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Society of American Foresters

Max S. Baucus

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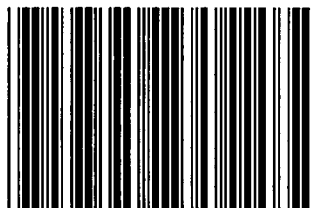
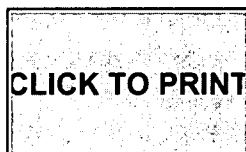
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(2) Subject* **none**

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BAUCUS

REMARKS OF SENATOR MAX BAUCUS
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

TROY, MONTANA
TUESDAY, MAY 29, 1979

THIS IS MY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO THE LINCOLN COUNTY AREA SINCE MY ELECTION TO THE SENATE. I AM PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU THIS EVENING, AND I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY THOUGHTS CONCERNING FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS IS A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION. WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER AND WORK TOGETHER, YOU DO SO AS PROFESSIONALS FUNCTIONING AS INDIVIDUALS, NOT AS AGENTS FOR YOUR EMPLOYER. THUS THE FRAMEWORK OF A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION GIVES YOU AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER BROAD RESOURCE ISSUES IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. THAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION AND IT ADDS TO MY PLEASURE IN COMING BEFORE YOU THIS EVENING.

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS FOUR MAIN ISSUES THIS EVENING. THE FIRST, IS THE NATURAL RESOURCE DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ELECTED NOT TO SEND TO THE CONGRESS HIS PLAN TO CREATE A DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES. I HAVE STUDIED THIS ISSUE AT LENGTH. DURING THE COURSE OF MY DELIBERATIONS MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE MONTANANS HAVE SHARED WITH ME THEIR CONCERN THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STAFF DID A VERY POOR JOB OF OUTLINING THE STRUCTURAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH REORGANIZATION.

FRANKLY, THE ADMINISTRATION DID NOT ASSESS WHETHER OR NOT NEW PROBLEMS WOULD BE CREATED BY MOVING THE FOREST AND RANGE PROGRAMS, FOR EXAMPLE, AWAY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. THEY DID NOT CONSIDER THE EFFECTS OF THE FIELD STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERAL AGENCIES SUCH AS THE BLM AND THE FOREST SERVICE IN TERMS OF REGIONAL OR STATE OFFICES, NATIONAL FORESTS AND BLM DISTRICT LANDS AND OFFICES. FRANKLY, THE REORGANIZATION PLAN WAS AMBIGUOUS.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, I URGE YOU AS MEMEBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS TO ASK WHETHER THERE ARE DEFECTS IN THE STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE EXISTING FEDERAL AGENCIES AND WHETHER THESE DEFICIENCIES CAN BE CORRECTED WITH LIMITED CHANGES OVER TIME, OR WHETHER IN YOUR VIEW MASSIVE CHANGES ARE NEEDED. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL ISSUES AND THEIR CAUSE AND THEN TO DEBATE NEW APPROACHES.

"IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT," IS A GOOD RULE. HOWEVER, AN EQUALLY GOOD RULE IS TO PROVIDE REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF ORGANIZATIONAL MACHINERY. ANY CHANGES IN STRUCTURE SHOULD BE BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE REASONS NOT JUST A DESIRE FOR CHANGE. IN MY OPINION, AS A RESULT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS, THE CONGRESS WILL NOT CONSIDER A REORGANIZATION PLAN DURING THE CURRENT CONGRESS.

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY SECOND POINT, AND THAT IS MY CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SMALL BUSINESS SEGMENT OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY. TWO WEEKS AGO I HAD THE PLEASURE OF CONDUCTING TWO DAYS OF HEARINGS ON THE SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE PROGRAM AFFECTING FEDERAL TIMBER.

AFTER TWO DAYS OF TESTIMONY, I REACHED ONE CONCLUSION. WE HAVE A GOOD DEAL OF OPINION BUT VERY LITTLE GOOD EVIDENCE REGARDING THE TIMBER SET-ASIDE PROGRAM. SO RATHER THEN PRESCRIBE A CURE OR EVEN DESCRIBE THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM, I PROPOSED A CAREFULLY DESIGNED IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY, FOCUSING ON THE ABILITY OF SMALL BUSINESS TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROMOTE A BROADLY BASED, HEALTHY FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY? OVER THE PAST DECADE THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF LITIGATION AND DEBATE CONCERNING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SET-ASIDE PROGRAM. LITTLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE BROADER ISSUE CONCERNING THE HEALTH OF THE SMALL BUSINESS SEGMENT OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY. I ASKED THE SENATE TO ADOPT MY PROPOSAL FOR SUCH A STUDY AND I WAS PLEASED THAT IT WAS INCORPORATED LAST WEEK INTO THE SMALL BUSINESS AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1979.

I WOULD BE LESS THAN FRANK WITH YOU IF I DID NOT INDICATE THAT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING DEGREE OF CONCENTRATION WITHIN THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY. I THINK WE NEED TO EXAMINE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS BENEFICIAL TO THE TAXPAYER, THE CONSUMER OF WOOD PRODUCTS, AND TO THE INDUSTRY.

IN THE WORK OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, TIME SHOULD BE OUR FRIEND, NOT OUR ADVERSARY. ACTIONS DEFERRED ARE FREQUENTLY OPPORTUNITIES LOST, AND IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL OUTLAY, DOLLARS INVESTED TODAY WILL YIELD GREAT BENEFITS IN THE YEARS TO COME. THE 1974 RESOURCES PLANNING ACT CHARTERED A NEW DIRECTION IN FOREST SERVICE PLANNING AND BUDGETING. THAT ACT IS BASED ON ADEQUATE AND REASONABLE PLANNING.

THE ACT PROVIDES FOR A SERIES OF 10 YEAR ASSESSMENTS, ALONG WITH EVALUATION PROCEDURES. THE ACT TIES POLICY TO BUDGET SO THAT RESOURCE MANAGERS CAN PRESENT INFORMED VIEWS TO THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN ORDER FOR THE CONGRESS TO ENACT INFORMED BUDGET PRIORITIES. THE POLICY DIRECTION OF THE RESOURCES PLANNING ACT IS SOUND. THE REAL PROBLEM IS MAKING IT WORK, WORK WELL, AND WORK IN A TIMELY FASHION.

IN MY ESTIMATION, THE CONGRESS HAS BEEN MORE DILIGENT IN CARRYING OUT THE INTENT OF THIS ACT THAN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. CONSERVATION AND TIMBER INDUSTRY GROUPS HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE IN PRESENTING SOUND ARGUMENTS TO THE CONGRESS CONCERNING BUDGET PRIORITIES THAN HAS THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

WHILE THE FOREST SERVICE HAS, UNDER QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, ADMITTED DEFICIENCIES IN THE BUDGET, THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH HAS NOT PREPARED A FORESTRY BUDGET IN THE SPIRIT OF THE RESOURCE PLANNING ACT. MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL PARTY, HAVE BEEN UNIFORMLY INTERESTED AND DILIGENT IN MAKING THE RPA PROCESS WORK.

GIVEN THIS UNIFORMITY OF JUDGMENT AND A DEMONSTRATED BI-PARTISAN APPROACH, A SERIOUS QUESTION EXISTS IN MY MIND AS TO WHY THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, UNDER PRESIDENTS FORD AND CARTER, HAS DISPLAYED THE SAME LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF THIS BUDGETARY TOOL WHICH IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVE ALLOCATION OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY. OMB'S MOST GLARING WEAKNESS HAS BEEN IN INVESTMENTS FOR THE FUTURE. WE ARE NOT MAKING ADEQUATE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS IN THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.

FOR THIS REASON, I AM PROPOSING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH WHICH WILL MORE EFFECTIVELY IDENTIFY THE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS NEEDED IN THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO OUTLINE FOR YOU MY PROPOSAL. IT WOULD CREATE A NATIONAL FOREST INVESTMENT FUND WHICH WILL BE COMPOSED OF THE NET CASH RECEIPTS DERIVED FROM THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.

CURRENTLY, THE NET RECEIPTS DERIVED FROM THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM RUN CLOSE TO A BILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY. THESE FUNDS WILL BE PLACED BY THE TREASURY IN AN INTEREST BEARING ACCOUNT. THE CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE NATIONAL FORESTS; FUNDS NEEDED FOR REFORESTATION, TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT, ROADS, TRAIL MAINTENANCE, WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT, RANGE FACILITIES, WILDLIFE AND OTHER RESOURCE INVESTMENTS WOULD BE CONSOLIDATED IN A "CAPITAL BUDGET."

THIS WOULD NOT BE A DEDICATED FUND, UNLIKE THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND, WHICH ABSOLUTELY ALLOCATES DOLLARS WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION. THE ONLY WAY THAT THE INVESTMENTS CAN BE MADE WILL BE THROUGH THE REGULAR CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS. MONIES FOR CAPITAL OUTLAY WOULD BE APPROPRIATED FROM THE FUND. THE FUND WILL SET THE POTENTIAL LEVEL OF ALL THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED ON THE NATIONAL FORESTS WITH ANNUAL BUDGETS PROVIDING THE DESIRED LEVEL AND RATE OF INVESTMENT.

I AM ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR MORE EFFECTIVE DETERMINATION OF THE SHORT AND LONG TERM INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO ENHANCE RESOURCE VALUES ON THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.

ANNUAL OPERATING FUNDS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE BUDGETED IN THE REGULAR PROCESS. IN MY VIEW, THIS WILL PROVIDE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE A BETTER WAY TO GAUGE THE PLOWBACK OF FUNDS INTO NEW RESOURCES FOR FOREST AND RANGELAND DEVELOPMENT ON OUR NATIONAL FORESTS.

I DO NOT SUGGEST THAT THIS PROPOSAL WILL BE A PERFECT VEHICLE. IT IS DESIGNED TO BE NATIONAL IN SCOPE. THE IDEA IS TO ASSURE A MULTIPLE-USE BASE WITH NEEDED INVESTMENTS MADE IN ALL RESOURCE CATEGORIES.

I HOPE TO INTRODUCE THIS LEGISLATION IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT EARLY HEARINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CONCEPT OF A CAPITAL INVESTMENTS FUND FOR THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO SHARE WITH ME YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS. BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE WILL FIND A WAY TO MEET THE INVESTMENT NEEDS THAT MUST BE MADE IF OUR FUTURE RESOURCE BASE IS TO SERVE ANTICIPATED NATIONAL NEEDS.

FINALLY, I WANT TO DWELL FOR A MOMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT REGULATIONS. I THINK THE REVISED REGULATIONS ARE A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE EARLIER DRAFT. THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, I TRUST, WILL CONSIDER ANY FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND PROPERLY PUT THE REGULATIONS INTO EFFECT. I KNOW THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL POINTS STILL TO BE CONTESTED BY VARIOUS GROUPS.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT REGULATIONS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. IF THE ACT IS ADMINISTERED IN THE SPIRIT OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT, MANY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES WE FACE WILL BE ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED.

NO MATTER WHAT THE SECRETARY MAY DECIDE, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, WHAT COUNTS IS WHETHER A GOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN IS DEVELOPED AT THE FOREST LEVEL. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DEFINE THE ALLOWABLE SALES LEVEL AND THE SUITABILITY OF LANDS FOR TIMBER PRODUCTION SHOULD BE PREDICATED ON WHAT IS SILVICULTURALLY BENEFICIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF SOUND FOREST RESOURCES, FOREST RESOURCES MANAGED FOR MULTIPLE USE AND SUSTAINED BENEFITS. IN THE LONG RUN, THIS WILL BE ECONOMICALLY BENEFICIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE OF A HEALTHY AND PROFITABLE FOREST INDUSTRY.

I HAVE TOUCHED ON FOUR ISSUES THIS EVENING WHICH ARE CRITICAL TO THE EFFECTIVE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL FORESTS. THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION, THE FUTURE OF SMALL TIMBER BUSINESSES, THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT ON THE NATIONAL FOREST, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT.

EACH OF THESE ISSUES WILL HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF WESTERN MONTANA AND LINCOLN COUNTY IN PARTICULAR. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SHARE YOUR COMMENTS WITH ME.

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING THIS EVENING.