10-6-1979

Montana Snowmobile Convention

Max S. Baucus
Senator * or Department*: BAUCUS

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Record Type*: Speeches & Remarks

MONTH/YEAR of Records*: October-1979
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(1) Subject*: Energy
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(2) Subject*  Montana Snowmobile Convention

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* "required information"
REMARKS OF SENATOR MAX BAUCUS
BEFORE THE
MONTANA SNOWMOBILE CONVENTION
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA
OCTOBER 6, 1979

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE FOR ABOUT TEN MONTHS. THIS MORNING, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO TALK ABOUT SEVERAL CRITICAL ISSUES CONFRONTING MONTANA AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR MONTANA’S FUTURE.

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A SEVERE ENERGY SHORTAGE. EASTERN GAS LINES AND MONTANA DIESEL SHORTAGES LAST SUMMER ARE LIKELY TO BE FOLLOWED BY HEATING FUEL SHORTAGES IN THE COMING WINTER. INFLATION IS RUNNING AT 13 PERCENT, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE ARE DRIFTING INTO A RECESSION. NECESSITIES OF AMERICAN LIFE -- HOUSING, FOOD, AND FUEL -- ARE EVEN SCARCE AND MORE EXPENSIVE.

THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT COAL MUST BE THE CORNERSTONE IN THIS NATION’S EFFORT TO BECOME ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT. BUT THERE WILL BE CONTINUED PRESSURE TO DEVELOP COAL REGARDLESS OF WHETHER COAL DEVELOPMENT ON A MASSIVE SCALE IS IN MONTANA’S BEST INTEREST.

THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO DEVELOP SYNTHETIC FUELS. WE DON’T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT SYNTHETIC FUELS, BUT WE KNOW THAT PRODUCING THEM REQUIRES ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF WATER.
ONE SYNTHETIC FUEL PLANT WILL REQUIRE ABOUT 300,000 ACRE FEET OF WATER ANNUALLY. 300,000 ACRE FEET! THINK ABOUT IT. THAT WATER COULD IRRIGATE 100,000 ACRES AND PROVIDE A LIVELIHOOD FOR NEARLY 300 FARM FAMILIES.

A DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY REPORT RECENTLY SUGGESTED THAT 37 SYNTHETIC FUEL PLANTS MIGHT BE BUILT IN MONTANA. OBVIOUSLY, THERE WOULD BE SWEEPING CONSEQUENCES OVER MONTANA’S AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

RISING HOUSING COSTS ARE CAUSING PRESSURES TO INCREASE TIMBER HARVEST. A RECENT FOREST SERVICE PLAN WOULD SELL FEDERAL TIMBER AT A MUCH FASTER RATE THAN IT GROWS. THIS PLAN WOULD RUN COUNTER TO THE SUSTAINED YIELD MULTIPLE USE CONCEPT ON OUR NATIONAL FORESTS. IN THE LONG RUN, THE ONLY POSSIBLE RESULT OF THAT POLICY IS DECIMATION OF THE FORESTRY RESOURCE.

THERE IS A TENDENCY OUTSIDE OF MONTANA TO TREAT OUR STATE AS AN ENERGY AND AGRICULTURAL COLONY.

HISTORICAL TENDENCY HAS BEEN FOR OUTSIDERS TO DEVELOP AND EXPLOIT MONTANA’S RESOURCES, WITH LITTLE REGARD TO OUR LONG-TERM INTEREST.

MONTANA IS A RESOURCE STATE, AND I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT OUR RESOURCES SHOULD NOT BE DEVELOPED.

BUT WE ALL KNOW THAT DEVELOPMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY PROGRESS. WHAT MAY BE ONE MAN’S SNOWMOBILE TRAIL MAY ONE DAY BE SOMEONE ELSE’S POWER CORRIDOR. MONTANA IS OUR HOME AND WE WANT IT TO REMAIN A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE. WE TAKE PRIDE IN ITS SCENIC BEAUTY, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE MONTANA SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION HAVE DISCOVERED THE UNIQUE BEAUTY OF MONTANA’S REMOTE AREAS IN WINTER.
WE DON'T WANT TO BE ANOTHER WEST VIRGINIA WHERE MASSIVE COAL DEVELOPMENT HAS LEFT ONLY ERODED MOUNTAIN SIDES, POLLUTED STREAMS AND ABJECT POVERTY.

WE DON'T WANT ANOTHER CLEVELAND, THE SKIES BLACKENED BY SMOKE STACKS AND WATER SO POLLUTED THAT IT ACTUALLY BURNS.

SO WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SOME HARD CHOICES. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BALANCE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONCERNS.

BUT IN ANY CASE, WE DON'T WANT TO TURN CONTROL OVER TO OUTSIDERS. WE MUST CONTINUE TO SPEAK A STRONG AND UNIFIED VOICE SO THAT MONTANA'S CONCERNS ARE NOT SWEPT ASIDE IN THE NATION'S STRUGGLE TO DEAL WITH IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

LET ME TURN TO SOME OF TODAY'S ISSUES THAT WILL AFFECT MONTANA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE.

MOST IMPORTANT IS ENERGY. CONGRESS IS DEBATING ENERGY PROPOSALS THAT COULD HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES ON MONTANA'S FUTURE.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS PROPOSED AN ENERGY MOBILIZATION BOARD THAT WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO SWEEP ASIDE STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS HAMPERING DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY FACILITIES.

CUTTING RED TAPE IS ONE THING. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE ENERGY MOBILIZATION BOARD WOULD HAVE AUTHORITY TO OVERRIDE WATER LAW AND SUCH IMPORTANT LEGISLATION AS MONTANA'S MAJOR FACILITIES SITING ACT.
I DON'T THINK THE PEOPLE OF MONTANA WANT WASHINGTON LAWYERS TO DECIDE CRUCIAL AND COMPLICATED ISSUES OF WESTERN WATER LAW. I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT UNLESS THE LEGISLATION IS AMENDED SUBSTANTIALLY, I WILL OPPOSE THE ENERGY MOBILIZATION BOARD.

MONTANA'S ECONOMY DEPENDS ON AN EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OF BULK COMMODITIES LIKE COAL, GRAIN AND FOREST PRODUCTS. SINCE I'VE BEEN IN THE SENATE, ONE OF MY MAJOR PRIORITIES HAS BEEN STRENGTHENING OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

WE NEED THE MILWAUKEE RAILROAD TO PROVIDE COMPETITION, TO HOLD DOWN FREIGHT RATES, TO PROVIDE JOBS, AND FOR ITS RAIL CAPACITY.

WE ALSO NEED STRONG PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. I CONTINUE TO BE DISAPPOINTED IN CONGRESS' RECENT ACTIONS PROVIDING $2.5 BILLION TO SHORE UP EASTERN PASSENGER SERVICE WHILE ELIMINATING THE NORTH COAST HIAWATHA.

ANOTHER REASON FOR SUPPORTING RAILROADS IS THAT TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES HAVE SEVERE FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES.

FOR INSTANCE, IF WE DON'T HAVE RAILROADS TO HAUL COAL, WE FACE DISAGREEABLE ALTERNATIVES: DEVELOPMENT OF COAL SLURRY PIPELINES OR MORE IN-STATE POWER PLANTS AND THE RESULTANT POWER LINE CORRIDORS.

MONTANANS HAVE SURPRISED THE WHOLE COUNTRY WITH THEIR STRONG SUPPORT FOR A DECENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORK. WE NEED TO KEEP UP AND WHERE POSSIBLE INCREASE OUR EFFORTS.
OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS, I'VE INDICATED MY SUPPORT FOR A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE ENERGY CRISIS THAT EMPHASIZES CONSERVATION, PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER, AND EMPHASIZES SOLAR AND ALCOHOL FUEL TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF ENERGY AND FEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS.

IN HIS ENERGY MESSAGE A FEW WEEKS AGO, THE PRESIDENT TALKED ABOUT DISCOURAGEMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

IT'S TOO BAD HE DOESN'T VISIT MONTANA MORE OFTEN. I CERTAINLY DON'T SEE THAT ATTITUDE HERE. THE DECISIONS MADE CONCERNING ENERGY ARE OF TREMENDOUS CONSEQUENCE AND INTEREST TO THE MONTANA SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION. I BELIEVE THAT RECREATION-LEISURE TIME ACTIVITY IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO OUR STATE, TO OUR PERSONAL MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. I HAVE CONSISTENTLY URGED THAT AMPLE AND DUE CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE USE OF ENERGY IN RECREATION. WE WILL ALL HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD. THOSE SACRIFICES SHOULD BE BORNE EQUALLY BY ALL SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY.

ALMOST ALL FORMS OF RECREATION -- FROM ATTENDING CONCERTS TO SKIING, TO TELEVISION VIEWING -- CONSUME ENERGY.

I HAVE BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THE EFFORTS OF THE SNOWMOBILE COMMUNITY AND THEIR COMMITMENT IN PLAYING AN APPROPRIATE ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS. MEASURES TAKEN BY THE SNOWMOBILE INDUSTRY AND SNOWMOBILERS INCLUDE:
*Technological developments which have substantially reduced the weight of new snowmobiles through the use of metal alloys, aluminum and other lighter materials.

*Incorporation of sophisticated technologies which have brought about the elimination of large displacement engines.

*The development of groomed, well-planned and close to home trails which increase snowmobile gas mileage and minimize the need for long distance transport to trail areas.

*Preparation of public service messages explaining ways to maximize use of snowmobiles.

I believe national energy goals can best be obtained not by imposing selective restrictions, but rather by urging conservation through efficient energy use.

In the United States, snowmobiles use just 12/100 of a percent of all gasoline consumed. As a point of comparison, all the electric blankets in the United States consumer 2.3 times as much energy as do snowmobiles.

The snowmobile industry and snowmobilers have made tremendous strides in conservation of energy. We must redouble our efforts in the years ahead.
AS I SAID EARLIER, MANY PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON TALK ABOUT DISCOURAGEMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I DON'T SEE THAT IN MONTANA. I STILL SEE THE SAME TRAITS OF INTEGRITY, ABILITY AND SELF-RELIANCE THAT HAVE ALWAYS CHARACTERIZED MONTANANS. AS ALWAYS, THERE IS PLENTY OF WILLINGNESS AND SPIRIT TO ATTACK TOUGH PROBLEMS.

I THINK WE CAN AND WILL FIND SOLUTIONS TO ENERGY PROBLEMS WITHOUT BULLDOZING STATES' RIGHTS AND DESTROYING THE SCENERY AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WE ALL ENJOY.

I THINK THAT WE CAN CONVINCE THE NATION THAT GOOD TRANSPORTATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF MONTANA'S RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE THAT EAT OUR WHEAT AND BURN OUR COAL AS IT IS TO MONTANA.

BUT IT WON'T HAPPEN UNLESS WE MAKE IT HAPPEN. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN PROUD TO BE A MONTANAN, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU, THE MEMBERS OF THE MONTANA SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION, AS WE STRIVE TOWARD THE KIND OF ECONOMIC FUTURE WE WANT.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MY COMMENTS WITH YOU THIS MORNING. I HAVE ENJOYED WORKING WITH YOU IN THE PAST. I HOPE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO SHARE YOUR CONCERNS WITH ME. LET'S HOPE WE HAVE A GREAT WINTER -- WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF SNOW! I WILL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS.