

Once again, I applaud his leadership in championing the protection of the environment.

Mr. President, for more than two decades, we have seen a remarkable bipartisan consensus on protecting the environment. As a consequence of this broad agreement, today we breathe cleaner air, drink cleaner water, and enjoy spectacular public lands.

Unfortunately, again during this Congress, we have faced numerous proposals to modify the environmental protections upon which American families depend. We have seen bills that would undermine the Wilderness Act and the management of our public lands, block implementation of the Endangered Species Act, rollback wetlands standards and weaken enforcement of clean water laws, and slow down or stop cleanup of hazardous waste sites. Congressional consideration of these proposals has been divisive, time-consuming, and ultimately unproductive.

Mr. President, I believe we have a responsibility to the American people to protect the quality of our public lands and resources. That responsibility of stewardship requires that I oppose legislative efforts to include proposals in routine spending bills that weaken environmental laws or prevent potentially beneficial environmental regulations from being promulgated by the federal agencies that carry out federal law.

In addition to my substantive concerns, Mr. President, I also share with the Senator from Montana a procedural concern about these riders. The people of Wisconsin have been calling my office in the last few weeks to express their grave concern that when riders are placed in spending bills major decisions regarding environmental protection are being made without the benefit of an up or down vote. Wisconsinites have very strong views that Congress has a responsibility to discuss and publicly debate matters effecting the environment. Thus, the Senior Senator from Montana is making an important procedural point for the Senate. We should be on record with regard to our position on this matter of open government and environmental stewardship.

Though I have substantive concerns about all of the riders that the Senior Senator from Montana has detailed, and others, I wanted to share my concerns by highlighting in detail a few riders contained in the Interior Appropriations legislation.

I am concerned about the language on forest road decommissioning that is contained in Title II of the Interior bill. This language prohibits the use of funds to decommission National Forest System roads until the Regional Forester certifies that all "unauthorized" roads are decommissioned or reconstructed. Mr. President, this mandate simply does not recognize that maintaining existing roads is a priority both in Wisconsin's national forests

and throughout Forest Service Region 9. Our existing road system in the Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests not only serves those who visit our forests, but also serves our local communities. Forest Service roads are important routes between communities in the northern part of my state. I also travel them when I attend Listening Sessions and other events in northern Wisconsin. I am concerned that if our forests have to spend time documenting all unauthorized roads this fiscal year, such as snowmobile crossings and other rights of way, we will neither get to accomplish any needed decommissioning, nor any much needed maintenance.

I also oppose the rider regarding logging in Tongass National Forest contained in the Interior bill. While Wisconsin's national forests have struggled to bring their timber sales above cost, I am concerned that this rider requires that the Forest Service offer for sale, and allow the logging of, ninety percent of the timber volume proposed by the Tongass Land Management Plan, a plan which is currently under appeal to the Secretary of Agriculture. Moreover, this rider contains a dangerous, precedent-setting provision that makes this requirement legally enforceable. I strongly believe that taxpayers should be getting a better return for the sale of timber from public lands, and I am concerned about increasing cut volumes when we still need to address below cost issues on the Tongass.

These are a few of my concerns, Mr. President. I believe that the Senate should act to strip these riders from the bill and send clean Interior funding provisions to the President for his signature. I encourage my colleagues to take the advice of the Senior Senator from Montana, and act to fund the programs we must fund without taking environmental policy actions that the public opposes.●

ACTIVATION OF THE MONTANA GUARD CAVALRY TROOP, THE BLACKHORSE UNIT

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I stand here today to recognize the beginning of a new era for the Montana Army National Guard. Activation of the Montana Guard Cavalry Troop, also known as the Blackhorse unit, will commence on October 3, 1998. This will be an integrated cavalry troop that is part of a regiment whose distinguished history dates back to the turn of the century.

The Blackhorse is currently one of only three armored cavalry regiments in the United States Army. The mission of this regiment is to train Army units for the next possible war and does so by challenging those units in real life scenarios to meet the test of active warfare. The Blackhorse unit is considered the most highly trained unit in the United States Army. The Montana Army National Guard is both honored and privileged to join the Blackhorse unit as an equal partner.

The Montana Army National Guard must be prepared to meet the challenges of what the future may hold. Now affiliated with the Blackhorse unit, the men and the women of Montana who serve to protect our nation, will be ready.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO SENATOR ROTH

● Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise to take just a minute of the Senate's time to let my colleagues know of an honor that Senator ROTH received from the Delaware Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

In a gala event last night in Wilmington, Delaware, Senator ROTH was honored for his achievements as a legislator and for his outstanding contributions to Delaware and to the nation. This was the Multiple Sclerosis Society's first-ever Dinner of Champions, and it is quite an honor for Senator ROTH to be one of the first two individuals recognized by the organization.

The other individual recognized last evening was Richard Christopher, the President of Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate. He and his company have been sponsors of and participants in the Bike-to-the-Bay fundraising event. The DuPont Company also received an award for its decade-long support of the popular Read-a-thon program. Senator ROTH was in excellent company last night.

And, fortunately, he was able to be there and accept the award in person. That is, Mr. President, one of the advantages of representing a State that is close to Washington. Senator ROTH could both vote here in the Senate and still get back to Wilmington in time to receive the award. I know that was important to him.

I thank my colleagues for allowing me to take this brief time. And, I congratulate Senator ROTH on his award.●

SECURITY AT GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT

● Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to clarify an issue regarding the security at the two uranium enrichment facilities. Section 310 of the conference report which deals with the allocation between the Department and the private corporation leasing the gaseous diffusion plants of the cost of arming and providing arrest authority to security police officers at the plants. I want to make it very clear that this section does not affect the current responsibility of the Department to pay for security for the Department's highly enriched uranium activities.

Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to thank the officials with the Department of Energy and the officials from the newly privatized United States Enrichment Corporation who sat down with my office and negotiated in good faith a solution to this difficult