

WHITE PASS SKI AREA
EXPANSION PROJECT

HON. NORMAN D. DICKS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. DICKS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that has occurred in my State over the past 23 years.

The White Pass Ski Area is located in the Cascade Mountain Range in the Gifford Pinchot and Wenatchee National Forests. White Pass is renowned as one of the best small ski areas in the Pacific Northwest and offers particular appeal to families. The area, which provides critical tourism revenue to the surrounding rural communities on both sides of the mountain range, is now looking to expand to provide greater opportunities to skiers in the Pacific Northwest.

Over two decades ago, we succeeded in passing through Congress the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984. This legislation added over 23,000 acres of land to the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area and removed from wilderness designation 800 acres adjacent to the White Pass Ski Area as having "significant potential for ski development" and urging the Secretary of Agriculture to "utilize this potential, in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations."

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan allocated the 800-acre area that Congress had withdrawn from the Wilderness Area back in 1984 to Developed Recreation in recognition of the intent of Congress. However, the LRMP concurrently inventoried as roadless the same 800-acre area. The conflicting, confusing and uncertain status of the subject lands needs addressing, which is why I rise today.

I can say from first-hand experience that, at the time we passed the aforementioned Washington Wilderness Act of 1984, it was congressional intent to permit expansion of the White Pass Ski Area. I would like to submit for the record a letter signed by the 1984 congressional delegation stating that it was our intent to provide for the expansion of White Pass Ski Area. In a February 3, 2004 letter, the U.S. Department of Agriculture also confirmed this congressional intent, stating: "We agree that the intent of Congress was clearly to allow for ski area development in the Hogback Basin." In addition, Congressman BAIRD, who represents the district where White Pass is located, submitted for the RECORD on January 31, 2007 a statement urging clarification and action on this issue.

The Fiscal Year 2007 Interior Appropriations Bill that passed the House in May of last year included important information clarifying congressional intent to permit expansion of White Pass Ski Area. The language stated:

The Committee notes that the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984 removed from wilderness designation 800 acres of land adjacent to the White Pass Ski Area in Washington State for potential ski development. The Committee notes that the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan allocated the 800-acre area as Developed Recreation to allow for ski area expansion, while concurrently inventoried the same land as roadless to reflect its current physical character. The Committee recognizes that it was the intent of Congress to

permit ski area expansion into this 800-acre area and urges the Secretary of Agriculture, once the Environmental Impact Statement for the White Pass Ski Area's Master Development Plan is properly completed, to move forward expeditiously in approving the expansion plans in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Unfortunately, the FY07 Continuing Resolution did not include any report language; therefore the language clarifying congressional intent that passed this body last summer was not included in the CR.

I wanted to bring this issue to the attention of my colleagues and highlight the fact that the House Appropriations Committee was prepared and willing to clarify congressional intent, and that the full House approved that clarification by voting for the fiscal year 2007 Interior Appropriations Bill in May. In keeping with this, I urge the Secretary of Agriculture to move forward expeditiously in approving the expansion plans in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations—once the Environmental Impact Statement is properly completed.

TRIBUTE TO SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, together with my colleague, Mr. THOMPSON from California, I rise today to honor the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District located in Northern California. On March 3, the agency received the prestigious County Leadership in Conservation Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) and Trust for Public Land (TPL).

This award is given annually to counties that showcase the best practices in innovative conservation work. As one of the first public agencies in the nation funded by a sales tax to protect agriculture, the Open Space District has continued to distinguish itself nationally. It has protected almost 70,000 acres, including farms, greenbelts, natural open spaces, and recreational areas.

The District was formed as a result of public concern over urbanization in Sonoma County as subdivisions, malls and parking lots threatened to overwhelm land the famed botanist Luther Burbank once called "God's chosen spot." Responding to the very real threat of sprawl, farmers, environmentalists and community leaders joined together in 1990 to pass a sales tax to fund preservation and open space acquisition. So successful is the District that the tax was renewed with a 75 percent approval vote in 2006. Today the tax provides approximately \$13 million a year for the District's land conservation and acquisition programs.

The County Open Space Authority is responsible for levying and distributing the funding, while the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acts as the Board of Directors. The Supervisors appoint a 17-member Open Space Advisory Committee, representing various stakeholders and interest groups, to recommend acquisitions. Manager Andrea MacKenzie works with all of these groups and

other local organizations in identifying and purchasing suitable properties (or conservation easements) and determining the best use for them, from agriculture to resource conservation to public access or recreation.

Madam Speaker, Sonoma County has a beautiful and diverse environment ranging from oak savannah to bay wetlands to coastal redwood forests. Its farmlands are among the richest on the planet and grow grapes for world-class wines, crispy Gravenstein apples and luscious Crane melons and many specialty crops. Its pastures and rangelands support both dairy and meat production. The District with its immense support from the public ensures that our children's children will always have woodland and hillside trails to hike and homegrown food to enjoy.

These open spaces keep Sonoma County's agricultural economy healthy, provide recreation for visitors and residents, and preserve the very character of the county. Mr. THOMPSON and I congratulate the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District upon the receipt of the well-deserved County Leadership in Conservation Award and look forward to continuing to work with the District to preserve Sonoma County's natural beauty and agricultural bounty.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN
CONTRACTING ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1362) to reform acquisition practices of the Federal Government:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1362, which makes several changes to federal acquisition laws to increase transparency and accountability in federal contracting.

Specifically, the bill requires agencies to limit the use of certain types of abuse-prone contracts, and to promote integrity in the acquisition workforce. The bill limits the length of certain noncompetitive contracts and requires large federal agencies to develop plans to minimize the use of noncompetitive contracts and cost-reimbursement type contracts. In addition the bill requires the public disclosure of justification and approval documents required for noncompetitive contracts and requires reports to Congress on certain contract audits. Finally, the bill contains a number of provisions which would improve the acquisition workforce.

The Bush administration has justified the award of lucrative no-bid contracts claiming exigent circumstances. The spending on no-bid contracts has more than doubled under the Bush Administration. The time has come again for us to continue in the tradition of restoring accountability back into Congress. This legislation builds on the progress we have made to return to the basic principles of fiscal responsibility and restore Congress's role as a check on the Executive Branch.

Transparency and integrity is needed in order for accountability to be restored in the