

COMMENDING MEHDI MORSHED FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, as the Chair of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, I rise today to recognize and commend the great work of Mehdi Morshed, who at the end of March is retiring from California High-Speed Rail Authority. For over 40 years, Mehdi has worked on transportation policy in various capacities in California and is widely considered a leading expert. I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Mehdi for over thirty years.

Mehdi Morshed was educated at the University of Washington in Seattle as a civil engineer and he received a master's degree in transportation engineering from the University of California, Berkeley.

Since then, he has worked to make sure that Californians have safe and accessible transportation. He worked for the California Department of Transportation in various capacities, including planning, design and construction of bridges.

He then served as the lead transportation policy staffer in the California State Senate for over 20 years. During his time at the State Senate, Mehdi was responsible for developing and enacting some of California's most ground-breaking transportation laws, policies and programs, including vehicle safety and emission standards, as well as assisting with the establishment of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the California Transportation Commission and other local and regional commissions, transportation districts and agencies.

At the end of this month, Mehdi will be retiring as the Executive Director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, a position he has held since 1998. His dedication to high-speed rail in California has resulted in the project evolving from a planning concept to a fully developed project with an 800-mile system that will link Los Angeles and the Bay Area through Central Valley, with links to Sacramento and San Diego. Mehdi was at the helm of the Authority when State proposition 1A was passed by voters in November 2008, which is a \$9 billion bond measure for the State's high-speed train system. Mehdi's ability to successfully develop California's high-speed rail system has led to California receiving \$2.5 billion in Recovery Act funding.

Madam Speaker, Mehdi Morshed has played a major role in developing and implementing California's transportation policies for over 40 years. I can assure you that his leadership will be missed in California, and his transportation projects throughout the State will be a lasting reminder of his years of service to the people of California.

OLDE DOMINION AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX

HON. THOMAS S. P. PERRIELLO

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mr. PERRIELLO. Madam Speaker, today, I want to celebrate a vision of the future that is deeply rooted in our past.

It is fitting that the vision is being realized in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, which for centuries served as an economic engine for the Commonwealth of Virginia. That economic engine was fueled by farmers.

Agriculture remains the largest industry in Pittsylvania County and the largest industry in the commonwealth. And today, we break ground on the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex, located just outside Chatham, Virginia. What will be built on this broken ground, however, will not just be the facilities, but a future for agriculture in this region. It will be a future built on innovation and education, recreation and community connection.

The Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex will house a number of professional agricultural leadership organizations and will offer the local agricultural industry a centralized location in which to learn best practices in operations, equipment, crops, soils, animals, forestry, and renewable systems. The complex will also serve as an opportunity for local producers to enter and grow new markets. These anticipated areas of growth include aquaculture, bioenergy production, and cattle markets.

I am particularly bullish on the opportunities our farmers can seize in the area of domestic energy production. Until now, this region has been locked out of the energy market. Farmers were forced simply to be consumers of energy. We are coming to understand, however, that farmers can be producers of energy—that agricultural regions can be energy regions. Crops we grow above ground can be just as valuable as fuel buried below. In Gretna, Virginia, Piedmont BioProducts has built a refinery that turns crops into oil. And in Chatham, the Van Der Hydies are turning waste into electricity, turning a liability into an income stream that may help them survive low dairy prices.

The complex will not only serve agriculturalists, but will engage the entire local and regional community. The resources and information offered through programs will be designed to meet a variety of interests ranging from those of homeowners to backyard gardeners to children interested in attending 4-H camp. Its arena will ensure that the complex becomes a regular gathering place for the community where citizens can enjoy a vast array of shows and concerts. Whether showcasing farm equipment and livestock or entertaining with country music, the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex will be a unique asset in Pittsylvania County. It will offer the local community endless opportunities to prosper the local economy through advances in its agriculture industry and increased tourism to the region.

Of course, the complex is not just sprouting from the earth uncultivated. It is the carefully tended fruit of the labor and vision of the Olde Dominion Agricultural Foundation. The foundation deserves great credit for making this a reality. The facility will allow the foundation to

further its goal "to provide extensive educational opportunities to area agricultural producers and individuals involved in agricultural-related activities" and will help the foundation realize its vision "in establishing an environment of excellence in the integration of agricultural, economic, and social systems."

It is only fitting that this complex be built in the county that ranked first in Virginia for flue-cured tobacco sales. However, the county's agricultural contributions do not stop there. Pittsylvania County has also been ranked fifth in Virginia for both corn silage and all hay production. Cattle, beef cows, and milk cows have placed Pittsylvania County in the top six producers in the commonwealth. Equine, swine, sheep, goats, horticulture, and viticulture groups are also growing industries. Additionally, Pittsylvania County benefits from the support of the surrounding counties of Bedford, Henry, Franklin, Halifax, and Campbell, which also have a high percentage of land invested in agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Virginia and Pittsylvania County first prospered because of tobacco farming. Agriculture continues to play a vital role by contributing billions of dollars to our local economy, providing fresh and wholesome products that are part of a healthy diet, and ensuring continued protection of our open spaces. I take great pride in the farming traditions of southern Virginia and believe that our farmers, supported by the community and invested with the latest innovations, can and will take a leading role in a new economic revival. Within our community we have the entrepreneurs, the innovators, the farmers. This complex will harness each of these components to open new markets and spur economic growth. This economic revival will not only keep wealth in our community, but more importantly may help keep our children in our community.

Southern Virginia is fortunate to have the vision of the Olde Dominion Agricultural Foundation and the future promise of the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex.

Let me close by quoting from one of Virginia's most famous farmers, Thomas Jefferson: "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands." The Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex will help strengthen those bands.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE "SAKS" BILL

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, every year roughly 36,500 women are violently assaulted in the workplace and yet their only remedy is workers compensation. In an effort to protect the rights of victims of workplace violence, I am reintroducing a bill to protect the civil rights of victims of gender-motivated violence. This legislation is intended to prevent employers from invoking workers compensation when employer negligence results in sexual assault and rape of an employee. This important bill will allow employees to sue their