

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I rise today to propose an amendment to allow the renewal of grazing permits on Forest Service lands until the completion of the required analyses under the National Environmental Protection Act [NEPA].

The management of Federal lands is the hub of multiple-use strategies. Sound stewardship and range management practices represent the foundation needed to protect Federal lands and ensure that they are maintained for future generations. Multiple-use practices by the ranchers themselves greatly enhance the condition of Federal lands. Keep in mind that many generations of ranch families have made a living, raised their families, and maintained these lands for future generations. The sustainability of their livelihoods is linked to the sustainability of the land. They are the true environmentalists.

Despite their previous good stewardship, ranch families now risk being punished for the Forest Service's inability to complete the studies required by NEPA in time for the beginning of the 1996 grazing season. Over 120 Black Hills' grazing permits must be reissued by the Forest Service before the 1996 grazing season, which begins in March 1996. In accordance with NEPA, before the permits can be reissued the Forest Service must analyze each allotment for effects on endangered species, and environmental, cultural, historical, and water resources.

In this time of downsizing, already 4,000 jobs at the Forest Service have been eliminated. Yet despite this reduction in human resources, the Forest Service must now take on sweeping studies of every single ranking allotment—not just in South Dakota—but throughout the Western States.

I met with Chief Jack Ward Thomas of the Forest Service last week. He said that in order to complete these analyses as close on time as possible, he will have to concentrate both his financial and human resources on completing the NEPA studies. Chief Thomas said it himself: "This means that every other function of the Forest Service in the West will suffer as a result."

The timber industry will suffer, as well as the ongoing Black Hills forest management plan activity. In addition, because Forest Service personnel and resources will be spread so thinly, the risk of appeals—of both timber sales and grazing permits—is even greater.

I recognize that due to recent court action, the Forest Service is between a rock and a hard place. My amendment will solve the Forest Service's dilemma. It allows the permits to be renewed until the completion of the NEPA analyses.

I would like to note that my amendment is very similar to an amendment offered yesterday by my colleague from South Dakota. However, my colleague's amendment was included as a part of the Regulatory Transition Act which could be delayed in conference for some time. The very fact that I am

introducing a similar amendment again today attests to the gravity of the situation, and my commitment to passing a resolution to this problem into law.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, we do not have much time. It is imperative that we resolve this issue quickly, for the sake of the ranchers and loggers in South Dakota—and across the West.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

I will now yield to my colleague who has taken a great deal of leadership on this issue, the Senator from Wyoming.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from South Dakota. He has joined with many of us to deal with this issue. It is one of these issues that has a timeliness problem.

What we really have, as the Senator has pointed out, is during the past several months there has been some kind of court ruling that requires an individual NEPA investigation for every grazing permit. There are about 4,500 grazing permits from the Forest Service. About 700 of them will expire this year, the end of 1995. And, under the new regulation, driven by the court procedure, these NEPA requirements would have to be completed before these grazing permits can be extended.

The Forest Service has said there is no way they can do that within that length of time. The result would be that ranches that depend upon grazing permits for their summer grass for cattle and sheep would simply be out of business.

This does not change the requirement, it simply provides for some time. It says basically that permits cannot be refused because of the lack of the NEPA regulation. In other words, it says until the NEPA regulation is finished the permits can be renewed. That is really what it is all about.

By the way, there is plenty of protection. It is not a matter of protection. There are now NEPA requirements on the forest plain, at the forest level. It is already there. In fact you can make an argument it is not needed. We are not making that argument. We are simply making the argument that the process of NEPA can continue but that there is not enough time to do it without injuring people who have a business of grazing on public lands.

This would simply extend the time for that to happen. It is timely and needs to be done so people can plan for next year, can plan to turn their cattle out, can have loans and continue their business as they always have.

Mr. President, I urge the amendment. Let us put it in the bill so we can take away this threat to the economy of the West.

I thank the Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. EXON addressed the Chair.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I want to congratulate my friend and colleague

from South Dakota, and my colleague and friend from Wyoming. I just made some pronouncements about the new Secretary of Agriculture about adjoining States. Here we are, adjoining States again. I am here with my senior colleague from South Dakota, Senator PRESSLER, and my new colleague from the western neighbor of the State of Nebraska.

I congratulate both of them for the amendment that has been offered. The matter has been cleared on this side and we are prepared to go ahead and agree to the amendment, if that is the will of the chairman of the Commerce Committee?

Mr. PRESSLER. I thank my friend from Nebraska. I regret he is leaving this Chamber. I have previously said a few kind words about him, both here and in the press. But I thank him very much for his great service here in this body.

Mr. President, I urge the adoption of this amendment.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. If there be no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 425) to amendment No. 420 was agreed to.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. PRESSLER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now return to executive session to the nomination of Secretary Glickman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF DANIEL ROBERT GLICKMAN, OF KANSAS, TO BE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

The Senate continued with the consideration of the nomination.

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about Dan Glickman. I have known him since 1974, when we came to the U.S. House of Representatives together. I have known him and his wife. We have traveled to different events together over the years. We have voted together in the House of Representatives. We have served together on a number of caucuses. I had observed his work over the years.

I certainly shall be voting with a great deal of pride for Dan Glickman for Secretary of Agriculture.

I am especially interested in the international aspects of agriculture. I believe in the next few years what we do in international agricultural trade will be just as important to farm prices as some of our domestic programs.

The business of the Secretary of Agriculture is the business of food for