

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH
ANNIVERSARY OF 4-H PROGRAM

HON. WES WATKINS

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2001

Mr. WATKINS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to commend the 4-H Youth Development Program for a very successful one hundred years of promoting positive youth activities. I was a proud member of the Bennington 4-H club, and I have very fond memories of my boyhood activities that I pursued through the 4-H program.

4-H was an excellent stepping stone to future achievements for me. 4-H taught me to set goals and then provided me with the tools and developed those talents needed to achieve my goals. In the same fashion, 4-H has continued to produce powerful and positive members.

In addition to a wonderful membership, the 4-H has a real strength in the Extension Agents and 4-H advisors around the world. These people are heroes and role models to our young people and should be recognized as such. Giving up much personal time and effort to promote the dreams and achievements of today's young people, Extension Agents and 4-H advisors are true examples of service to others.

As a former member of the House Appropriations Committee, I was proud to lend my support to measures that extended or enhanced funding to promote the 4-H. I have been very supportive of this remarkable organization in the past, and I will continue to be in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the 4-H is one of the premier youth organizations of the world. The 4-H motto is, "to make the best better." I believe the 4-H is truly one of the best, and I look forward to watching this ever-changing and evolving program become even better.

INTRODUCTION OF THE URBAN
SPRAWL AND SMART GROWTH
STUDY ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth Study Act. This bill is designed to shine a bright light on the influence of federal actions on urban sprawl and assure that federal agencies consider how their actions may add to this problem.

Mr. Speaker, communities in Colorado and throughout the country are struggling to preserve their special character and quality of life in the face of burgeoning populations. The expected benefits of moderate, planned growth are being overtaken by the economic and environmental costs of rapid, unmanaged growth. Especially in the West and South, extreme population growth has resulted in the continual build-out of cities and the loss of surrounding farmland and open space.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

In my state, this residential and commercial growth is also spreading along interstate highways into the mountain valleys and forested regions. The resulting sprawl is creating congested highways, more air pollution, greater energy consumption, overtaxed city services, and crowded schools and shopping centers. Local governments are facing rapidly increasing demands for costly public services that accompany such growth.

According to the recent census, Colorado is one of the most rapidly growing states. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. population grew by 13.1 percent. During the same period, Colorado's growth was 30.6 percent! And in many of our counties the rate was even higher.

What does this mean? Let me highlight some issues that are occurring in my district north of Denver.

The growth of businesses and homes along US Highway 36, the major road between Denver and Boulder, is causing tremendous pressures on this roadway and greatly increasing congestion and traffic woes. The communities along its route are working together to address this problem, and I have been doing what I can to help by securing funds for the reconstruction of one of the more complex and troublesome overpasses near Broomfield. Clearly the Federal government can and should have a helpful role in addressing transportation issues like US Highway 36.

The growth has also created the risk that communities along Denver's Front Range will "grow together" and thereby create an unending metropolis from Fort Collins in the north to Colorado Springs in the south. The communities in this region are doing what they can to control this development and preserve their special character. But they could use help from the Federal government to make sure that Federal policies do not hamper their ability to keep their communities intact.

Indeed, these problems are neither inevitable nor incurable. Citizens in Colorado are asking their leaders to address the symptoms of sprawl and to help them control and manage growth more effectively. We got started with this effort in 1994, when then Governor Roy Romer initiated his "Smart Growth and Development Initiative." That initiative focused attention on the problems of sprawl, the unevenness of growth and development (some rural areas welcome more development), and the role of federal, state and local governments in creating and managing sprawl and its impacts.

Other states from North Carolina and Georgia to California and Oregon have been experiencing similar growth pressures. Many are developing processes and mechanisms to deal with these problems. Some states have used growth control legislation creating urban service areas. Others have relied on their local communities to slow down or temporarily cease the issuance of building permits. Many have appropriated funds or created sales tax initiatives to purchase and protect open spaces and agricultural lands.

All of this has been done with an understanding that state and local governments are the best place to plan for and manage growth and sprawl issues. Armed with zoning and other developing management authorities,

they are best suited to gauge the pulse of their citizens and determine where, when, and how growth should best occur.

But the efforts of state, local and tribal governments to plan for and manage urban growth and sprawl can be thwarted by actions taken at the federal level. A well-developed plan by a local community can be swept aside by the routing of a major highway or the construction of a poorly sited post office. The cumulative effects of a number of small federal actions and policies together may create or foster the very sprawl that communities have fought so hard to control.

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The bill I am introducing today is designed to focus attention on the many federal decisions and projects that can either foster or ameliorate sprawl. It does this through the existing requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), one of our nation's premier environmental laws. NEPA requires all federal agencies to evaluate their proposed activities and projects for social and environmental impacts and to take timely steps to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

Specifically, since 1970 NEPA has required all federal agencies to include in the planning stages for all "major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" a detailed statement by the responsible official on the environmental impacts of the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects that can't be avoided, alternatives to the action, the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources should it be implemented.

This analysis is what is essentially required in an environmental impact statement (EIS). It is not the only document required for agency decision-making, but is meant to guide agencies to consider potential environmental impacts and alternatives in making important decisions.

Most federal agencies have done a reasonably good job in implementing NEPA. However, when it comes to considering the cumulative impacts and indirect effects of federal actions—such as on sprawl—much of the NEPA analysis has not been adequate. Too often, federal agencies look at the localized short-term impacts of a proposed project and neglect to review the broader "spill over" impacts that the activity may have on a region, especially when viewed cumulatively in relation to other ongoing or planned actions influencing regional growth and development.

This observation was in fact identified in a September 2000 General Accounting Office report entitled "Community Development: Local Growth Issues—Federal Opportunities and Challenges." This report looked at the various ways that federal actions can foster sprawl or assist communities to better address sprawl impacts.

The report also noted that although NEPA requires that federal agencies review the "indirect and cumulative" impacts of federal actions or projects (such as sprawl), often that review is rather thin and not well explored. The report noted that when it comes to evaluating the "indirect and cumulative" effects of

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