states''—all located in the Western U.S.* In four states, the federal government owns more than half the land—Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Utah. In Colorado, more than one-third of the land is owned by the Federal government.

Most of these federal land holdings in the West are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service, making the BLM and the Forest service the de factor planning and zoning board for much of the rural West. Result: Issues that anywhere else in the nation would be state of local issues—like locating a road or bike path or building a water system or camping facilities—are federal issues in the West. Examples: BLM or Forest Service managers decide how many cows will graze, where they will graze and at what time of year—or where a pipeline or road must go.

Over the past decade Center-sponsored studies and forums, Congressional hearings and media reports have documented increasing dissatisfaction with ''one-size fits-all'' federal policies that guide the management of federal lands and the highly-intrusive administrative practices of federal land managers. A major concern is that land use decisions by federal authorities can have a strong bearing on jobs and economic opportunity in the small towns and rural areas adjacent to federal lands. Increasingly, Westerners and, to be fair, some federal land managers, have called for major reforms in federal land management policies—and especially for policies and practices that would allow greater decentralization of decision-making within the federal system and more local participation and administrative flexibility in this system of federal control.

The bottom line: Both Westerners and many outside the West are dissatisfied with the way the federal government managers its land holdings in the West—including national parks, wilderness and other federal lands—and the concern is highest among those most affected. These include tourists and other visitors to the West, farmers, ranchers and small business people who live and work in the rural West, and economic development professionals who struggle to make things work in the transition to America's New Economy.

In addition, there is growing concern in Congress about how President Clinton uses executive power—and especially the willingness of this executive branch to usurp and Constitution authority of Congress (violating the separation of powers among co-equal branches of government) and the states (violating the principles of federalism). The concern came to a head in October when Western members of Congress initiated a resolution to block the Clinton administration from designating 570,000 acres near the Grand Canyon as a national monument and to restrict the administration's ability to lock up other land holdings without subjecting its proposals to legislative review.

These are initial moves of an increasingly assertive Western Congressional delegation determined to restrict the power of the president to withdraw millions of acres of public land from multiple use without public participation or comment by bikers, climbers, builders of camp sites and explorers for oil and gas and other natural resources, These are among the most effected individuals and groups whose access to the land is often restricted or prohibited.

These concerns, and the timing of these moves by Western members of Congress, reflect a backlash from President Clinton's 1996 election year designation of 1.7 million acres in Utah as the Escalante/Grand Staircase National Monument, a stealth decision without Congressional review and without broad consultation with state and local elected leaders or the public.

By contrast, when the process of restricting public use of the land includes broad intergovernmental consultation and public participation, good things happen. Example: October's designation of the Black Canyon National Park in Western Colorado. This designation of America's newest national park was supported by Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Rep. Scott McInnis and other members of Colorado's Congressional delegation and by most state and local elected leaders and the public in Colorado.

*The 11 public lands states, located in the lower 48, are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

OMISSION FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2000

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PASCRELL (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) on account of official business in the district.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 4:00 p.m. on account of official business.

Mr. SCHAFFER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEVIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HANSEN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. EMERSON, for 5 minutes, March 14.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 935. An act to authorize research to promote the conversion of biomass into biobased industrial products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture; in addition to the Committee on Science for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 13, 2000, at 2 p.m.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

U.S. CONGRESS,
OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE,
Washington, DC, February 16, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 4(c)(4) of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (''VEO'') (2 U.S.C. §1316a(4)) and section 304(b) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. §1384(b)), I am submitting on behalf of the Office of Compliance, U.S. Congress, this advance notice of proposed rulemaking for publication in the Congressional Record. This advance notice seeks comment on a number of regulatory issues arising under section 4(c) of VEO, which affords to covered employees of the legislative branch the rights and protections of selected provisions of veterans' preference law.

Very truly yours,

GLEN D. NAGER,
Chair of the Board.

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998: Extension of Rights and Protections Relating to Veterans' Preference Under Title 5, United States Code, to Covered Employees of the Legislative Branch

ADVANCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

Summary: The Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance (''Board'') invites comments from employing office, covered employees, and other interested persons on matters arising from the issuance of regulations under section 4(c)(4) of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (''VEO''), Pub. L. 105–339, 112 Stat. 3186, codified at 2 USC §1316a.

The provisions of section 4(c) will become effective on the effective date of the Board regulations authorized under section 4(c)(4). VEO §4(c)(6). Section 4(c)(4) of the VEO directs the Board to issue regulations to implement section 4. Section 304 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (''CAA''), Pub. L. 104–1, 109 Stat. 3, prescribes the procedure applicable to the issuance of substantive regulations by the Board. Upon initial review, the Board has concerns that a plain reading of VEO may yield regulations that are the same as the regulations of the executive branch yet provide veterans' preference rights and protections to no currently ''covered employee'' of the legislative branch. If that is the case, questions arise over the nature and scope of the Board's authority to modify the regulations in order to achieve a more effective implementation of veterans' preference rights and protections to ''covered employees.''

The Board issues this Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (''ANPR'') to solicit comments from interested individuals and groups in order to encourage and obtain participation and information in the development of regulations.