

Tax base—small towns may have to spend their small tax base to defend themselves from Environmental groups, or on costly modifications to their infrastructure, because of a species that may or not be in their community and, in some cases, may not actually be endangered or even exist.

When the Fish and Wildlife Service considers a listing in Rural America, the economic consequences are brought to their attention, but they often place the lowest priority on the communities they devastate.

While the Mountain Plover was being evaluated for listing, the government suggested if the plover was listed, farmers would have to cease normal farming practices from late April to mid-May because this coincides with the plover's nesting season. For a farmer in the Eastern Plains, this would be devastating because this is the only time of the year for planting most crops. USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service wrote that the plover's listing "may adversely impact a number of common agriculture practices in the short-grass prairie region in the United States." In already difficult times for farmers in America, the elimination of their planting season would cause extinction of the Rural Farmer in the eastern plains.

Farmers are often fined for continuing farming activities on their property, even if the species is not known to exist on their land, but just because their land might be potential habitat for an animal the government is concerned about.

The bottom line:

Federal agencies should not create mandates that will financially devastate entire communities.

Rural America is already burdened because they face various economic disadvantages.

Rural Americans cannot bear the burden of species recovery.

The government should take into consideration the economic consequences to already strained Rural Americans, and work with the communities, not against them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DEAL of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL OCEAN DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution in support of establishing a National Ocean Day.

A National Ocean Day would help to focus the public's attention on the vital role the

ocean plays in the lives of our nation's people and the significant impact our people have on the health of this vital resource.

The ocean covers 71 percent of the Earth's surface and is key to the life support systems of all creatures on this planet. It contains a wondrous abundance and diversity of life—from the smallest microorganism to the blue whale. The potential of the ocean's tremendous resources are not yet fully explored and likely includes life-saving medicines and treatments.

Two-thirds of the world's people live within 50 miles of a coast and one out of six American jobs is in fishing, shipping, or tourism. Some 90 percent of the world's trade is transported on the oceans.

The health of our ocean ecosystems are threatened by global warming, pollution, over-fishing, and the destruction of coral reefs. We must take steps today to protect this irreplaceable resource.

The State of Hawaii has designated the first Wednesday of June as Ocean Day in recognition of the significant role the ocean plays in the lives of Hawaii's people, culture, history, and traditions. I hope my colleagues will join me in calling for a National Ocean Day to help focus nationwide attention on the need for responsible stewardship of this precious resource.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

POWS AND MIAS IN VIETNAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, back in 1993 I met a gentleman named Binh Ly. And Mr. Ly told me and other Congressmen that he had a business partner, Mr. Nguyen Van Hao, who met with former Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown to seek his help in normalizing relations with Vietnam.

Mr. Ly said that Mr. Hao who met with Ron Brown three or four times told him that Ron Brown wanted \$700,000 in up-front money to start the normalization process with Vietnam. Mr. Brown said initially that he never met with Mr. Hoa, but later, it was found out that he did indeed meet with him three times.

The FBI, on October 2 of 1992, was reported in the New York Times to have discovered evidence that the Vietnamese government was preparing to establish a special bank account in Singapore, and the evidence was in the

form of a large transfer of an undisclosed sum of money or a transfer of undisclosed sum of money between the East Asian banks.

The interesting thing about this is that Mr. Ly told us before we found out about that that there was going to be \$700,000 transferred to the Banque Indosuez in Singapore for Mr. Brown from the Vietnamese government.

Now, the reason I bring this up is we had hearing on this, and Mr. Brown was investigated. Unfortunately, Mr. Brown died in a plane crash over in the former Yugoslav a few years ago, but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Ly made this statement, and the normalization process then did go forward.

The administration said that the reason the normalization process was going forward was we wanted to heal old wounds and that the Vietnamese government had agreed that they would give us a full accounting of the 2,300 POW-MIAs that were still missing and unaccounted for in Vietnam while we normalize relations with Vietnam. And we have received a few reports on the POW-MIAs that were unreported until the normalization took place, but the process went forward. And we normalized relations.

Mr. Speaker, now, here we are 7 years later in the year 2000, and we still have 2,023 POW-MIAs unaccounted for. Every President up until this administration had said that we would never start the normalization process until we had a full accounting of our POW-MIAs.

There is a lot of families in this country that still wonder what happened to their husbands, their fathers, their sons that do not know and may never know what happened to them because the Vietnamese government has not lived up to the commitment that they made.

Many people believe to this day that the reason the normalization process took place was because of the potential money being given to Ron Brown and others in the government as a payoff to start the process.

Others believed that the administration really did want to get a complete accounting of the POW-MIAs and they believed the Vietnamese government when they said they would give us a complete accounting.

Here we are 7 years later, and we have had an accounting of maybe 200 out of the 2,300 that were missing and are still missing and unaccounted for.

The reason I come to the floor tonight is because I am very concerned about something that is taking place as we speak. The Secretary of Defense of the United States, Mr. Cohen, has gone to Vietnam. And he is meeting with Vietnamese leaders to talk about the POW-MIA issue and to show good faith on the part of the United States Government in the peaceful agreements that have been made by this administration with the Vietnamese government.

The thing that concerns me is that our Secretary of Defense has gone over