have a few minutes to share with us about this very important issue. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) for not only grabbing this hour for an important conversation and debate that we are going to be having later this week but for the leadership that he has particularly shown on fiscal responsibility, maintaining fiscal discipline. He has been very active in both the Blue Dog and also the coalition of which I am a member, the New Democratic Coalition. We have a lot of overlap in the membership between our two groups, and it is because we are basically fiscal soulmates.

When it comes to the issues affecting the public purse, the Federal budget, both of our groups, the New Dems and the Blue Dogs, believe very strongly in maintaining fiscal discipline, keeping our eye on taxpayer dollars, trying to promote policies that will best position this Nation to deal with the challenges of the future, which to me seems the looming budget debt and the implosion that is about to occur starting next decade. Of course I am referring to the 77 million Americans who are all marching virtually simultaneously to their retirement, the so-called baby boom generation, who will start entering into the Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

Yet this week we are going to have a very important policy debate in regards to whether or not this Nation will have the resources to deal with the greatest fiscal challenge we face, that is, this aging population and the burden it will place on the Social Security program, the burden it will place with rising health care costs and how do we maintain some common sense and fiscal discipline to deal with that.

I am very concerned. It is almost like deja vu all over again, pursuing the policies of the 1980s where we had large tax cuts being proposed and enacted which left us in annual structural deficits year after year, adding to the $5.7 trillion national debt that we now have rather than maintaining the fiscal discipline which was needed. For me, and I believe for a lot of people in this Congress, one of the keys to future economic growth and prosperity, and it is something we hear constantly from Chairman Greenspan when he is testifying, is keep your eyes on the effect fiscal policy has on long-term interest rates. They have consistently testified, and the history of fiscal policy shows, that when you start racking up deficits again, adding to the national debt rather than subtracting from it, having the public sector squeezing the private sector for the limited resources in order to finance ongoing government operations, it has an adverse effect on the bond market and it leads to long-term interest rates going up rather than coming down, which is a hidden tax then on all Americans, whether they are wealthy or middle-income or low-income Americans, because of the additional expense it will take for them to borrow money, whether it is for home payments or car or credit card payments or to invest capital in businesses. It is the long-term interest rates we need to keep an eye on.

The best thing we can do as an institution here is to maintain sound fiscal policy, reduce the national debt which will help reduce those long-term interest rates and really set us on the course for long-term economic prosperity. This is a serious issue. One of the concerns I have is that the majority party in the House and the party at the White House right now are pursuing policies that are not enabling our country to best position ourselves for the challenges of the future. That is what has to change.

I think people back home are beginning to realize that the tax cut that was enacted last year is being financed now through the collection of payroll taxes, FICA taxes, additional moneys that are supposed to be going in and guarded in the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, but which are now being raided in order to finance these tax cuts. If anyone last year would have been told that this would be the reality, that we would be passing tax cuts for some Americans and paying for it through the collection of payroll taxes that are supposed to be going into these trust funds, they would have thought it was crazy economic policy to pursue. But given the economic slowdown, the change of events of last September, that is, in fact, the situation.

I think it is time for groups like the Blue Dog Coalition and the New Democratic Coalition to stand up and start making an issue of this. I commend the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) for his leadership and for the time he was able to get this evening to talk about this very important issue.

Mr. HILL. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for joining us here this evening.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I represent a very large rural area in Nebraska. Ninety-seven percent of this district is privately owned. Currently landowners are very concerned about property rights and they are especially concerned about the Endangered Species Act, because this Act can be tremendously invasive.

Currently, I believe there is a crisis of confidence regarding the administration of the Endangered Species Act. I am going to mention just a few things here that have happened that have led to this crisis of confidence. First of all, the Klamath Basin situation that happened a year ago, the water, the irrigation water for 1,400 farmers was cut off abruptly.

Of course, what this did was to cause a great deal of financial hardship. There were two types of suckers in Klamath Lake, and coho salmon in the river below that were supposedly to be protected. As a result, the farmers lost their crops, some lost their farms, land values declined from $2,500 an acre to $35 per acre in that particular area. Oregon State University estimates that the loss of water cost the economy $134 million in that particular area. And so this was a tremendously costly and a very invasive situation that occurred.

Of course, to make matters worse, recently the National Academy of Science, in an independent peer review, ruled that there was insufficient data to justify the decision to shut off the irrigation water in the Klamath Basin. In other words, they have more or less said that this was something that should not have happened. Factors other than the lower levels in Klamath Lake were endangering the sucker fish and actually the larger releases of water, the irrigation water that normally went down the irrigation canals, was released down the Klamath River supposedly to help the coho salmon and actually because this water was warmer, the National Academy of Science indicated that these larger releases actually harmed the coho salmon. So it was the reverse of what they had tried to accomplish.

Secondly, more recently, in a congressional hearing, we heard from people from Fish and Wildlife and the Forest Service and these officials were asked to testify, because seven employees of these agencies and a Washington State agency also falsely planted Canadian lynx hair in the forests of Washington and Oregon. You might ask, why in the world would somebody do this? Why would you go out and bother to take hair from a captive lynx and plant it in widespread areas? Apparently this would result in a wider declaration of critical habitat for the Canadian lynx and they must have felt in some way that this would have helped preserve the Canadian lynx.

Obviously, it was a falsehood and, according to testimony, others within government agencies were aware of the planted lynx hair and did not report it. The interesting thing was that after all of this happened, the guilty parties were subjected to counseling as a punishment, and most of them received their year-end bonuses and raises. And so you would think, well, what kind of a message are we sending if somebody falsifies data and yet practically no consequences occur as a result of that falsification?

Recently, the National Park Service also indicated some false and inflated numbers of visitors to national forests from an actual count of 209 million visitors to our national forests, and they reported 920 million visitors which was roughly a 400 percent increase, an inflation, that was false.

Again you might ask, why in the world would a responsible Federal agency do this? They certainly can count better than this. Certainly this could not be a mathematical error to miss by 700 million visitors. Again I think, many assume that this had something to do with the fact that they wanted to point out overcrowding, and that maybe some more roads or some more areas of the parks needed to be restricted to visitors because of overcrowding.

And so many of these different situations have led to somewhat of a crisis of confidence in terms of how our public officials are dealing with the Endangered Species Act and our wildlife in general. It would seem that sometimes there is not a real level playing field involved in this situation.

Recently here in Washington, D.C., the Environmental Protection Agency gave the Corps of Engineers permission to dump thousands of tons of sludge into the Potomac River. Of course this was in direct violation, you would think, of the Endangered Species Act because the sturgeon, the short-nosed sturgeon, occupies the Potomac River and it is endangered. And so you would say, why would they do this? How in the world could you get by with this when out in the West you cannot do these other things? And, of course, it also caused beavers and ducks and others to be mucked up to the point where they had a hard time surviving. It would appear that maybe one of the answers is that these tons of sludge, if they are not pumped into the Potomac River, would have to be put in dump trucks and would be trucked through the city of Washington, D.C., which is not real politically popular in this area.

So sometimes people in rural areas have the feeling that maybe there is a double standard and maybe people in some urban areas because of the size of the population and the economic impact do not pay quite the same price. And so that has been a concern.

And then the issue that I want to spend most of my time tonight on has to do with the Central Platte River in the State of Nebraska. In 1978, 56 miles of the Central Platte were declared critical habitat for the whooping crane. At that time in 1978 there were not very many cranes, whooping cranes, probably less than 50. And so they were listed as an endangered species and certainly rightly so. At the present time they are doing better. There are roughly 175 whooping cranes that fly generally through the State of Nebraska. And so as a result of that designation, we find that some things occurred.

□ 2200

As a result, in order to protect habitat, critical habitat, for the whooping crane, the Platte River Cooperative Agreement began to take shape. What they proposed in this agreement was in-stream flows. So what was required was 2,400 cubic feet per second of water down the Platte River in that area of critical habitat in the spring.

The interesting thing here is that water generally is lost to irrigation, because you do not irrigate that early in the spring, and some of it is lost to power generation as well, and it was strictly put there to enhance the habitat for the whooping crane.

It was interesting, because the original recommendation by many biologists was not 2,400 cubic feet per second, but rather they said 1,300 cubic feet per second would be the ideal flow. By tweaking it one way or another, Fish and Wildlife almost doubled the flow and the amount of water that goes down the river. They wanted 1,200 cubic feet per second during the summer, and then they want pulse flows of 12,000 to 16,000 cubic feet per second for 5 days in May and June of wet years.

This is a huge amount of water in the Platte River, and it results in some flooding; and it results in some real difficult situations. Some people assume that actually the main issue here is that it deepens the channels in the river when you have these large pulse flows, and then the issue is what do you do to compensate for the loss of sediment in the river when you do this?

Now, the problem with those pulse flows is as follows: the 12,000 to 16,000 cubic feet per second as we mentioned will deepen the channel in the river and will remove sediment. So Nebraska is being, as part of their contribution to the cooperative agreement, is being asked to contribute 100,000 acre feet of water, stored in Lake McConahay; and this water is being used to flow down the Platte River when people feel the cranes might need it. Wyoming contributes 34,000 acre feet of water and Colorado 10,000 acre feet of water, so the total contribution is 140,000 acre feet of water. So that is an interesting premise, and it is fairly expensive.

Of course, the other issue is there are some other requirements, and that is that there are no new depletions in the Platte River. So we not only have these flows, but within 3 to 4 miles of either side of the Platte River, you cannot set down a new well within 3 to 4 miles of the river after 1997. So a community that is expanding, a farmer, whatever, is no longer able to do this.

Then the sediment that is lost in the river from the large pulse flows has to be replaced. At one time what they were doing was talking about the fact that they would haul in 100 dump truckloads of sediment per day, and this would go on for years and years and years. You can imagine the cost of doing this. That is supposed to replace the sediment that these large pulse flows used to take sediment out of the river.

Now they have revised that, and they are talking about taking bulldozers and pushing islands into the river and causing more sediment. So as you can see, this is a very invasive procession; it is a very expensive process; and it has been very difficult to administer.

That is phase one. After 10 years, phase two kicks in. Phase two, listen to this, requires 417,000 acre feet of water. That is about triple what we are talking about here, 140,000 acre feet. So when you get up to 417,000 acre feet of water, you are talking about practically all of the irrigation water used in the Platte River system. So what farmers and ranchers are rightly concerned about is that at some point the Endangered Species Act could be used in a way that would cut off all irrigation up and down the Platte River, which is several hundred miles long, and would probably make the Klamath Basin situation pale by comparison.

So far the estimated total cost of the project, that is just to the cooperative agreement, it is not the water loss or anything else, just to plan it is $160 million. That is just to create it, as we said. That is a small cost compared to the cost of the irrigation water, the power lost and the land and sediment dumping and so on.

So I think most people would say the cooperative agreement has been time-consuming, has been expensive and has been burdensome to landowners. And, the most important thing, the thing I would really like to drive home tonight, is the idea that the whole thing, I believe, is based on a false premise; and the false premise is that that 56-mile stretch of the Platte River is critical for the existence of the whooping crane.

So let us take a look at the map of Nebraska. The area here in red, from Lexington to Grand Island, is the critical habitat for the whooping crane, really not quite that far. So the idea of critical habitat is this is habitat that it is removed or in some way damaged or changed; it really does great damage to the endangered species. So you would assume that this would be an area that would really be critical to the migration of the whooping crane as they go north and south.

So let us take a look at this issue and some of the data. The Watershed Program director, who worked for the Whooping Crane Trust, this was an environmental group, not a farm group, this was an environmental group, and he worked for that group for 17 years and wrote a document filed on March 22, 2000, that was sent to Fish and Wildlife, and the letter states as follows: ''From 1970 through 1998, that is a total of 29 years, 11 years there were no whooping cranes.''

That is almost 40 percent of the time there were no whooping cranes that were sighted at any point in this stretch of river, which is supposedly critical habitat. You would think if that was critical habitat, that certainly you would not go 40 percent of the years without any observation of a whooping crane in that area.

Then he goes on to say this: ''On average, less than 1 percent of the population of whooping cranes was ever confirmed in the Platte Valley during that same time frame.''

So, again, if it is critical habitat, you would think that you would see 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent, whatever.

But you have had 1 percent or less cranes who have ever been seen in that region of the river over 29 years.

Probably the most convincing evidence that I have run across is that from 1981 to 1984, a period of 2½ to 3 years, there was a radio-tracking study of whooping cranes where they had an electronic collar put on them so you knew absolutely where they were all the time. This went on for three southern migrations and two northern migrations. Eighteen cranes at that time represented somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of the total whooping crane population.

Here was what they found in that research: they found that none of those 18 whooping cranes over 2½ years, three southern and two northern migrations, none of them used the Platte River at any time during that migration.

Now, surely if this is critical habitat for the whooping crane, you would think that at least seven or eight or nine of those cranes would have regularly used the river, but yet not one of them did over that period of time of 2½ years. It is not a case here where they can slip out of the area under the radar screen, because they are checked electronically and they know where they are. They were not in that area of the river.

So the author goes on to say: ''I wonder if the Platte River would even be considered if the Fish and Wildlife Service was charged with designating critical habitat today. Whooping crane experts that I have visited would be hard-pressed to consider the Platte River, given our current state of knowledge.''

Then he says: ''Certainly none would be willing to state on a witness stand that the continued existence of the species would be in jeopardy if the Platte River were to disappear.''

So what he is saying is if this area of the Platte River for some reason went away, he does not know of any experts that would say that would harm the whooping crane. Yet that is the critical habitat, and that is the area that has caused all of the in-stream flows, the 140,000 acre feet of water and the sediment being dumped into the Platte River to compensate for pulse flows, and all of the things that are going on up and down this river, which really have impacted farmers and ranchers.

Also within three miles of either side of this river, you cannot drill a new well. Anytime you do, you have to close down another one. So all of the water here is restricted, primarily for this particular stretch of the Platte which is supposed to preserve the whooping crane. So again, I would have to say that this is a false premise.

The thing we might also mention is that whooping cranes, normally when they do stop in February, and they do stop, and you will see a scattergram of where they stop, and there are some here, and there are some here and up here, so they are all through the State, but normally they only stay overnight.

If this was critical habitat, they would probably stay here for several days, a week, maybe a month, and regroup, do some mating, whatever; but they do not. I think they simply fly along, and when they are tired and see some water, they drop in for the evening. It may be here, it may be here, it could be almost anywhere place. It might be on a lake, Sand Hill Lake or whatever.

But the important thing to remember is this central part of the Platte is really critical habitat for one group of cranes, and that is the Sand Hill cranes. There are roughly 400,000 to 500,000 Sand Hill cranes that come into that area, and they spend 2 to 4 weeks every year. They come from Arizona, and they come from Texas and Oklahoma and Arkansas and Louisiana; and they funnel into this area, and they are heavily concentrated in this area; and then they go up to their nesting grounds up in Canada and North Dakota and so on.

So what has happened I think is early on Fish and Wildlife and others made a mistake, and I think it was an honest mistake. I think they assumed that the whooping crane does the same thing as the Sand Hill crane, and that the whooping crane really needed this area to spend time to stage, to mate, to gain strength for the rest of their trip. But that is not the case. We very well have proven this at the present time.

There is one whooping crane that got mixed up, and this whooping crane apparently was imprinted and identified with Sand Hill cranes. They have even named it. ''Oklahoma'' is the name of it. This particular crane comes with the Sand Hill cranes, and he sticks around for 3 or 4 weeks like the other Sand Hill cranes, because he thinks he is a Sand Hill crane, apparently. I would wonder how many of the sightings in this area have been Oklahoma, that one crane. He may have been sighted many times over. So, anyway, there is a difference between these two different species; and I think it is important that we understand that this is the case.

Actually, Fish and Wildlife is doing everything they can to make the habitat fit the whooping crane. Twice a day they fly the river here looking for whooping cranes; and, of course, if you look hard enough, you may find something. But, still, you are only having 1 percent, maybe 2 percent of the total population, even with surveillance flights going back and forth on the river. Only 1 to 2 percent of the whooping cranes are spotted in that area as they come north or as they go south.

So, again, we would say that probably most definitely there has been an improper designation of this area for the whooping crane, and nobody cares too much if it is an improper designation. The main issue is simply the fact that it is causing an awful lot of disruption up and down the Platte River Valley.

Now, further, and I think this is important too, Fish and Wildlife is expected shortly to declare 450 miles of the Platte River and the Loop River right here and the Niabrara River as critical habitat for the piping plover and the least tern. Ninety-seven percent of these rivers flow through private land. Also these same two species, the piping plover and the least tern, will have critical habitat declared in South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana and Minnesota; and in those States almost 100 percent of the area is public land. In Nebraska it is almost all private. The same issues that apply to the whooping crane apply to this particular designation of these species.

So it is interesting. But let us stick with the middle section of the Platte River, because this is the area we know the most about, and this is the area where we have the most data. Again, refer to the document from the watershed director who wrote the letter. He said ''that the Central Platte does not offer any naturally occurring nesting habitat for these species, i.e., the piping plover and least tern, is amply demonstrated by the fact that no tern or plover chicks were known to fledge on any natural river sandbar during the entire decade of the 1990s.''

So this stretch of river we have been talking about was studied over a 10-year period, and at that time they found no fledglings of chicks on the river, other than in sand pits which are off the river and then some man-made sandbars that were strictly designed for this fledgling capacity.

□ 2215

So the problem is that these birds nest near the water level. So any time there is a fluctuation, any time a river raises, it flushes out the nests. So they do pretty well on lakes, they do pretty well on sand pits, but they do not do very well on rivers, particularly rivers that fluctuate.

So the letter from this particular individual who wrote to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the researcher said this. He said, ''A 50-to-60 day window of flows less than about 1,500 cubic feet per second during late May through mid July is necessary to allow for nesting and subsequent fledging. This did not happen in the 1990s. Nests and/or young were flooded out.''

So what he is saying is this: that on that stretch of Platte River, any time you get elevated flows above 1,500 cubic feet per second, because the nests are built right at water level, you are going to flush them out. So what they are trying to do is that they are trying to regulate flows in the river from this lake right here, Lake McConaughy. The problem is that the lake is 100 miles from the start of the critical habitat, right there, and it is about 170 miles to the end of the critical habitat, which is right there.

Now, the problem is that it takes, to go 100 miles, that water needs 5 days to get to the start of the habitat, it needs 7 days to get to the bottom end of the habitat, so you are releasing water out

of Lake McConaughy to control the flow to try to get 1,500 cubic feet per second or whatever. The problem is that in the next 5 days, we better not have a rain. Because if we have a rain down here or if we have a significant inflow from the South Platte River, then, all of a sudden, that water comes up and that is what happened for 10 straight years. All of those rivers were flushed out. So here we have critical habitat, again, that is going to be very disruptive to ranchers and farmers that apparently is not working.

For some reason, the sand pits and the lakes and the other areas where the piping plover and the least tern have been hatching and have been fledging have not been declared as critical habitat; only the rivers. So this is a little bit of a puzzle, at least to me; I do not quite understand exactly how this is working.

So it would seem that attempting to create a river environment which, for most nesting by the piping plover and the least tern, may actually harm the species. This is the logic.

Again, the letter from this particular researcher goes on. He says, ''This begs the question as to whether it is in the best interests of the species' long term well-being to attract them to an area where they are likely to be flooded or eaten by predators.'' So what you do is you adjust the river and in the spring, because you are trying to hold down the flows, you get them to nest and then over that next 50 or 60 days, you are holding your breath and, most of the time, they are going to get flooded out. So you attract them into an area that probably is going to result in their destruction. They would be much better off if they went to a sand pit or some place where they are not going to be flooded out. So in some ways, all of the machinations and the different gyrations that we are going through here to save the piping plover and the least tern may actually contribute to their demise.

So it is interesting to note that much of the regulation of critical habitat is designed to restore habitat to its original state. That is sort of the gold standard I think for many environmental groups, and particularly for Fish and Wildlife. So we read in the Journals of Lewis and Clark 1800, as they went up the Missouri River, we read about prairie dogs and we read about buffalo. So these folks are pointing to these journals and they are saying, well, this is where the prairie dogs once lived and this was before people disturbed it. Therefore, we must restore this situation, this habitat, and we must make sure these species are again existent in those areas.

So there was a study done by EA Engineering in the late 1980s, and they indicated this. They said the Central Platte did not play a significant role in the maintenance of the least tern or the piping plover prior to the construction of Kingsley Dam in 1941. Here is the dam, and what they are saying is before that dam was in existence back in the 1800s, nobody saw the piping plover or least tern in any numbers at all along the Platte River.

They said there were 3 reasons for this: Number one that ran the river ran unimpeded; the snow pack melted and the highest water would occur in June, which was about in the peak nesting time for the piping plover and least tern. Every year they got wiped out because that water went up and they could no longer survive and then, the Platte River is rather unique in that in August, it would dry up. Most years there would not be any water in the river, which meant essentially that there was no feed, there was no habitat for the young birds if they did manage to survive. So the river was not really what some people thought it was. Then lastly, there was no historical data of tern or plover sightings on the Central Platte at all during the early 1900s, the late 1800s.

So we would say, well, certainly, if settlers, trappers, people who went along the river, if they were there they would have seen them and they would have reported them, but they did not do so. So the assumption is that this is not critical habitat that is indigenous to the species. This is not something that has occurred over a long period of time, and if it has worked at all, it has been because of that dam. But even then, it has not been effective.

So what we are saying here is that the critical habitat designations for the whooping crane and the piping plover would not seem to be accurate, at least the way I interpret the data. So I have requested the Secretary of the Interior provide an independent peer review through the National Academy of Science or some equivalent agency. I know that Secretary Norton is dedicated to making decisions based on accurate data. I have talked to her, and I know this is true. So we are assuming, we are hoping that we can avert another situation similar to the Klamath Basin by having an independent peer review. I think everyone is willing to live with it if the data indicates it. But most people that I know who study the river are really uncomfortable with making this critical habitat and all of the changes that occur in Nebraska, in Wyoming and in Colorado, for what appears to be nonexistent habitat. So we are hoping that we can get a study done.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that those listening do not assume that I oppose endangered species. I am very much in tune with wildlife and I certainly do not want to see the whooping crane suffer, the piping plover, the least tern, the prairie dog, or whatever, but I think it is important to remember that sometimes the Endangered Species Act may actually harm the species. Of course I already mentioned that the coho salmon was harmed by the larger flows out of Klamath Lake because the water warmed up and when the water went down the river, the coho were damaged. So that is one example of the Endangered Species Act actually harming a species.

We have also talked about the flows on the Central Platte luring the piping plover to nest and then having them wiped out by rain events. Then let us consider one other case, and that is the issue of prairie dogs, because the prairie dogs are now considered threatened. They are not listed. But I think the one thing that people need to understand is that ranchers and farmers right now can, in places, tolerate some prairie dogs, because they know they can control them. Now, a prairie dog can take over and eliminate a whole pasture, a whole ranch, a whole farm if they are left unchecked. But you can handle a prairie dog colony here, a prairie dog colony there, and you understand if they start spreading, you can do something to control the spread. But once the prairie dog is listed as endangered or threatened, then you cannot do anything to that prairie dog.

So ranchers and farmers are concerned. So right now, some ranchers and farmers are saying, I cannot afford to have any prairie dogs on my property in case it is listed as an endangered species. So I think right now in some ways, the Endangered Species Act and the ability to list the prairie dog potentially may be working against the prairie dog more than any other issue at the present time.

So we have had several examples, and there are others where the Endangered Species Act does not serve landowners and wildlife well. We talked about the Klamath Basin issue, the 2001 Canadian lynx, falsification of visitor data to national forests, the ignoring of the dumping of sludge into the Potomac and also the critical habitat designation on the Platte River. Let us be fair. I think it is only fair to say this too. I have been a little bit hard on fish and wildlife and the Forest Service. Certainly the great majority of Federal employees who work with endangered species are ethical, they are hard-working. I have met them, I know them and I have worked with them. It is like any profession: 5 or the 10 percent tend to paint with a very broad brush.

However, I would have to say this, in all candor. I do believe that an end-justifies-the-means mentality has become more and more pervasive. In other words, there is the thought process that we need to save the species; therefore, we are going to make sure that we do whatever we have to do to have plenty of critical habitat, and we are going to protect the species and we are not going to be too worried about the financial consequences to ranchers and other people. So the absolute authority granted by the Endangered Species Act has given license, I believe, to rather serious abuses and we have chronicled some of those this evening. The person closest to the species is the landowner and the person who often cares as much about the species as anybody is the landowner.

So I have seen some cases where Fish and Wildlife people have worked in partnership and in a symbiotic relationship with the landowners. This has made a huge difference, because when you get the landowners on board, when they are with you and they understand what you are trying to do and they understand you are not out to get them, some great things can happen for the wildlife. So I have seen it that way.

I have seen it on the other hand too. I have seen arbitrary behavior where the Endangered Species Act has been used as a club: my way or the highway. You guys do not have any rights, we are going to shove it down your throat. When that happens, you find that the landowner is forced to choose between a species and his livelihood, and the landowner usually is going to choose his livelihood. The Endangered Species Act, often unnecessarily, forces the landowner to make this choice, and when this happens, everyone loses.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION TO OFFER MOTION TO INSTRUCT ON H.R. 2646, FARM SECURITY ACT OF 2001

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 7(c) of rule XXII, I hereby announce my intention to offer the following motion to instruct House conferees tomorrow on H.R. 2646.

The form of the motion is as follows: I move that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2646, an Act to provide for the continuation of agricultural programs through fiscal year 2011, be instructed to disagree to the provisions contained in Section 452 of the Senate amendment, relating to partial restoration of benefits to legal immigrants.

WELFARE REFORM AND OTHER ISSUES IMPORTANT TO AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, before I give my comments tonight, I want to take note of one individual in particular here in the room with us tonight and those that are also here every single night, every single day on the floor, and they are the pages that have worked so hard to make the operation of this House successful as it is. In particular, one Katie Roehrick, who I spoke to just a little earlier, I want to especially point out and thank her for her work and staying late in the evenings as she does and to her mom, Brenda, for producing such a lovely daughter.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues with which I wish to deal tonight. Before I begin the major body of my presentation, I want to refer to the comments that were made by members of the minority party here earlier this evening, and for at least an hour, perhaps longer, they went on about the concerns they have with the fact that we have, that this body has passed and this Congress has passed, a package of bills that we refer to as a stimulus package and essentially, they are measures designed to reduce taxes on the people of the United States of America.

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I think, and they were concerned about this, and they certainly do not want, as they said, they do not want these measures to become permanent. They want all of the temporary tax cuts to remain only temporary. In fact, they are concerned about the fact that we passed them at all. They would just as soon that we never had passed tax cuts.

I would like the people listening, and also, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to address this comment to the House, and reflect upon exactly what it was that we had to do in order to get Democratic support for our package, the package that we refer to as a stimulus package. I think it is very elucidative. It tells us a great deal about the difference between the two parties, and about the way in which we do our business here in this House. It tells us a great deal about how we view government and its relationship to the people.

Now, it is undeniably true that as a result of a number of things, traditional economic downturns, the war we are facing, a variety of other issues have impacted negatively on the economy of this Nation. That is undeniably true. No one argues with that.

As a result, revenues have dropped, jobs have disappeared, and Federal, State and local governments are having a more difficult time meeting their commitments because revenues have decreased. That is undeniably true. That is the only thing upon which we agree.

Everybody here can agree there is a problem. The President has articulated the problem, and has postulated a response and a solution. This is what separates the two parties, this philosophy of government embodied in this whole idea of a stimulus package, ''stimulus,'' meaning to get the country moving again.

What can we do, what is there that the Members of this body can do, to reinvigorate the American economy?

Now, when we presented this in the form of a motion here on the floor, in the form of regulations and/or laws, here is what we came up with.

On the Republican side, we said that the best thing that we can do as a body is to in fact reduce the tax burden on the people of the country and on the businesses that employ the people of this country, because we believe in order to get the economy in fact stimulated, as the title of the package implies, we need to increase the number of jobs that are available to the people of the country. We have to make sure that the government does what it can do to make it easier for corporations, for small businesses, to employ other people, to sell their products and services, and thereby prosper. We believe that is the way to get the economy moving again.

What did our friends on the other side offer to this stimulus package? What did we in fact have to include in order to get it passed? The one proposal, the one and only proposal that came from the minority party to stimulate our economy, was to increase the length of time people could be on unemployment compensation.

Now, we can argue for the need for the Federal Government to increase the length of time people can be eligible for unemployment, but that is a separate debate. It should be a separate debate, totally and completely different from the debate over what it is we can do to get the economy moving again. Yet, this is the only thing they put forward, an increase in the amount of time people could be eligible for unemployment.

Now, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is a perfect example. I cannot think of a better way to explain to the American people the difference that exists between two parties, two philosophies, two ideas of government.

One, because we want tax breaks, we are characterized as heartbreakers, cruel, or only wanting to help the ''rich.'' But as has been said often on this floor, and certainly something with which I agree, Mr. Speaker, I have never personally been given a job by a poor person. Jobs only come from people who can afford to give jobs, companies that can afford to employ people. And their ability to do so, their ability to employ people, is directly related to the costs they incur to be in business.

One of those costs, in fact, I think a very expensive cost, is the cost of the government. I think it is too high. I think we interfere far too much with the marketplace and with people's ability to actually do business.

There are legitimate roles for the government, undeniably, legitimate roles in this area. But when we are talking about trying to get this economy moving again, and then to hear our friends on the other side of the aisle come up here tonight and talk for over an hour about their fear that a tax break, that a tax cut would in some way or other jeopardize the success of our stimulus package, that is absolutely incredible.

Actually, it is not incredible, it is to be expected, but it is also to be rejected. It is a failed philosophy. We cannot tax ourselves out of a recession. What we can do is, of course, unleash the power, the spirit, and the enterprise of the American people, and that is what we have done. That is what this President has requested. That is how this Congress has responded.

We should not only disavow any attempt on the part of the minority