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TIMBER AND AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I have heard from hundreds of private landowners, forest owners, and farmers in Arkansas who are greatly concerned about the Environmental Protection Agency's attempt to rewrite portions of the Clean Water Act.

I know the Senator from Idaho has been very much involved in this issue, has had hearings on this, and has been a leader in determining exactly what the EPA intends to do.

In August of last year, as the occupant of the chair knows, the EPA proposed a regulation which requires States to renew their efforts to fully implement a so-called voluntary total maximum daily load, or TMDL, program.

The States, in conjunction with the EPA, would establish TMDLs for water bodies statewide. If States fail to meet those TMDL guidelines, the EPA would then have the authority to enforce the new water quality standards. I believe that is what this agency had in mind all along.

Should the EPA be successful in carrying out their plans, this regulation will have a direct impact on two of my State's most important industries: agriculture and timber. Agriculture and forestry activity, which the EPA currently treats as potential "non-point source" polluters, could be regulated as point source pollution.

A regulation requiring foresters, private landowners and farmers to obtain discharge permits for traditional forestry and agriculture activities is costly, overly burdensome and unnecessary.

I believe this is yet another deliberate attempt to circumvent the Clean Water Act and legislate through regulation. Rewriting TMDL requirements and redefining point source pollution should be addressed when Congress, the elected representatives of the people, reauthorizes the Clean Water Act.

Arkansas has put forth a tremendous effort to implement statewide Best Management Practices and other water quality regulations.

If my State is required to establish and enforce expanded federal, one-size-fits-all TMDL standards, it must redirect already limited funds and resources away from successful State implementation programs and hand them over to bureaucratic EPA procedures and oversight.

These are some of the reasons why landowners in Arkansas are so upset. In early January I spoke at a meeting in El Dorado, AR, where 1,500 people attended to voice their concerns.

A few weeks later, 3,000 people attended a similar meeting in Tex-

arkana, AR. Although the public comment period for this proposed regulation is over, a third meeting scheduled for later this month is expected to draw similar crowds.

The thousands of people who attend these meetings have families, busy schedules, and many other responsibilities, but they are willing to sacrifice their time to learn more about this proposed regulation and how it will affect their livelihood.

One of the core issues motivating Arkansans to attend public meetings by the thousand is *trust*. Ultimately, the people of my State do not trust the EPA. In other words, the EPA has not earned the trust of my constituents.

Clearly, the EPA has done an incredibly poor job communicating their proposal to those whom it will affect the most. During my time in public service, I have never seen this kind of public outcry to anything the EPA has done.

In response to the reaction from foresters, private landowners and farmers, private landowners and farmers in Arkansas, I have introduced S. 2139, the Timber and Agriculture Fairness Act.

My bill consists of two simple parts: First, it exempts silviculture operations and agriculture stormwater discharges from EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting requirements; and, second, it defines nonpoint source pollution relating to both agriculture stormwater discharges and silviculture operations.

This two-prong approach, I believe, is the sensible way to winning back the trust of Arkansans and the American people.

We must remind ourselves that we have a Government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." By passing this legislation, we will give the Government back to its original owners.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support S. 2139.

I express my appreciation to the Senator from California for fitting me in between her comments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

Mr. CRAPO. I thank the Senator from California for allowing me to take a few moments to address the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD E. DIXON

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to make a statement in recognition of one of my very close friends out in Idaho who has just had a wonderful accomplishment in his life. He is a neighbor, a friend, and a member of my staff from Idaho, Don Dixon.

On March 24, Don will be given the distinct honor of induction into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame. The honor reflects his commitment to farming in Idaho and the respect and esteem in which he is held in our community. I know you join eastern Idaho and myself in extending to Don congratulations on this achievement.

Don is a lifelong farmer and resident of Idaho Falls, ID. He owns and tends the farm his grandfather purchased in 1900 and, thereafter, was owned by his father. Apparently, the farming bug hit Don hard because he took over the Dixon operation with his brother soon after college and his military service. A measure of his success is reflected by his continued expansion of the farm and livestock and the handover of a solid operation to his son.

For years, Don's work has produced some of the region's best potatoes, in a State that has the world's finest spuds, cattle, hay, and grain. In this time of agriculture distress and low prices, Don has demonstrated himself to be a model farmer by taking steps to protect the environment by undertaking the best management practices and water conservation through improved irrigation techniques. We can all be proud of his work to be a productive member of the agriculture community and a good steward of the land.

Although his induction into the Hall of Fame is a special accomplishment, Don has long been chosen as a representative of his community. He has been an active member of eastern Idaho's business and agriculture organizations for as long as I can remember. Don has served on the board of the Eastern Idaho State Fair and, for 6 years, served on the Idaho Potato Commission, a post nominated by our Governor. His recognition at the national level is evident from Don's successes as Director of the National Potato Promotion Board.

In 1995, Don joined my staff and served with distinction through the balance of my House tenure, working on agriculture and natural resources issues. He was instrumental in my work with farmers and ranchers throughout the State during the debate on the 1996 farm bill. When I was elected to the Senate in 1998, Don agreed to continue our partnership by becoming my State Director of Agriculture, a position he has fulfilled with distinction and widely-held respect.

Don has served the people of Idaho above and beyond the call of duty, meeting more farmers and community leaders than any of his peers and probably has logged enough miles on his pickup truck to circumnavigate the world several times. The patience and understanding of his wife Georgia, his four children, and extended family for his work is a testament to Don's commitment to service and leadership in