquarters facility and leasehold improvement is not economical. The Amado site is accessible to the mountain and to the interstate highway; contains all necessary utilities; and can be developed most cost efficiently with the least amount of disruption to present operations.

If approved, the \$150,000 funding for the acquisition of land will be sought in the Smithsonian's budget request for fiscal year 1985. The actual plans and construction of the permanent headquarters, estimated to cost \$3 million, would be referred to the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation in fiscal year 1986.

Passage of S. 930 will result in no changes in existing law.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to Section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Congressional Budget Office has reviewed S. 930, a bill which authorizes appropriations of \$150,000 in 1985 for the Smithsonian Institution to purchase land in Santa Cruz County, Arizona, for the permanent headquarters of the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory. Assuming full appropriations of the authorization level, outlays would also equal \$150,000 in 1985.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Committee on House Administration does not consider the enactment of S. 930 to have any significant inflationary impact in the operation of the national economy.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Other than the information contained in this report, there are no committee oversight findings or recommendations pursuant to clause 2(b)(1) of rule X.

The Committee on Government Operations did not submit a summary of oversight findings and recommendations under clause 4(a)(2) of rule X.