

Statement on Expediting Small Business Administration Loans for Hurricane Andrew Victims

September 3, 1992

I have just met with Administrator Saiki who informed me that the Small Business Administration has responded to my request to expedite their loan process so that victims of Hurricane Andrew can swiftly receive disaster loan checks. SBA loans that typically require 30 to 60 days will now be processed in just 7 days.

I have also asked the IRS to be on site so that they can provide tax information to the loan applicants whose tax records have been lost or destroyed as a result of the hurricane. Treasury Department officials will also be there to cut the checks

immediately. Today Pat Saiki will depart to Florida and Louisiana to deliver the first disaster loan checks. By the time they are finished, the SBA will have made thousands of loans to businesses and homeowners who are resolved to rebuild their neighborhoods, repair their communities, and get on with their lives.

The SBA is ready to help homeowners and renters qualify for low-interest, long-term loans to rebuild or repair their homes as well as their businesses. Like the rest of the Federal Government, the SBA is in for the long haul.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Nevada Public Lands Wilderness Designation

September 3, 1992

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to submit for congressional consideration and passage the "Nevada Public Lands Wilderness Act".

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), (43 U.S.C. 1701, *et seq.*), directs the Secretary of the Interior to review the wilderness potential of the public lands.

The review of the areas identified in Nevada and Lassen County, California, began immediately after the enactment of FLPMA and has now been completed. Approximately 5.2 million acres of public lands in 110 areas in Nevada and Lassen County, California, met the minimum wilderness criteria and were designated as wilderness study areas (WSAs). These WSAs were studied and analyzed during the review process and the results documented in 17 environmental impact statements and eight instant study area reports.

Based on the studies and reviews of the WSAs, the Secretary of the Interior is recommending that all or part of 52 of the WSAs, totaling 1,892,041 acres of public

lands, be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

I concur with the Secretary of the Interior's recommendations and am pleased to recommend designation of the 52 areas (totaling 1,892,041 acres) identified in the enclosed draft legislation as additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The proposed additions represent the diversity of wilderness values in the State of Nevada and Lassen County, California. They range from the Black Rock Desert and the canyons of the Humboldt and Owyhee Rivers, to the ancient bristlecone pines in central Nevada, to the Mojave Desert in southern Nevada and its Joshua trees and desert tortoises. These areas span a wide variety of Nevada landforms, ecosystems, and other natural systems and features. Their inclusion in the wilderness system will improve the geographic distribution of wilderness areas in Nevada and Lassen County, California, and will complement existing areas of congressionally designated wilderness. They will provide new

and outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation.

The enclosed draft legislation provides that designation as wilderness shall not constitute a reservation of water or water rights for wilderness purposes. This is consistent with the fact that the Congress did not establish a Federal reserved water right for wilderness purposes. The Administration has established the policy that, where it is necessary to obtain water rights for wilderness purposes in a specific wilderness area, water rights would be sought from the State by filing under State water laws. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Administration that the designation of wilderness areas should not interfere with the use of water rights, State water administration, or the use of a State's interstate water allocation.

The draft legislation also provides for access to wilderness areas by Indian people for traditional cultural and religious purposes. Access by the general public may be limited in order to protect the privacy of religious cultural activities taking place in specific wilderness areas. In addition, to

the fullest extent practicable, the Department of the Interior will coordinate with the Department of Defense to minimize the impact of any overflights during these religious cultural activities.

I further concur with the Secretary of the Interior that all or part of 106 of the WSAs encompassing 3,277,546 acres are not suitable for preservation as wilderness.

Also enclosed are a letter and report from the Secretary of the Interior concerning the WSAs discussed above and a section-by-section analysis of the draft legislation. I urge the Congress to act expeditiously and favorably on the proposed legislation so that the natural resources of these WSAs in Nevada and Lassen County, California, may be protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Dan Quayle, President of the Senate.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Capital Gains Tax Regulations

September 3, 1992

In response to a request from the White House, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel has rendered a formal opinion on the issue of "indexing." We are disappointed that the opinion concludes that neither the President nor the Treasury Secretary nor the Commissioner of the IRS has the authority to act to revise the IRS regulations in a way that would index for inflation the cost of assets bought and sold

in capital gains transactions.

The President believes that such indexing of cost would be sound economic policy and would be sound as a matter of fairness. Accordingly, he has instructed the Treasury Department to add to his legislative program a provision that would provide the taxpayer with the option of indexing cost when determining income subject to gain.