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FROM:

Mike Bader

PROJECT:

MESSAGE:

We sure hope the Administration will put the brakes on the Williams bill before it gets out of hand and hurts everybody. The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act is much more in line with the Administration's stated policies and now has 27 co-sponsors and support from more than 500 businesses and organizations. Andrew Lowenthal (Rep. Maloney 205-7944) can provide details on NREPA.

Wilderness fight tests Gore's commitment

By SCOTT SOMNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Conservationists are counting on Vice President Al Gore to help block any bills that would curb citizen challenges to decisions on logging and protection for national forests. But Gore isn't tipping his hand, and there may be few opportunities this year to see whether White House duty has changed the perspective that made the former Tennessee senator an environmental hero.

A Montana dispute could bring the matter to a head.

For 15 years, Montanans have been arguing about 6 million acres of roadless national forest lands.

Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., is pushing a bill that would protect about 1.6 million acres as wilderness, study about 500,000 acres and free 3.9 million for logging, grazing, mining and other development.

The bill would bar citizens

(See GORE, Page D-8)

Missoulian, Sunday, September 12, 1993

FROM PAGE B-1

Gore

(continued)

from filing lawsuits that challenge Congress' decisions on which lands to include in the national wilderness system.

The bill says the wilderness reviews in the Forest Service's forest-management plans for the area are sufficient. Environmentalists could not argue about excluded lands until those plans come up for review in five years or so.

Williams noted that the only decision insulated from the challenges would be the initial one on which lands are to receive wilderness protection.

"If I am right and we do not clarify the language, then we recklessly remove the citizenry's rights to challenge decisions that could gravely and irreparably alter the Earth's largest intact temperate forest ecosystem."

— Vice President Al Gore

"That does not mean all appeals should be stopped on released lands," he said.

"The Endangered Species Act, violation of the Clean Water Act, air pollution, riparian areas — people can appeal on all sorts of things and ought to be allowed to have those appeals," Williams said.

"The question is whether they should be appealed on wilderness characteristics. They should not."

Mike Bader of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies in Missoula, disagrees.

"Basically they are condemning 4 million acres of the last American wilderness to industrial development," Bader said. "We figure within five years, all the old-growth will be gone. They have done no evaluation of what the impacts of this would be."

Environmentalists say Northwest lawmakers

have insulated bills from court challenges in the past on similar grounds, that the legislation was "deemed sufficient" to meet requirements of environmental laws.

Bader said the wilderness reviews "deemed sufficient" in Williams' bill are part of forest-management plans that exaggerated timber-harvest potential and allowed excessive logging.

"To adopt those Reagan-Bush forest plans is outrageous," he said.

Michael Scott, Northern Rockies regional director for The Wilderness Society, told a House subcommittee in July that Williams' release language "charts dangerous ground and should be removed."

But timber-industry leaders say such language is necessary to provide some assurance that non-wilderness lands won't be tied up in court battles and can be released for development.

The years of uncertainty over the lands' status have been a nightmare, say officials for the Montana Snowmobile Association, the Montana Petroleum Association and the Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association.

"For some time now, all national forests in Montana have been off-limits to the oil and gas industry — even areas not under consideration for wilderness," said Bill Ballard, president of an independent oil and gas company in Billings, Mont.

As a Tennessee senator, Gore helped rally opposition to restraint of judicial review. In March 1992, he spoke out against a wilderness bill from Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., that critics said would have released millions of acres for development, free from appeal.

"This bill would in fact set a terrible precedent for future similar bills and greatly reduce the rights of citizens in our society," Gore said in a Senate floor speech at the time.

"If I am right and we do not clarify the language, then we recklessly remove the citizenry's rights to challenge decisions that could gravely and irreparably alter the Earth's largest intact temperate forest ecosystem," he said then.

Baucus's bill died in Congress last year. But Williams' measure is expected to come to a floor vote this year.

For the past three weeks, Gore spokeswoman Maria Romash has refused to respond to repeated telephone and written queries about the vice president's position on the matter.

Comment

The Arizona Daily Star
Founded 1877

Stephen E. Auslander, Editor

James M. Kiser, Editor

Michael E. Putzger, Publisher

Page Editor

Tucson, Thursday, September 8, 1977

EDITORIALS

Those meddling Eastern do-gooders

Sen. Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming is outraged at meddling Easterner do-gooders trying to tell him what is best for the West. You don't have to be Teddy Roosevelt or John Muir, though, to see that the West's beauties and vastness need protection.

Wallop has a lot to learn from others, but he will have none of these outsider meddlers. "No set of dumb fools, movie actors and representatives of silk stocking districts are going to take over the economy of the West as long as I'm around," he thundered. And all this because a bill introduced by Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, a first-term Democrat from Manhattan, would prohibit any development on 16.3 million acres of Rocky Mountain high country in five states.

This curious tale of East vs. West was reported in The New York Times after Maloney visited Yellowstone National Park. She saw at a glance what Western politicians sometimes do not see in a lifetime — the unique treasure of wild beauty that transcends all state borders and belongs to all Americans.

Wallop whopped her with the rejoinder that maybe her Manhattan district should be given back to its original owners, the Indians. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II, a Massachusetts Democrat, a longtime backpacker and former hiking guide in the West, had originally wanted to introduce the bill. He had to back off, said the Times, when Mon-

ahan Sen. Max Baucus warned he would use his influence to block money for cleaning up Boston Harbor.

Western politicians who perpetuate the kind of special-interest exploitation of the West that secured and kept them in office do not speak for all Westerners. A leader of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, based in Bozeman, Montana, said environmentalists had no choice but to find out-of-state people to back their bill. And furthermore, he added, how can Baucus represent interests of wilderness areas when he is under pressure from timber and mining industries?

Perhaps Easterners, for all their naivete, know a little history about the vast exploitation of the West. How buffalo and West were hunted to death for their hides and replaced by cattle, and how dry, rainless areas with nowhere near enough water for irrigation saw homesteaders plow up the land anyway.

Regardless of ruffled egos in the Wallop and Baucus camps, the notion is fortunate that New Yorker Teddy Roosevelt, a frequent summer visitor to the West, devoted much of his political career to protecting forests and wildlife habitat from the excesses of "civilization." He laid the foundation stones for national forests, parks and wildlife refuges.

Some Westerners cannot see the forests, just the lumber, and they miss the meadows because they are only cow fodder.

Wild Rockies Antitrust Forest Emergency

Key Congressman Misled

Vento prepares rubber-stamp for wilderness destruction bill,
Rep. Pat Williams' H.R. 2473

Co-Sponsors needed now for Northern Rockies
Ecosystem Protection Act, H.R. 2638

Bad News

Introduced by Montana Rep. Pat Williams, H.R. 2473 would implement the forest plans developed under the Reagan and Bush administrations, codifying bloated, illegal logging levels and destroying prime wildlife habitat and low elevation old growth forests.

The bill mandates that nearly 4 million acres of pristine roadless lands be released for development under these forest plans, and it proposes a bogus "ecosystem study" with no interim protection, to be coordinated by the Forest Service. Citizen's rights to challenge developments in released areas would be limited.

Rep. Bruce Vento is preparing for a rubber stamp approval of the bill in the Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee. In addition, Rep. Vento has been misinformed by the timber industry and has criticized NREPA, saying that lands protected by NREPA "are not really wilderness in character."

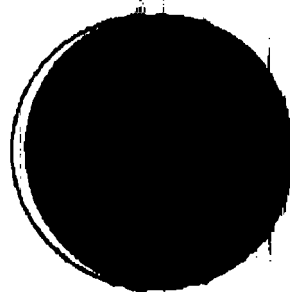
Good News

On July 15, 1993, Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) introduced the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, NREPA, H.R. 2638, along with a bi-partisan coalition of House members. Currently, NREPA has 24 sponsors and has been referred to the House committees on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Merchant Marine & Fisheries.

NREPA would protect over 20 million acres of public lands in the Northern Rockies as Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers, Biological Linkage Corridors, and National Park and Preserves. It would also establish a Wildland Recovery System to create jobs restoring lands that have been damaged by poor land management.

NREPA is supported by 500 organizations and small businesses representing millions of Americans.

H.R. 2473 protects less than
one-half of one percent of
Montana's timber base
as Wilderness!



Montana's timber base
protected as Wilderness
by Williams bill

Support H.R. 2638, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA)

Your Action Needed Immediately

call the government documents room at 202-225-3456; request a copy of all these bills

Write to:

Rep. George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

Rep. Bruce Vento
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Public Lands, Parks & Forests

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

If you live in Montana, also write to Rep. Pat Williams

Mail Copies to:

Vice President Al Gore

President of the Senate, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510

Rep. Tom Foley, Speaker of the House

Rep. Gerry Studds, Chairman of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee

And your own Congressional Representative - U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

Major points to include in your letter:

- Support H.R. 2638, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA), the citizen alternative that protects our forest ecosystems and our economic base. It is supported by 100 businesses and organizations, and millions of individuals from coast to coast.
- Oppose H.R. 2473 and H.R. 1570. Ask them to stop this public forest give-away. These lands belong to all of us, not the big corporations. Sustainable development should be limited to lands already accessible.
- No public lands bill is acceptable if it contains limits on citizen and judicial review! Delete the release provisions entirely!
- Prime hunting and fishing lands are threatened by these bills; only "rocks and ice" are protected. These bills jeopardize our quality of life and will threaten species with extinction.
- Any scientific study must provide interim protection for roadless lands. Such a study should be conducted by the independent scientific community, not the Forest Service.

For more information contact the Wild Rockies Action Fund
P.O. Box 8395/Missoula, MT 59807 (406) 543-2689

CO-SPONSORS - NREPA
(as of 9/10/93)

Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)
Arthur Ravenel (R-SC)
Ron Dellums (D-CA)
James Walsh (R-NY)
Joe Kennedy (D-MA)
Susan Molinari (R-NY)
Bob Carr (D-MI)
John Porter (R-IL)
Anna Eshoo (D-CA)
Leslie Byrne (D-VA)
Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)
Edward Markey (D-MA)
Ben Cardin (D-MD)
Nydia Velazquez (D-NY)
Chris Shays (R-CT)
Barney Frank (D-MA)
Sidney Yates (D-IL)
Gary Ackerman (D-NY)
Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
Tony Heilenson (D-CA)
Jerry Nadler (D-NY)
Robert Torricelli (D-NJ)
Pete Stark (D-CA)
William Clay (D-MO)
Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)
Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R-NY)