with disabilities, the elderly, non-English speakers, children, the poor, and the homeless. We understand that there is often significant overlap between at-risk groups. Individuals who are homeless, for example, are also poor and often disabled.

Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and I also believe that a new director of At-Risk Individuals will also be a great resource to States, which will now have to incorporate the needs of at-risk individuals into disaster plans as a condition of receiving Federal disaster preparedness funding. The process by which the needs of at-risk individuals are incorporated into State, let alone Federal disaster plans is not obvious and will require both accumulation and dissemination of expertise. The committee envisions the Office of At-Risk Individuals as an ideal repository and resource for information in this regard. This information can be gathered from entities already doing excellent work in the field. Within HHS, this includes the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability, and Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Within DHS, this includes the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Preparedness Directorate, and the Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities. Within the community, this includes organizations like C.A.R.D. in California and the Kellogg Foundation's Redefining Readiness Projects. Within Academia, this includes work done by the Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies in Maryland and the New York Academy of Medicine. Nationally, this includes the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness, Initiative, the Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Finally, Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and I believe that a new Director of At-Risk Individuals can be an important source of funding and support for a community engagement process focused on organizing ordinary citizens to prepare and to respond to public health emergencies. The public is not a passive entity and must be viewed as a valuable partner in disaster planning and response. Communities are better able, for example, to identify the location of their special needs populations, to communicate with them, and to intervene in ways that are consistent with the reality of people's lives. In addition, during disasters, the governmental response is often delayed, and people must be able to protect themselves why they wait for help. Last of all, community-derived public health emergency plans must be coordinated with local, State and Federal disaster plans and the new Office of At-Risk Individuals can fund opportunities to bring all key stakeholders together.

The AARP, the American Red Cross, United Cerebral Palsy, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have all endorsed this important amendment. These are groups that most would agree know much about at-risk individuals, disaster preparedness and response.

In short, the process of addressing the needs of at-risk individuals during public health emergencies is a necessary and immense task that must be overseen. A new Director of At-Risk Individuals with a budget of up to $5 million as specified in S. 3678 will provide the focus, expertise, personnel, and institutional memory to assure that the at-risk language in S. 3678 is followed and that the Government, in planning for and responding to emergencies, keeps the needs of all Americans, front and center.

I thank Senators BURR and KENNEDY again for writing and passing S. 3678 and being open to the Lieberman-Cochran language.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR STEPHEN G. PURDY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Major Stephen G. Purdy, Jr., of the U.S. Air Force for the outstanding contributions he rendered this year while serving as a legislative fellow on my staff. Stephen will soon complete his Capitol Hill fellowship, and it is my hope that he has benefited as much from this experience as I have benefited from having him on my staff.

In the course of Stephen's military career, he has served rotations in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisitions, Space and Nuclear Programs. While working at the Space and Missile Systems Center, Stephen was the Atlas V Program chief engineer. Additionally, Stephen has served as the Joint Counterair Acquisition Manager at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisitions, Global Power Directorate. Finally, before joining my office Stephen was posted to the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Legislative Liaison.

To my great benefit, Stephen joined my office in a year when the Air Force was searching for a new mission for Cannon Air Force base in New Mexico. Cannon was originally targeted for closure on the Department of Defense's, DOD, Base Closure and Realignment, BRAC, list. However, the BRAC Commission ultimately found that the DOD ''substantially deviated'' on several BRAC selection criteria and required that DOD shall seek a new mission for Cannon. Stephen's experience proved critical in our successful efforts to secure a new mission for Cannon. I have no doubt that his tireless work and dedication were important to the Air Force's decision to relocate the Air Force Special Operation Command's 16th Special Operations Wing to Cannon, which has ensured that Cannon will continue to play an important role in securing our Nation.

I must also thank Stephen's family for enduring his many late nights at work. So to Wendy, Stephen's wife, and the Purdy children, Taylor and Holly, I say thank you. And without question, you can be extremely proud of Stephen's dedication to our country.

Finally, Mr. President, I give my heartfelt thanks to Stephen for his service. His can-do attitude and tireless work ethic were infectious. His willingness to tackle issues which were new to him and to embrace the goals I've set for my staff on behalf of both the men and women of the Armed Forces and the citizens of New Mexico were truly commendable. I have no doubt that as Stephen continues his military career he will achieve great things for both the U.S. Air Force and his country, and I wish him the very best of luck in all his future endeavors.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATION 2006

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate briefly turned to H.R. 5384, the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2007. This bill appropriates about $98 billion in spending, an amount that is approximately $4.9 billion over the administration's budget request, and $4.7 billion more than the House-passed bill. Although we were unable to complete work on H.R. 5384, I want to explain my objections to the passage of this bill in its current form.

I believe that some Federal involvement is necessary to assist low-income families under the food stamp program, and that we should ensure that our farmers stay out of the red, and to this end, many of the programs under the Agriculture Department are worthwhile and I support their funding. I know that many of my colleagues have spoken before the Senate about the economic struggles of America's farmers. But as Congress looks ahead toward legislating a new farm bill in the near future, next year in fact, we once again conform to the practice of diverting taxpayer dollars into an array of special interest pork projects which have not been authorized or requested by the Administration.

Let's take a look at some of the earmarks that are in this bill and accompanying report:

$3.5 million for fruit fly control in Texas, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$400,000 for codling moth research in Kerneysville, WVA, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$200,000 for research into the genetic enhancement of barley in Aberdeen, ID, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$300,000 for grass research in Burns, OR which was not in the administration's budget request.

$750,000 to the Denali Commission to improve solid waste disposal sites in Alaska, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$200,000 for the Utah State University's Space Dynamics Laboratory to

study gaseous emissions from agriculture operations, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$100,000 to study crop pollination by bees, Logan, UT, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$600,000 for the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center in Madison, WI, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$250,000 for shellfish and salmon research, Franklin, ME, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$250,000 for the Great Lakes Aquaculture Center, Coshocton, OH, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$158,000 for cranberry research, Massachusetts.

$1.4 million for potato research (State not listed).

$453,000 for seafood safety research, Massachusetts;

$4.1 million for shrimp aquiculture research in AZ, HI, MA, MS, SC, and TX.

$780,000 for milk safety research at Pennsylvania State University, PA, which was not in the administration's budget request.

$170,000 for blackbird management in the State of Kansas, which was not in the administration's budget request.

It is worth noting what we are already doing to support our Nation's agriculture producers. Last year, Federal farm subsidies grew to more than $23 billion despite near-record farm revenue which reached $76 billion. While some of these farm programs make good fiscal sense, other have become alarmingly wasteful and counterproductive.

For example, The Washington Post recently exposed a USDA program, known as ''direct and counter-cyclical payments,'' that in 2005 paid out $1.3 billion to farmers irrespective of high or low market prices or whether they grew any crops at all. This program was intended to be a temporary subsidy that would prop up farmers during poor market conditions, but the special interests and the farm lobby convinced Congress to keep this unneeded program, which has become perhaps the most abused farm subsidy in existence.

The Washington Post also discovered that in 2002 and 2003, $635 million in drought assistance went to ranchers and dairy farmers whose livestock experienced mild or no drought at all. Thanks to strong lobbying by cattle growers, the Congress modified the payment requirements under the Livestock Compensation Program for 2002–2003, so that ranchers weren't required to prove they suffered any actual losses. So long as a the disaster was declared, the Government simply mailed checks to ranchers dependent only on the number of cattle they owned.

In an offshoot of the USDA's drought relief efforts, the Federal Government paid $34 million to compensate catfish farmers for feed they purchased during the 2002 drought year, even though feed prices were at a 10-year low. Much like the cattle program, catfish farmers were not required to prove they suffered any losses. All they had to do was tell the USDA how much feed they bought that year.

Who is at fault for this egregious waste? The farmer? The Department of Agriculture? In reality, both are the victims of bad policy. Unfortunately, the biggest victim is the taxpayer, and the blame rests with us, the Congress. Our current farm policy is riddled with waste. Yet we compound matters by furthering the out-of-control earmarking of pork.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record copies of *The Washington Post* articles I cited: Farm Program Pays $.13 Billion to People Who Don't Farm (July 2, 2006), No Drought Required For Federal Drought Aid (July 18, 2006), and When Feed Was Cheap, Catfish Farmers Got Help Buying It (July 18, 2006).

It is difficult to overlook the $4.5 billion disaster assistance package that appropriators have attached to this bill. None of this funding under this agricultural title is included in the administration's request, and in fact, was strongly opposed by the administration when similar provision were added to the 2006 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill. My colleagues may recall that the emergency supplemental faced a veto threat because of the billions of dollars in unrequested agriculture handouts appropriators were seeking. Fortunately these agriculture subsidies were removed in conference, and the bill was finally enacted enabling crucial funding to reach our troops overseas.

Let's take a look at some of the provisions in this latest Agriculture disaster package:

$1 billion in crop disaster assistance to compensate farmers for damage that occurred in 2005 due to weather. This also specifically applies to the Mormon cricket infestation in Nevada, and flooding in California, Hawaii and Vermont.

$13 million to help ewe lamb farmers who have suffered populations losses.

$6 million to owners of flooded crop and grazing land in North Dakota.

$6 million to assist a sugarcane transportation cooperative in Hawaii.

$100 million for grants to each State to promote specialty crop production.

$1.7 billion in assistance to dairy farmers who suffered losses in 2005.

This appropriations measure is not expected to receive any further action during this session of Congress. Instead of debating and passing our annual spending bills, our constitutional obligation, we are resorting to passing continuing resolutions to maintain our government functions well into fiscal year 2007. This failure is partially because of our habit of earmarking. When members frantically look for appropriation bills as vehicles for pet projects and unrequested earmarks, the appropriation process becomes a game of ''you vote for my pork, I'll vote for yours.'' This is the sad state of our appropriations process, when we would rather postpone funding for critical programs for our farmers, soldiers, veterans, seniors, and nearly everything until next year if it means our pork isn't included this round.

Again I want to make it clear that I support doing all that we can for the American farmer. Agriculture production is part of the backbone of our great country. However, we do more bad than good by raiding the national treasury, and, in some cases other Agriculture programs, to pay for pet projects that in many cases benefitlll certain constituency which is not representative of the larger needs of the farming community.

RETIREMENT OF JOHN TREZISE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, as the chairman of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, I wish to speak for a few moments about the coming retirement of one of the most dedicated public servants I have had the pleasure of knowing. Shortly after the first of the year, John Trezise will be leaving the Department of the Interior after 35 productive years..

Since 1998, John has served as the Director of the Interior Department's Office of Budget and for the 5 years before that as the Chief of the Office's Division of Budget. In short, John has been ''running the numbers'' at the Interior Department for the past 13 years. And I can vouch for the fact that during those years, no one has known more about the Department's budget than John. He is, to put it bluntly, a walking ledger.

John first got his start with the Department in 1971 when he hired on as a young attorney in the Office of the Solicitor. For a number of years, he was Assistant Solicitor for administrative law and General Legal Services, specializing in appropriations law issues.

It is this legal background that has made John such an important asset to those of us on the Appropriations Committee. The guidance and counsel John has been able to offer our Members and our staff has been invaluable. It is no exaggeration to say that without his help, we would have been, if not lost, at least temporarily delayed in getting our appropriations bill done each year on time and within our budget.

As he prepares to leave the Department, I wish to take this opportunity to say thank you to John Trezise for all he has done and to let him know that he will be sorely missed by the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Interior appropriations subcommittee, I wish to join my colleague from Montana in extending our congratulations and our best wishes to John Trezise as he prepares to leave Federal service.

Each spring, the Interior Subcommittee holds a budget hearing to