

with the Senate, I would like to request that consideration be given to funding by the conferees. However, if that is not the case, I would encourage the Department of Interior to consider the funding of this program a priority in its fiscal year 2000 budget.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize the many challenges you face in balancing competing needs and projects in the Interior bill but I would like to emphasize the importance this program plays in arresting the decline of our Nation's neotropical migratory bird population.

□ 1915.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GREENWOOD. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I am familiar with this. I have martins that come visit us every summer, and, of course, they migrate to South America. So this kind of thing affects the bird population that moves back and forth between North and South America.

As the gentleman from Pennsylvania points out, there are many competing demands on the limited funds in this bill, but I do recognize the importance of protecting the Neotropical migratory bird population. While we cannot meet every request, as evidenced by these three books with letters from Members, I assure the gentleman that I will work with the gentleman and the Department of Interior to ensure appropriate funding for the program once the legislation is enacted.

I might say I congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) on making this effort. I think it is very important.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the commitment and support of the chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIGGS) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I yield to my distinguished friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), who, along with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER), have been two of the people who worked the hardest to try to bring their vision of reform to the

National Forest system, to ensure sustainability, to ensure the fact that timber roads are built properly, that we have the highest environmental standards and that we improve these roads and protect our natural heritage.

I regret very much that the gentleman and I have not always seen eye to eye, but I regret the fact he is not going to be with us next year. I have enjoyed working with the gentleman.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me just thank my good friend from Washington (Mr. DICKS). Everyone in the country listening to the debate should understand that there is no one in the Congress of the United States that is responsible for cutting down more trees than the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS).

Mr. DICKS. No, that is not true.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the gentleman for his phenomenal victory that he has been able to maintain over the course of the last many, many years in this body.

But, on a serious note, we ought to recognize a great warrior in politics, and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) certainly fulfills that description. His defense of making certain that we do have proper forestry management in this country is something that I have come to understand better because of the debates that he has fostered on the House floor, and it is important for those of us who want to protect our Nation's forests to understand that our forests have to be managed.

But also it is important for us to make certain that we are not providing taxpayer subsidies to lumber companies that do not need them, lumber companies that have made tremendous profits as a result of the largess of the taxpayers and the people of our Nation and the national heritage of our country, which has the most phenomenal and beautiful forests of any country on the face of the Earth.

I recognize that we need to strike a balance in terms of the types of policies and recognize that it does take taxpayer revenues to support the management of our forests, and we ought to be honest and the Forest Service ought to be honest about what accounts they really need to have, and how much money they need to have, in order to properly manage our forests.

If there are roads that need to be improved, if there are damaged areas of our forest that need to be tended to, if there are fire roads that need to be built, we ought to build those roads, and we ought to put the money in the account that the Forest Service needs. But what we ought not to do is turn around and give subsidies to lumber companies that simply do not need them. Far too often in the past we have commingled those funds and had a complete misunderstanding about what actually we were paying for.

I believe that the administration's policy, which I know the chairman of

the committee has now gone along with, as well as my friend the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), which gets rid of the purchase-a-road credit program, which suspends the forest subsidies, the lumber subsidies we were giving to the timber companies, which recognizes that we ought to have and continue this moratorium into the future, until we get an honest accounting of what in fact the Forest Service needs and what they do not need.

I have never backed away from asking for taxpayer dollars for legitimate needs of the people of this country. Where there are legitimate needs of our forests, we ought to provide the funding. But we ought not to be mixing up and providing funding to lumber companies that are simply using subsidies that they do not need in order to make more and more profits.

I want to commend the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) for the efforts they have made, and also want to say the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE) has an amendment which is coming up which I believe will once again highlight some of the discrepancies and issues that need to be addressed further in order to clarify exactly what accounts we ought to be putting money in and what accounts we should not be putting money in.

I do want to thank my good friend the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), and recognize the great contribution he makes.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I just want to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) and compliment all the parties and the goodwill of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY). We had a spirited debate on this issue last year, as we all know, and I think we have reached a reasonable compromise. I hope that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) will look at the numbers. I think we have done in the bill much of what the gentleman is suggesting there in terms of funding reconstruction of roads, trying to improve forest health, and making the forest a viable part of our Nation's recreation resources.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. DICKS was allowed to proceed for one additional minute.)

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA).

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, the forest is a viable part of our Nation's recreational resource, as well as a source of wood fiber under proper circumstances. Unfortunately, I will not be able to use my two-by-four as evidence this year, so I will point out, so