Lehman, Richard

~~bcc:~~ Jack Lew

THE WHITE HOUSE

July 18, 1994

Honorable Richard H. Lehman
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Rick,

Thank you for your letter and kind apology for not being able to attend our meeting on the 29th. I appreciate your need to be at the mining reform Conference Committee, although no explanation was necessary. I hope that we can count on your support of universal coverage and meaningful reform in the critical weeks ahead, and I look forward to working with you toward that end.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Hillary

Hillary Rodham Clinton

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

RICHARD H. LEHMAN
19TH DISTRICT
CALIFORNIA

June 29, 1994

PAM JUL 6 1994

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
The First Lady
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

Please accept my deepest apologies for not being able to join you today for the morning meeting on health care.

As you may know, I am a member of the House delegation to the Conference Committee on the mining reform bill. Today was the first meeting of the Committee, and it turned out to be more contentious as well as more time consuming than initially anticipated.

Please know that I share your concern for addressing the urgent need for comprehensive reform of our current health care system. I certainly wish I was able to discuss in more detail with you today the proposals currently before Congress. I hope the meeting was a productive one.

Sincerely,

Rick

RICHARD H. LEHMAN
Member of Congress

THE WHITE HOUSE

May 28, 1993

Honorable Richard H. Lehman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lehman:

Thank you for responding to our request for your input on the development of the President's health care reform proposal.

When the President sends his proposal to Congress next month, you will see that it responds to the issues you noted in your memo. The proposal will be fair to both urban and rural areas, and will provide incentives to encourage medical students to pursue primary care residencies and to carry them out in rural areas. It will also reform the malpractice system, and address the concerns raised by citizens across the country -- by controlling spiraling health care costs, eliminating wasteful paperwork, preserving the right of individuals to choose their doctors, and providing the security of universal coverage, regardless of one's employer or state of health.

The submission of the President's plan is, of course, just the first step toward the implementation of a new health care system.

I hope that we will have your support as we move ahead, and that you will stay involved in this process.

Again, thank you for your helpful memorandum.

Sincerely,

Hillary

Hillary Rodham Clinton

THE WHITE HOUSE

September 1, 1993

Honorable Richard Lehman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lehman:

Thank you for the letter concerning the issue of medical liability reform.

I appreciate hearing from you regarding the success California has had with MICRA legislation. Malpractice reform is an important component in providing affordable health care. As a former governor, the President is sensitive to states' interests and will keep legislation like California's in mind as the health reform legislation is put into final form.

Again, thank you for writing. I look forward to our continued work together to ensure that all Americans enjoy the security of quality, affordable health care.

Sincerely,

Hillary

Hillary Rodham Clinton

National Perspecti

LEGISLATION

Key Fresno Congressman Gets Snubbed, Not Wooed

The vote of Rep. Lehman, a Democrat in a GOP district, could be crucial for Clinton health care reform. But he's being ignored.

By KAREN TUMULTY
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—To put it mildly, the Clinton Administration has not been particularly solicitous of Rep. Richard H. Lehman, the Fresno area Democrat who is struggling to hold his congressional seat in a largely Republican district.

When he asked for a Job Corps center, for instance, the Labor Department instead gave the facility to the San Francisco Bay Area—which already had two others.

Last week, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt came to the district for a tour of Yosemite Park without even bothering to contact the local congressman. That was his second snub: Last year, Babbitt invited Lehman—one of Congress' most avid outdoorsmen—on a camping trip, only to withdraw the invitation at the last minute.

Similarly, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy last year canceled an appearance in the Fresno Valley, which has been in the grip of a drought off and on for seven years. Espy has yet to make a stop in the district, the heart of the world's richest Farm Belt.

Such slights might not hold any particular significance, if it weren't for the fact that the North Fork lawmaker holds enormous leverage on the issue that is the heart of President Clinton's agenda: health care reform.

He is one of three undecided Democrats who have become the focus of intense negotiations on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is considered the most crucial battleground in the House. And without all three of their votes, Chairman John D. Dingell (D-Mich.) probably cannot produce a sweeping health care bill.

The position of Lehman and the other two Democrats—Reps. Jim Slattery of Kansas and Rick Boucher of Virginia—also demonstrates how closely fought the struggle over health care reform will be. Against a public mood that is increasingly suspicious of the Clinton plan and its various alternatives, House leaders have no choice but to build support the hard way: vote by vote.

The question for some, however, is whether the White House understands that. Aware of how badly he needs Lehman, Dingell has privately urged officials to start paying more attention to the lawmaker's concerns.

Or at least to cease what appears to be a none-too-subtle campaign of retribution against Lehman for his past votes against the Clinton economic program.

"Lehman's not obstructionist. He wants to help if he can, which is all the more reason the White House ought to be smart about this," said one Democrat who has been close to the negotiations.

Henry A. Waxman (D-Los Angeles), chairman of Energy and Commerce's health subcommittee, said: "They haven't been as attentive to him as they should be. I hope that changes. He is one of the most highly regarded members of the delegation."

Lehman insisted that past insults and injuries will have no bearing on his ultimate decision on how to vote, which he hopes to make this week. But he noted pointedly: "If they're going to need you down the line, they ought to pay attention."

His main concern, he said, is whether the farms and small businesses that make up about 90% of the employers in his district could afford Clinton's proposal that they pay for their workers' health coverage. Dingell has a variation exempting the smallest businesses, but that troubles Lehman as well.

With the right incentives, he said, employers might be able to expand coverage without being ordered to by Washington.

"I would be more comfortable giving market forces a better opportunity to work to get broader coverage before we resort to a mandate," he said. "If that doesn't work, we could phase it in."

Lehman also is demanding that the committee consider the effect that the Clinton plan and the Dingell alternative could have on the California Public Employees Retirement System, which provides health coverage to 930,000 government employees and retirees.

Although Clinton has hailed CALPERS' impressive efforts at holding

'If they're going to need you down the line, they ought to pay attention.'

REP. RICHARD H. LEHMAN
(D-North Fork)

down health premiums as a model for the nation, his plan would put it out of business. CALPERS officials say the Dingell proposal is not much better, because it would put a $142-million tax on the system.

Both plans, they say, would encourage the shift of health costs from corporate America to state governments. To date, CALPERS lobbyist David Vienna said, Lehman has been the only lawmaker to take those concerns seriously.

Lehman's situation is further complicated by his district, which is newly redrawn in a fashion inhospitable to any Democrat. In 1992, he won by only 1,030 votes, which was less than a half-percent of the total cast. Clinton ran well behind former President George Bush, attracting only 38% of the vote.

Lehman's office is being swamped with telephone calls from constituents and interest groups opposing the Clinton plan, but the forces in favor of it are turning up the heat as well. Last week, 17 organizations, led by Consumers Union, began running newspaper ads in his district declaring: "Congressman Lehman: We Just Want the Same Health Care Coverage You Have."

"They're wasting their money," Lehman said, with a note of annoyance. "I'm going to make my decision on what's in the bill, not what's in the paid media."

Perspective

**ing to need you
e, they ought to
ttention.'**

RD H. LEHMAN
rth Fork)

iums as a model for
n would put it out of
RS officials say the
is not much better,
ut a $142-million tax

say, would encourage
costs from corporate
overnments. To date,
t David Vienna said,
the only lawmaker to
s seriously.
on is further compli-
ict, which is newly
n inhospitable to any
he won by only 1,030
ess than a half-per-
ast. Clinton ran well
sident George Bush,
of the vote.
is being swamped
ls from constituents
opposing the Clinton
s in favor of it are
as well. Last week,
led by Consumers
ng newspaper ads in
ing: "Congressman
t Want the Same
ge You Have."
their money," Leh-
e of annoyance. "I'm

ENVIRONMENT

Activists Cheer U.S. Decision to Annul Alaska Timber Deal

By JOHN BALZAR
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SEATTLE—A last vestige of America's campaign to rebuild and industrialize Japan after World War II has come to an abrupt end—by order of the U.S. Forest Service.

Environmentalists cheered the decision as long overdue and just in time to preserve sound stewardship of the largest public forest in the U.S. inventory, the 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska.

The Tongass is the centerpiece of what environmentalists call the last intact temperate rain forest in the world.

Last week, the Forest Service canceled the remaining 17 years on a 55-year, exclusive Tongass lumber contract that was one of the most unusual in the nation.

The contract was signed with Japanese investors 37 years ago, guaranteeing their company, Alaska Pulp Corp., wood from the Tongass forest through the year 2011. The idea stemmed from Gen. Douglas MacArthur's program to help Japan after the war, and coincided with a desire in the U.S. Congress to create a year-round economy in the southern coastal region of Alaska.

As a condition of the contract, Alaska Pulp promised to build and maintain a wood pulp mill in Alaska. In return, it received up to 100 million board feet of timber each year without competitive bidding. So far, the company has cut 2.16 billion board feet.

Environmentalists long have complained that an exclusive contract for such vast amounts of timber, including rare and valued Sitka Spruce, no longer served America's interests. They said it led to vast over-cutting and shorted U.S. taxpayers, who found themselves subsidizing the logging—at least during some years.

Then last September, Alaska Pulp shut its pulp mill and laid off many of the 400 employees, although it continued to use contract timber for its sawmill. The sawmill trims high-grade logs for shipment to Japan and the Far East.

The company said that increasing costs of pollution controls and a shrinking market made its pulp mill unprofitable. Alaska Pulp said it wanted to reberboard, all the while continuing to send trimmed logs from its sawmill to Asia. The fiberboard plant was to have employed 140 people.

Prompted by environmentalists, the Forest Service ruled that the company was in breach of the contract and nullified it. The Clinton Administration said Alaska Pulp now would have to bid competitively for the timber.

Alaska Pulp said it was "profoundly disappointed" and blamed the U.S. government for incrementally, year after year, changing the way the contract was administered, driving up costs until the pulp mill could not be sustained. Last year, the firm sued, complaining of government infringement on its contract rights. The case is pending.

John Hough, a director of the company, said its executives would meet this week to decide their next step.

"It is the position of the company that its operations were on a 100-year, sustainable harvest plan, and environmentalists who say differently are wrong," Hough said. Alaska environmentalists believe the forest has been cut at twice the rate that is sustainable. And they said the contract cancellation means Tongass managers can better balance the conflicting needs of wildlife and fish habitat and timber harvesters.

"We're not saying you shouldn't cut trees on the Tongass. But you sure better cut them at a rate that everything else can live with," said Allen E. Smith, chairman of the Alaska Rainforest Coalition and regional director of the Wilderness Society. He said the contract represented "the worst of the last century's approach to logging."

Environmentalists now have their sights on the only remaining contract of this kind—a 50-year deal signed in 1954 with the U.S.-owned Ketchikan Pulp Corp., also in the Tongass National Forest.

Eric Jorgensen, attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, said the Administration should evoke "severe environmental damage" as grounds for canceling the remaining years on Ketchikan's contract.

But Alaska's congressional delegation and state government support the contracts. And even opponents agreed there was no clear-cut contract breach