

I think we, as citizens, are willing to pay some more, particularly if we are certain that the fees we pay in the particular park stay in that park to enhance the resources of the park that we like to see.

The other is that management, of course, is expected to be good. I think they should implement programs that give it the opportunity to do it, like the pilot program. We are going to need, over time, to continue to set priorities. I have argued from time to time that there is a difference in the public lands. Some of them, like parks and forests, have been withdrawn by the Federal Government for a purpose. There were unique characteristics, and they were withdrawn from the public domain because they are and were unique. Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management were simply residual lands. Wyoming is 50 percent owned by the Federal Government. The State of the Senator from Idaho is more than that. Nevada is 87 percent owned by the Federal Government. Many of those lands were never withdrawn for a particular purpose. The parks were, the forests were, the wildernesses were. So we will have to set some priorities, over time, on that.

So, Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to talk just a little bit about something I think is very important, and to encourage that the funding for operations of parks, which is in this bill we will be considering, ought to be maintained, despite the fact that the House is somewhat lower. I think that is a move toward the short-term resolution, and then I hope that my associates and I can work toward resolving some of the longer-term solutions over the next 2, 3 years, so that we can make these national parks, cultural institutions, fiscally sound.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, what is the business of the Senate at this moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are currently in morning business, under the control of Senator DASCHLE until 1 o'clock, and under the control of the Republicans until 2 o'clock.

Mr. CRAIG. I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes in morning business.

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

A MESSAGE FROM THE WEST

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, with my colleague from Wyoming just having spoken, one would think it is "Western day" on the floor of the U.S. Senate, especially when I choose to come to the floor this morning also to speak about Western public lands issues.

Certainly, the issue of national parks, in which the Senator from Wyoming is so knowledgeable, is not just a Western issue; it is clearly a national

issue, with national parks spanning the length and breath of our country.

I come to visit about an issue that has been in the skies of the West all summer. It doesn't happen to be there at this moment. As I flew out of Idaho this weekend after a rainstorm, the sky was clear. But for well over 2 months this summer, up until this weekend, Western skies have not been clear. They have been filled with smoke.

If you had flown over Idaho or nearly any part of the West as I have many times this summer, you would have been convinced that the West truly was on fire. In many instances, that was true. Our Western forests and rangelands have burned again at an unprecedented rate this summer. Smoke from extensive wildfires invaded our cities. It damaged tourism, it caused health problems, and homes adjacent to the public lands were in jeopardy and many burned as a result of the high incident of wildfires.

I know that you and others have seen this on television, it was talked about oftentimes on national television and in the newspapers through the course of the summer. Wildfires were regular occurrences on nightly news shows in the West in States like Oregon or Idaho or California or Arizona or New Mexico or Montana or Wyoming or in places in Utah.

Tragically, what we heard this summer has become a regular occurrence which we in the West have had to endure. Nearly every 2 years, it seems, since 1988, the frequency and intensity of fire has gone well beyond the historic norm. Its genesis is the increasingly poor health of our public forests and the fuel buildup from millions of acres of dead and dying trees and unforaged, or in other words, non-grazed, grasslands of the West. It is a problem that we could do something about in this Congress and as Americans if we chose to do so.

These fires are destroying our resources, trying our patience and exhausting our financial ability to suppress them. This year another record will be set with more than 6 million acres burned, in excess of the record set only 2 years ago, and before that, in 1988. In fact, this is the largest amount of acres burned in a single year since 1967.

Firefighting forces started the year with over \$400 million of debt, and the deficit continues to pile up as more and more Federal personnel and equipment are thrown into this battle against wildfire.

The Knutson-Vandenburg, known as the KV, fund has been the handy source from which we have borrowed hundreds of millions of dollars to pay for emergency firefighting costs, and it is now broke. There is no money in the fund. KV moneys are collected from timber sale revenues specifically to replant and regenerate public forests with new seedlings. Because the borrowed money has not been replaced, the tree planting programs are now in jeopardy.

In other words, what we are doing is we are borrowing all of the money to fight fires, but we are not putting the money back, so there is no money to replant the forests.

Tragically enough, there are some folks out there who say, "Oh, well, this is Mother Nature; let it be." I am one of those who cannot agree with that, and I think most of our colleagues cannot, and certainly the citizens of the West cannot.

My question to my colleagues is simple: How long can we ignore what is happening in our western forests? If that smoke were blowing through the urban canyons of the eastern cities, how long would the public put up with it before demanding action from their Representatives in Congress?

I have offered a long-term, broad-based solution with my legislation to restore forest health. We have a chance to pass that legislation. It is S. 391, which was approved by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in June; but it has been hung up in politics, politics, and environmental politics that have no basis in science and no understanding of the tragedy that our western national forests are experiencing today. It is simply the politics of politics that has stopped efforts to deal with forest health, and I ask that you help me to change that, because we should be addressing the crisis that exists, and will continue to exist, in the western forests.

I have stood in this Chamber to sustain the temporary emergency salvage law which is critical to our short-term needs from the 1994 fires. And, yes, I have heard some people claim that there is no emergency.

If that is true, they were not listening to the nightly news this summer, or they were not listening in Idaho or Oregon or Washington or Montana or Wyoming or Utah or Arizona or California or New Mexico. They are simply ignoring the fact, or they are being lulled to sleep by the symphony of environmental voices that would only argue that this is Mother Nature at her finest.

There is an emergency. A critical emergency. But in most people's minds it is not an emergency until the fire starts and is roaring up the mountain-side and threatening their own town. Then it becomes an emergency overnight, and all of the resources of the State and Federal Government, including the Army and the Marines, are brought into the fight. Oregon's Governor, in fact, this year declared a state of emergency because of the fires roaring across the State of Oregon.

Would it not make more sense to take preventive actions before the crisis starts? Of course that makes sense, but then again it is not politically correct right now to make sense about the idea of managing our forests if man is involved in that management. It makes better sense for some to argue that you simply lock them up and let Mother Nature do her thing. Well, Mother Nature was doing her thing this summer,

and she burned well over 6 million acres of land, land whose forests will now take decades and sometimes generations to restore or replace themselves.

First of all, we must permit active management of these forests. We must reduce forest fuels to restrict the size of the fires and cool their intensity. Some scratch their heads and say, "What are you talking about, Senator? Fires are hot."

That is right, but some fires are hotter than others. And when you have phenomenal fuel buildup of the kind we have seen because of the dead and dying trees on these forest floors, and ignored because of the absence of management, these fires are intensively hotter than the normal fires that oftentimes amble through a forest burning shrubbery but not destroying and killing the trees. Those normal fires are the fires of Mother Nature of decades ago, those are the fires that periodically cleansed our forests. But these cleansing fires were not the fires of the summer of 1996.

Would it not make more sense to take the preventive action that I am talking about? Of course, we could do that. First we must permit, as I have mentioned, the active management of our forests. We must reduce the fuels. One needed activity is salvage timber removal, and my guess is we will be back on this floor later this year, and probably the first of next year, asking for flexibility to do salvage on some of these 6 million burned acres. There will be Senators on this floor who will say, "But environmental groups do not want this; it would be destructive." And so we would let hundreds of millions of dollars in trees then rot and wash away, and we would not replenish our funds to replant and regenerate our forests. For the life of me, I cannot understand how that is good business, good environmental business, good economic business, for that matter, or just good management. It is, in fact, poor management, poor management at its very worst.

Let me close by asking the cooperation of the Senate, whether it is the passage of my forest health legislation or whether it is just the simple awakening to the situation that exists in the western forests of today, a situation that is largely our doing, largely our doing because we have been so good at putting out fires over the last 30 years that we have now created the circumstance which creates the extraordinary, the unusual, the dramatic fires that we saw in the West this summer.

So I hope that we recognize an emergency exists, and if we created it, we ought to be able to manage it. The science of forestry today argues that we can, but it is not a science of ignorance or a science of turning your back. It is a science that demands the kind of active management that the U.S. Forest Service and its professionals know how to use, if they would only be allowed to do so.

Frankly, it is not the science of this administration, which has passively ignored the problem because of the pressure placed upon them by certain environmental groups to do nothing and walk away. In Idaho and the rest of the Western States over the next decade, doing nothing and walking away will simply create another summer of 1996 over and over again. Millions of acres will be burned, houses and private property will be lost, and the debt will mount, a debt that the public owes for fighting these fires in an effort to save the resource and save private lands and private resources. We can avoid this. We can avoid this by wise and responsible management.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, what is the time situation and the procedure situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business right now is we are in morning business until 2 o'clock; between 12 and 1 it is under the control of Senator DASCHLE, and then, from 1 until 2 o'clock, morning business will be under the control of Republicans.

Mr. SIMPSON. With that, Mr. President, and a thank you to my friend from Montana, Senator BURNS, because I will take a few minutes, and then perhaps 5 minutes of the time under our administration will go to him. I will not take 15; I may take 7—maybe.

Mr. BURNS. You can take as much as you want.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, that was a noble comment from my friend from Montana. Absolutely the generosity matches only his magnanimous smile, and I love it. I will just continue now for an hour and 40—no, excuse me. That just slipped. It slipped away for a moment. That is the trouble with me, Mr. President. I take my work seriously but not myself. That can get you in a lot of difficulty in life, but that is still the best way to fly.

Mr. BURNS. I thank my colleague.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION REFORM AND IMMIGRANT RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 1996

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I want to speak on the issue of illegal immigration. Not legal immigration; that issue is not before this body. I know how to legislate. It was very clear this body did not wish to deal with legal immigration. That will be for others who come after me, Democrats and Republicans alike, to deal with that very tough issue. But, on Wednesday of last

week, the House appointed conferees to the conference on the immigration bill, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. That is legislation that passed both Houses of the Congress by overwhelming margins. There were only three votes against this very popular bill in the Senate. I think the vote was 97 to 3. The House version passed by a vote of 333 to 87.

Our fine majority leader and the House majority leader have each stated that passing immigration reform legislation in this Congress is a priority. Senator Bob Dole, a man for whom I have the richest admiration and respect—I served as his assistant—was always a very strong supporter of responsible immigration reform issues, all such measures, and candidate Dole has always expressed his support for the present illegal immigration control bill.

The conference committee will meet this week, but already we are hearing about a plan now to filibuster the conference report here in the Senate. We all received a letter, of course, from the President, explicitly threatening a veto. That is common knowledge. His reason is clear to him and clear to many others, and that is the so-called Gallegly amendment.

But I would refresh and remind my colleagues why this legislation received such strong bipartisan support in both Houses.

This legislation is to strengthen the border enforcement by nearly doubling the size of the Border Patrol.

It will ensure that aliens who commit serious crimes are detained upon their release from prison until they can be deported, and then they will be deported under expedited procedures.

It will provide prompt decisions for those who apply for asylum and ensure that those who genuinely fear persecution at home can remain here.

It will create an expedited removal process, so that those who seek to enter the United States surreptitiously or with fraudulent documents can be promptly deported and not allowed to stay here for years while pursuing various frivolous appeals at all levels and in all forums, administrative and judicial.

It will ensure that the sponsor and not the U.S. taxpayer will be primarily responsible for providing financial support to new immigrants in need.

And it will provide for voluntary pilot programs on systems to enable employers and welfare providers more reliably to identify those who are eligible to work or to receive benefits in this country.

The most controversial portion of the bill, of course, the one that gave rise to the veto threat and the filibuster plan caper, is the so-called Gallegly amendment, which authorizes the States to decide whether or not to provide a free public education to illegal persons, illegal aliens—a proposal which in its