pleased that the following day, the House of Representatives also adopted the bill by a significant margin. The bill has now been sent to the President for his signature.

Mr. President, in the hours leading up to House consideration of the bill, a concern was raised that a provision in the bill might impact wetlands protection.

By way of background, let me say that under current law, the Department of Transportation [DOT] is required to identify unusually sensitive environmental areas. Once these areas have been identified, DOT is to promulgate special rules to minimize the chances of a liquid pipeline accident in these areas. DOT is currently in the process of implementing this provision of the law.

In fact, current law does not identify wetlands as one of the areas DOT should look at when making its identification of these unusually sensitive environmental areas. That is why I and my fellow cosponsors attempted to remedy this situation through language in S. 1505. The bill directs DOT to include ''critical wetlands'' in its consideration.

Apparently, the use of the term ''critical'' has raised a question in some parts of the environmental community as to whether we are attempting to create a new category of wetlands that might undermine other wetlands protection programs carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Corps of Engineers. This is just not true.

I want to assure first, the American people and second, the environmental community, that the language of S. 1505 is simply intended to give direction to the Department of Transportation, and its Office of Pipeline Safety.

In no way are the words intended to have any precedent-setting effect on any other law or agency. In no way are the words designed to diminish the role of DOT to protect the environment and the public's safety in and around pipelines.

Mr. President, I have recently spoken to all of my cosponsors of S. 1505, and they too agree with what I have just said. They too share the same interpretation of the words and the intention of the legislation.

This language will strengthen the pipeline safety program's protection of both the environment, and the public's safety.

Mr. President, again I want to reiterate this language is not intended to have any impact outside the pipeline safety program. I believe the criticisms aimed at the use of the term ''critical wetlands'' are unjustified. I believe it is a false canard.

Mr. President, I hope this statement clears up any administration misconception that may exist on this matter. And, I hope the President promptly signs this legislation.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, October 2, the Federal debt stood at $5,235,509,457,452.56.

One year ago, October 2, 1995, the Federal debt stood at $4,987,587,000,000.

Five years ago, October 2, 1991, the Federal debt stood at $3,675,035,000,000.

Ten years ago, October 2, 1986, the Federal debt stood at $2,125,302,000,000.

Fifteen years ago, October 2, 1981, the Federal debt stood at $994,220,000,000 which reflects an increase of more than $4 trillion, $4,241,289,457,452.56, during the past 15 years.

HERE'S WEEKLY BOX SCORE ON U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that for the week ending September 27, the United States imported 6,536,000 barrels of oil each day, 1,258,000 less than the 7,794,000 imported during the same week a year ago.

Nevertheless, Americans relied on foreign oil for 50 percent of their needs last week, and there are no signs that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf war, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970's, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil—by U.S. producers using American workers? Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 6,536,000 barrels a day.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NICHOLAS G. BERAM VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on November 16, 1996, the Nicholas G. Beram Veteran's Association will celebrate its 50th anniversary at a dinner event in Randolph, MA. I regret very much that I will not be able to join the members of this fine organization on their special occasion. However, I would like to take a few moments to share with the members of this body the association's half-century of history.

The Nicholas G. Beram Veteran's Association was founded in 1946 by a small group of Syrian-Lebanese veterans from the Boston area. From 25 charter members this group has grown to over 250 veterans; its ranks comprised of individuals who have served their country with distinction in every military conflict since World War II.

The Nicholas G. Beram Veteran's Association has made commendable efforts in honoring the service, not only of its own members, but of all Arab-American veterans. The deceased receive a special service at the wake, and their families are presented with an American flag. This year more than 450 graves of Arab-American veterans in 15 cemeteries in the Boston area were decorated. Additionally, the association maintains a long-established scholarship fund that provides annual $1,000 grants to up to nine students.

As the grandson of Lebanese immigrants, I take special pride in the activities of the Nicholas G. Beram Veteran's Association. I salute its members for their five decades of commitment to their heritage and service in our Nation's Armed Forces. On behalf of all my Senate colleagues, I congratulate the Nicholas G. Beram Veteran's Association on what I am certain will be a successful anniversary celebration, and extend my best wishes for future years of continued prosperity.

LOW INCOME HOUSING CREDIT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, Senators MOSELEY-BRAUN and BAUCUS and I want to call attention to a matter that is very important to the small group affected. At the end of my remarks I will ask that a letter to HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, signed by myself and Senators BAUCUS and MOSELEY-BRAUN, be included in the RECORD. We are asking the Secretary to review the criteria for income determination for the low-income housing tax credit and consider using the criteria and standards already in effect under the low-income guidelines for section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act as income guidelines for the low-income housing tax credit.

Senators BAUCUS and MOSELEY-BRAUN have seen situations in Montana and Illinois similar to one facing the community of Hibbing, MN. Several years ago, the city of Hibbing organized a development program to purchase and restore the historic Androy Hotel in downtown Hibbing. The hotel was run down and had been abandoned. The rehabilitation was important to the city of Hibbing not only because of the history of the Androy Hotel, but because it symbolically dominates the downtown area.

The rehabilitated hotel has been constructed for much needed senior citizen housing and there has been historic restoration of the hotel ballroom and lobby on the first floor. The low-income housing tax credit program made some of the funding provided by the city of Hibbing and a local bank possible.

The low-income housing tax credit restricts the use of housing units to seniors of a certain income level. Unfortunately, because of a unique situation, many Hibbing seniors are just above the prescribed income level. This is because in Hibbing there is a long history of saving for retirement due to the commitment by the iron mining industry to solid pension programs and Social Security income for both