

the economy of many rural towns throughout America. Because of their dependence on organic waste, biomass facilities are usually located in rural areas where they are often important engines of economic growth. For example, in the small town of Sherman, ME, a biomass facility provides 56 percent of the property tax base. It also directly employs 23 individuals and indirectly provides work for hundreds of truck drivers, wood operators, mill workers and maintenance contractors.

In another small town of Maine, Athens, ME, a biomass facility provides a third of that small town's tax base and directly employs 20 people, while supporting a local wood operator who, in turn, employs 40 people.

The point is, the economy in many of the small towns in Maine, in towns such as Livermore, Ashland, Greenville, Fort Fairfield, Stratton and West Enfield benefit considerably from these biomass facilities. In total, there are over 100 biomass facilities in the United States, representing an investment in excess of \$7 billion. These facilities contribute jobs, property taxes and a disposal point for waste products. In addition, rural biomass facilities also provide ash for use by local farmers, reducing their purchases of lime. I understand there is regularly more demand for the ash produced by these biomass plants than there is supply.

With biomass energy production, nothing is wasted. Biomass turns waste products—the byproducts of timber, paper or farming operations—into needed energy, wasting nothing. Even the ash is returned to the Earth to grow organic matter yielding both crops and waste to generate still more electricity.

We in Congress often discuss ways to help rural America. I know that is of great concern to the Presiding Officer. This proposal offers an opportunity to do so in a way that not only benefits the economy of small towns in rural America but also in a way that generates considerable environmental benefits that we all can enjoy.

This measure makes both economic and environmental sense. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation and working for its passage.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for 15 minutes following the presentation of the Senator from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Anthony

Blaylock be granted the privilege of the floor during morning business this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

JUVENILE VIOLENCE

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this is going to be an important week in the Senate. I am very glad there is going to be a discussion—a long overdue discussion—on juvenile violence and steps that can be taken to prevent it in our country.

BOOK SELLING IN AMERICA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I turn for a few minutes this morning to an issue that many Senators may not have heard much about but one that has great implications for the consumer, for intellectual freedom and the quality of life in our communities across the country.

The issue I intend to focus on specifically is the proposed acquisition by Barnes & Noble of the Ingram book company. The price tag on this acquisition is \$600 million, and it involves the Nation's largest bookstore chain, Barnes & Noble, joining forces with the Ingram book company, the world's largest book distributor.

I am concerned that this deal will give Barnes & Noble a competitive stranglehold on the bookselling business in America. That is why last November I asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate this proposed acquisition. Based on information I have learned in the last few days, I believe the Federal Trade Commission will soon make a decision on this proposed acquisition. I am very hopeful that when the Federal Trade Commission comes down with that decision, they will come down foursquare for the consumer.

Right now across this country, thousands and thousands of Americans have stopped at small bookstores to sign petitions urging that this proposed acquisition be blocked. In fact, there is a special phone line at the Federal Trade Commission because there has been such a tidal wave of interest on this specific proposal. I will briefly outline this morning what I find troubling about this proposed deal.

For a small bookstore, if this acquisition goes forward, they will have to depend on a megastore for the products they sell. The new bookstore colossus, with Barnes & Noble coming together with Ingram, will essentially have a huge competitive advantage that could work to cause great hardship for small bookstores in our country. Because the Ingram Company has information about sales and volume and ordering

habits of small bookstores, is the new megastore going to use that information in a fair way? I am very concerned about it, but I can tell you that small bookstores across this country are very troubled when it comes to getting fair access to the titles they need, when it comes to how that information which Ingram has, that will be part of the new operation with Barnes & Noble, is used. I can tell you that small bookstores across this country believe this issue is literally one of life and death for them.

Second, I am concerned about issues relating to intellectual freedom. My concern is that with this deal and the potential that there will be just a handful of big bookstores in our country dominating the Nation, what they will stock are largely the best sellers.

I have had some experience with this. My father, who passed away, was an author and had a small publishing company. He said there is always room at the big stores in titles involving sex and drugs and rock and roll.

But I am concerned about what is going to happen when we have just a handful of these megastores, whether we are going to see intellectual freedom prosper and those titles that are not always on the best seller list accessible the way they are today.

Third, I am concerned about the vitality of our communities. These small bookstores in so many of our communities do more than just sell books. Yes, they sell publications and they make it possible for young people in rural America and inner cities and others to have a comfortable place to learn, but they are also a huge addition to Main Street in so many parts of rural Oregon and, I am sure, in Kansas where the Presiding Officer resides. Having been born in Wichita, we have talked before about life in rural America.

I do not want to see those small bookstores becoming part of the Main Street of yesteryear in rural America. I am very concerned that if this proposed merger goes forward, as it is currently structured, it really will put a hardship on a lot of main streets in rural communities and will diminish the vitality of many of those towns.

I admit to growing up a bit skeptical of some of these large megastores. As I said, my dad was an author, and I spent a lot of Sunday afternoons going through some of those megastores with my dad trying to persuade them to put one of his titles that did not fit their view of what was popular up close, up close to where the consumers were when they stopped to browse in the window. My father was concerned about the concentration of economic power in the bookselling business.

I tell you, I think this deal, if it goes forward as structured, will confirm a

lot of the worries that my dad and others like him have had about our country and where the bookselling business is going.

Finally, I think we all understand that the bookselling business has changed certainly on the Internet. The Presiding Officer has worked with me on legislation which has been important to me such as the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

The Internet has changed the bookselling business. There is no question about the fact that with Amazon.com and others in the business of selling books on line, the business has changed very dramatically. But I do not buy the idea that Barnes & Noble had to merge with Ingram in order to take on Amazon. I do not buy that idea at all.

I think there is a role in our country for a variety of ways for consumers to order publications. I think there is an important place for the small bookstore, especially because of the contributions they make to main streets in rural communities and inner cities. I certainly do not want to hold back on-line shopping. That is why I was a principal sponsor in the Senate of the Internet Tax Freedom Act. So I do not take a back seat to anybody in terms of trying to ensure that we take advantage of all the technological innovations that are available for the consumer.

What concerns me about this proposal is that a lot of small bookstores are not going to be able to survive. A lot of small bookstores are going to find it difficult to survive if Barnes & Noble has proprietary information about them, about their volume, about their sales practices, about the way they do business, and if that information is used against small bookstores.

So I believe the Federal Trade Commission has in front of it an issue of extreme importance, one which will dramatically affect intellectual freedom, one which has great implications for antitrust policy and the consumer, one which will be vital to the well-being of communities and main streets across this country. I believe the Federal Trade Commission is going to rule soon on this proposed acquisition. I believe they are going to act in the interest of the consumer. I appreciate the opportunity to bring the Senate up to date on this important economic matter.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from North Dakota.

FAMILY FARMERS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor briefly today to talk about two issues. First, tomorrow the appropriations conference begins between the House and the Senate on the emergency supplemental appropriations bill. That includes specifically the

President's request for emergency appropriations to be made for some agricultural spring planting loans, some emergency appropriations to be made for the purpose of helping the victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America, and then since that time the President has made new recommendations on emergency funding for the Defense Department needs as a result of the actions in Kosovo.

The House of Representatives took a request by President Clinton for nearly \$6 billion in added funds for the military especially, but including some humanitarian relief for the actions in Kosovo, and added to that \$6 billion of emergency funding nearly \$7 billion more, to reach a total of close to \$13 billion in emergency funding.

A number of us believe that, while we are on the subject of emergencies and in a supplemental appropriations conference, it would be inappropriate to add \$7 billion to the defense budget for emergency needs relating to Kosovo—although some of it has very little relationship to Kosovo, it has a relationship to what is called "readiness" in defense accounts and other things—that it would be inappropriate to consider that without considering other emergency needs here at home on the domestic front. One of those is agriculture.

The plight of the family farmer in this country has been pretty well described by myself and others on the floor of the Senate in recent months. The Congress did some emergency work last fall to provide some income support to family farmers above and beyond the current farm bill. But it is not nearly enough.

We now come to May of 1999, at a time in which prices for many commodities in agriculture, in constant dollars, are at Depression level, and we are going to lose thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of family farmers if we decide to do nothing. Tomorrow's conference between the House and Senate may be the only opportunity that exists this year to provide support for emergency funding, to add some income price support to family farmers, which they desperately need.

This chart shows what is happening in rural America. This map shows counties marked in red which are being depopulated in our country. These are counties that have lost at least 10 percent of their population in the last 18 years. You can see on this map the large red area that shows the middle of this country—the farm belt—is being depopulated, people are leaving.

Why are people leaving the farm belt in droves, and especially now in more recent years? Why are people leaving their family farms, leaving the farm belt, and leaving rural counties? The answer is, family farmers cannot make a living when they produce grain and

then have to sell it at a price far below their cost of production. It does not work that way. You go broke. Bad trade agreements, concentration in agricultural industries—there are a whole series of reasons—but the central reason, it seems to me, is low prices. If you do not get a decent price for that which you produce, you are not going to be able to make a decent living.

The question for this country is, What kind of price supports are available to farmers when market prices collapse? Every one of us in this Chamber would prefer that farmers received their prices from the marketplace. But when the marketplace collapses, farmers load a couple hundred bushels of wheat on their trucks, drive to the elevators, are told that wheat has no value, or has very little value, then the question for Congress is, Do we want family farmers in our future? And, if we do, What kind of income support are we willing to offer to create a bridge over that price valley when prices collapse?

The largest enterprises, the big agrifactories, will make it across that valley. They are big enough, strong enough, have the financial resources to make it across that price valley. It is the family farmer who will not make it. So the question for the Congress is, Do we care about family farming? And, if we do, what can we do to provide some income support when prices collapse?

A number of us will offer, during this deliberation in the conference between the House and the Senate on emergency needs, a proposal to restore some emergency funding to family farmers. There are lots of ways of doing that. I have my own feeling about how to do it. Senator HARKIN and I, along with Senator CONRAD and others—Senator HARKIN and I, incidentally, will be in the conference tomorrow, are prepared to offer some proposals to deal with emergency needs, it is not just the Defense Department that has emergency needs, family farming is in a full-scale emergency in this country.

This Congress must take steps to save it. Tomorrow, again, Senator HARKIN, myself and some others in the conference on appropriations, of which Senator HARKIN and I are conferees, intend to raise this question in a very forceful way and push very aggressively for action on an emergency basis with our colleagues.

Republican and Democrat colleagues here in this Chamber understand that we face a very serious problem. All of my colleagues who come from the farm belt have said the same thing. Family farmers are in trouble. There is no disagreement about that. There might be some disagreement about the mechanism by which we address this question, but I think everyone here, with whom I share the long-term interests of the welfare of family farming, believes that we need, during periods of