

2-14-1991

Address to Montana Legislature

Max S. Baucus

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(1) Subject*: **Federal Issues**

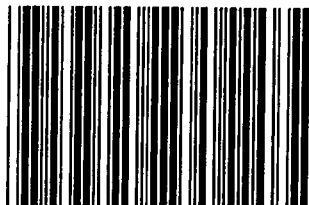
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(2) Subject* **Address to the Montana Legislature**

DOCUMENT DATE*: **02/14/1991**

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* "required information"



BAUCUS

SENATOR BAUCUS ADDRESS TO THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE

February 14, 1991.

It is a pleasure, and an honor, for me to be here with you this afternoon.

But first, as we meet here today, a word about a matter that concerns us each day. I think we all feel a certain pall cast over the country by the war. That was brought home to me again just a few minutes ago at a rally in support of our troops here on the Capitol steps.

There's not a person among us who isn't concerned about that conflict and the welfare of our men and women in the Gulf. We're proud of them, and we fully support them as well as the President's effort to find a speedy resolution of this conflict -- with a minimal loss of life.

Every day, as I look at the pictures of men and women in uniform prepared to do their job to the best of their ability, I remind myself that we at home should demand no less from ourselves.

If our soldiers are prepared to give the ultimate sacrifice for their country -- certainly we, too, can go the extra mile in service to our people.

As public servants, our most important job now is preparing our towns, our state, and our country for the future -- making sure we are doing OUR part to restore our economic strength, both nationally and locally -- making sure our country's future is worthy of our returning troops.

We must do all we can to help provide good paying jobs so that our families can make ends meet, and to provide the resource base to support education, highways and other needed services.

It won't be easy. Nothing worth doing ever is. Some events are virtually beyond our control: the duration, the cost, and the aftermath of the war in the Gulf -- The success, or failure, of the world trade talks, particularly whether we can persuade the EEC to lower its agriculture subsidies -- The potential breakup of the Soviet Union, and all of it's consequences.

While we must be prepared to deal with these events, as individuals we can do little to influence them.

But there is a lot we can do. You can certainly work on legislation that is in your domain. Conrad, Pat, Ron and I can certainly work on federal legislation in ours, such as passage

of a wilderness bill.

That's obvious. Yet it's becoming more clear to me that joint cooperative efforts between state government and the delegation are not only more frequent, but more necessary.

Let's look first at what's worked.

The McLaughlin Reserach Institute in Great Falls is a good example. The combination of five million dollars of Federal money and two million in state funds will produce a new laboratory building that will help Montana prepare for the future, with jobs and with economic growth.

In Missoula and Billings, local governments and private organizations worked with us to get funds for two other important land acquisitions -- the Rattlesnake corridor and Pompey's Pillar, totalling about \$1.2 million.

We all have to keep up our efforts to make sure those two projects are completed. And I'm confident that together, with effort, we'll see them concluded.

We can also point with pride to the federal appropriation for a new \$3.5 million Mine Waste Technology Center in Butte. The inspiration for this important project came from Montana Technologies Company and Montana Tech. And Conrad, Pat and I were able to get the congressional help that was needed.

When it's finished, the new center will mean an important and prestigious role for Butte in the national cleanup of mine wastes. It will help us clean up our own contamination and help lead the way for other states to do likewise. And it also will mean jobs and a further boost to the Montana economy. A winner all the way around.

In Bozeman, a \$5 million federal highway demonstration project for a new 19th Street interchange -- a project developed by the city, which also donated the land -- will not only help local business, it will show how treated wastewater can be used to irrigate the surrounding landscaping. That is cooperation that will pay future benefits.

And future benefits are at the heart of the \$100,000 grant we got for the University of Montana. The money will fund a project to seek cooperation among the timber industry, academia, and local businesses to develop new value-added products -- products that will mean more demand for Montana's resources and better jobs for its people.

There are other examples.

Last year the state, the delegation and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation worked together to get 3.5 million dollars to purchase additional land near Yellowstone Park for elk habitat. That appropriation is an investment in the wildlife legacy that helps make Montana such a special place.

These are examples of joint cooperative efforts that have produced results. But what about the future? What joint cooperative efforts lie ahead?

There's one that's not very glamorous, but nevertheless, very important. And that's solid waste disposal -- garbage.

I chair the Senate Subcommittee on Environmental Protection. We're tackling the whole gamut of solid waste issues this year, including allowing states to ban the importation of solid waste. We'll be doing that when we dive into renewing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. We're also going to encourage recycling.

Recycling is more than just a good concept. It will help keep our landfills in operation longer. In 1980, Montana had 250 landfills. Now, more than half are closed. And in a few years, only 35 to 50 landfills may still be open. Recycling means more than just separating garbage, however. That's the easy part. Recycling means finding and encouraging markets for products using recycled materials.

These markets just don't find themselves. That's why we need a partnership of local, state and Federal agencies working together to find innovative, creative ways to achieve more recycling. For instance, the Federal government can use the tax code to encourage development of needed plants and equipment. And state and local governments could exempt recycling operations from property taxes. And all levels of government can find ways of buying more recycled products.

You can be sure that I'll be working closely with you so that we enact a RCRA bill that works.

In another example, it was Montana's local communities and state government that let us in Washington know that some of our well-meaning environmental regulations were working real hardships on small towns.

The result was my Small Communities Assistance Bill -- a \$4.5 billion grant and loan program. The purpose of the bill is to help towns pay for public health and environmental facilities including sewage treatment plants, drinking water systems and solid waste programs. Under the bill, communities under 3,500 in population would be able to meet the financial burdens of these necessary programs.

Unfortunately we didn't get that bill all the way through the Congress last session, but I'm determined to get it through this year.

There's one final matter that perhaps deserves our closest attention -- reauthorization of our nation's highway program. The President's proposal to reform the highway system may sound good on the surface -- more money for transportation -- even if the big increases don't come until 1995 and 96. But look a

little deeper and you'll see that it is bad news for Montana.

The proposal to designate so-called highways of national significance clearly favors states with large populations and small land areas, just the opposite of Montana's situation. Worse, it would ignore many communities of significance to Montana. Towns like Lewistown, Jordan, Scobey, Broadus, Thompson Falls, Ennis, and Red lodge would be left off the new system.

And not only will we have fewer communities on the federal aid system, the state will have to pay a higher proportion of the costs. The state share for interstate costs would rise from 10 percent to 25 percent. And for rural roads, it would jump from 25 percent now to 40 percent under the President's plan. The Highway Department estimates that these new match requirements would cost Montana an additional \$30 million, more than double the current amount.

In truth, this plan, just like many of the policies of earlier years, ignores the special nature of many less populated, western states. For example, California, with some 29 million people, has about 30 feet of highway for each person. Montana, by contrast, has some 472 feet of highway per capita, nearly 16 times more. And the Administration's proposal simply doesn't take that additional burden on Montanans into account.

The Montana House has recently approved a joint resolution -- H.J.Res. 12 -- that opposes any changes in the highway formula. That's the right track and I'll work to ensure that Montana gets its share.

Furthermore, you should know that Governor Stephens is doing a good job rallying western governors. He organized governors at the National Governor's Conference in Washington last week. And he's dedicated state resources along with other western governors to help our cause.

Stan and I have already discussed western state strategy several times. I, too, have organized Western Senators on our mutual behalf. As the only member of our Congressional delegation on the relevant committee, I will coordinate our mutual effort to help assure our western states' victory.

This is Valentine's Day! I won't say that I have any romantic affection for any of you, but I do have a lot of respect and admiration for what you do. You work very hard.

You all attend all of your committee meetings, you make quick decisions as you report out bills. You all attend the full sessions in the afternoons -- it's a very compressed few months.

You also are one of the few remaining truly citizen's

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legislative bodies in the nation. You are a good cross-section of the folks you represent. You are not predominantly lawyers. You are real people.

I'm very proud to have you as my legislature. Together, we have a lot to do. You, Stan and the four of us in the delegation. Let's roll up our sleeves and get it done!

Thank you.
