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6-5-68

STATEMENT OF: Senator Mike Mansfield (D. Montana)

S. 1602 - Northwest Regional Services Corporation Act

I am happy to have the privilege to appear before your Subcommittee this morning in behalf of S. 1602, providing for the creation of the Northwest Regional Services Corporation. I want to assure you of my deep appreciation of your scheduling this hearing at a time when you are confronted with many other responsibilities and obligations.

The purposes of S. 1602 are broad in scope, but of special interest to the state of Montana. What the Montana Congressional delegation is attempting to do here is provide a vehicle for directing the utilization of Glasgow Air Force Base---a Strategic Air Command facility scheduled to close on July 1, this year. Glasgow AFB is the newest of the SAC bases. It was built on a simple plan. The Department of Defense, in its wisdom, has determined that this is one of their facilities which should be closed down for a number of reasons. The time for arguing against this decision or attempting to bring about a reversal is long past. The Base is going to close as a military installation, and we must recognize the consequences.

The people of Montana do not want to see this modern installation, valued at more than one-hundred million dollars, taken over by nature, blowing winds and sagebrush. We did not ask that

this base be located at Glasgow in north-central Montana. It was done and brought with it all the problems associated with a Federal impact of this magnitude. What we now ask is that the Federal government continue its responsibility by finding the best solution or solutions for the use of these vast facilities, thus negating the impact created by the Base closure. This can be done most effectively through the Northwest Regional Services Corporation. This corporation can be the agent to see that the Base is maintained in top-notch condition---the buildings, utilities, housing, and non-military equipment. The corporation can also negotiate the best plan for making use of the facilities.

Since the time the Base closing was announced, the people of my state have not been idle. The city of Glasgow, Valley County, the state of Montana, the Federal agencies, and the Montana Congressional delegation have been exploring many possibilities and combinations thereof. In recent months the special Presidential Task Force has processed a number of proposals---educational, vocational training, research, transportation and industry oriented. Something can be, and will be, done to make use of Glasgow Air Force Base. But, we need time to explore in detail the various plans. We must make certain this facility will be used for beneficial purposes, on a long range basis. The Northwest Regional Services Corporation.

is the agent needed to guide this effort. We are not proposing a continuing Federal financial commitment. We do ask that the Federal government recognize its obligation in this matter, and that can best be done through the enactment of S. 1602.

My able colleague, Senator Lee Metcalf, who has done so much in behalf of this legislation, is present this morning to present testimony in support of S. 1602. I concur fully with his remarks and ask that my name be associated with the statement. Also, I have received copies of many letters, addressed to your Committee, from Montana which endorse this legislation. I would appreciate it if you would have these documents made part of the record of this hearing. I am submitting the letters for the convenience of the Committee.

Thank you again for your courtesy in this matter, and I sincerely hope that the Committee will be able to report S. 1602 to the House Floor in the near future.