EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

VIRGINIA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

HON. THOMAS J. BLILEY, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 1995

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce legislation that responds to the concerns of Virginians regarding national parks in the Commonwealth. The Virginia national parks bill confronts a number of Virginia's pressing park issues, addressing Shenandoah National Park, Richmond National Battlefield Park, Shenandoah Valley National Battlefields, and Colonial Parkway.

First, my bill addresses constituent concerns about the expansion of Shenandoah National Park and Richmond National Battlefield Park. These two parks share an unusual status in that they are each a relatively small park with a much larger authorized boundary. The result of this situation is that, unlike the vast majority of national parks, these parks can expand whenever they want, without congressional approval or proper representation of local communities' interests.

While Shenandoah National Park includes 196,000 acres of land, its enormous 1926 authorized boundary includes 521,000 acres, enveloping parts of many surrounding communities. Similarly, while Richmond National Battlefield is composed of several small sites surrounding Richmond, its sprawling 1936 authorized boundary includes about 250 square miles of the metropolitan area.

Many citizens and local governments within the authorized boundaries of both the Shenandoah and Richmond parks fear that there is a cloud hanging over local property titles and that the parks could expand without a fair consideration of the local communities' concerns. My bill would put to rest these fears by amending the two parks' authorized boundaries to conform to the land that the National Park Service currently owns. This legislation doesn't preclude future expansion of these parks. It simply gives the people most affected by park expansion a proper voice in the decision. I believe that these provisions will relieve the longstanding tensions between these parks and their neighbors and promote more cooperative and fruitful relationships.

Another provision of my bill responds to a Virginia General Assembly resolution asking for legislation to allow for the maintenance of secondary roads inside Shenandoah National Park. Since the park's inception in 1935, Virginia has maintained and operated secondary roads in the park under a series of temporary-use permits. These permits have recently expired and the National Park Service has not renewed them, leaving the State without permission to maintain the roads. Many of these secondary highways are regularly traveled by school buses and are badly in need of repairs and safety improvements. My bill returns these roads to the State so that they can be properly maintained.

The legislation I introduce today also incorporates the provisions of the Shenandoah Valley National Battlefields Partnership Act, legislation sponsored by Congressman WOLF, which passed the other body last year. This legislation conserves for future generations 10 Civil War battlefields of the Shenandoah Valley. Importantly, the act accomplishes these goals without infringing on the rights of private property owners. This legislation establishes partnerships between Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector to conserve and interpret the legacy of some of the most vital battlefields of the Civil War.

Another provision of my bill authorizes the National Park Service to buy a small plot of land for the Colonial Parkway near Jamestown.

The Virginia national parks bill addresses the concerns of Virginians on a variety of issues pertaining to national parks and I welcome the support of my colleagues in cosponsoring this legislation.

REGULATORY TRANSITION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 23, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 450), to ensure economy and efficiency of Federal Government operations by establishing a moratorium on regulatory rulemaking actions, and for other purposes:

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 450, the Regulatory Transition Act of 1995, but I would like to make clear what this bill does and does not do.

First, what the bill does do. This legislation will place a temporary hold on regulations which are currently under promulgation by Federal agencies. These regulations—which number more than 65,000 pages per year—are literally choking the economic growth of the Nation and must be looked at.

Again, this is a temporary hold. We are simply saying that the redtape machine needs to stop for a few months so we can see if these regulations are helping or hurting the American people. I would bet that many homebuilders, roadbuilders, and oil and gas entrepreneurs in my district would say that the redtape of regulation is definitely hurting.

However, there are clear limits to what this bill applies to. For instance, the bill explicitly states that no regulations "which would prevent an imminent threat to health or safety" would be affected by this legislation. In fact, I spoke to the chairman of the committee that wrote this bill, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. CLINGER, to ensure that these provisions were part of the final package.

But in order to ensure that critical safety regulations pending at the Mine Safety and Health Administration [MSHA] would not be affected, I will vote for an amendment during floor debate which will exempt such actions from the bill. These include important rules requiring better ventilation to avoid buildup of methane gas and restricting the use of diesel equipment to avoid coal mine fires. I simply feel that protecting the health and safety of our miners requires this added protection.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I am supportive of efforts to put a hold on the regulation steamroller known as the Federal Government. I only wanted to clarify for my colleagues that important rules regarding health and safety would not be impacted.

LAKE GEORGE, IN, WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 1995

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to authorize the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan for northwest Indiana's Deep River Basin, which includes Deep River, Lake George, Turkey Creek, and other related tributaries. The communities of Hobart, Lake Station, and Merriville, IN, would greatly benefit from the implementation of this plan.

The sediment cleanup of Lake George was first authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, Public Law 99–662, and the project has received Federal funding since 1990. The project includes flood control, environmental enhancement, and recreational development for an area that comprises the 282-acre Lake George, Turkey Creek, and Deep River in the vicinities of Hobart and Lake Station, IN.

However, the successful completion of the Lake George project is dependent upon a detailed, comprehensive investigation of the watershed, beyond the scope of the existing Lake George study authority. The legislation I am introducing today would facilitate the evaluation of how to sufficiently control the current and long-term sediment quality and quantity, address chronic flooding problems and the safety of Lake George Dam, and ensure the proper management of endangered wetlands.

In addition, a comprehensive watershed management plan is essential to determine the placement of sediment traps for the authorized Lake George project. Taxpayer dollars would be saved by instituting effective land use management techniques and trapping sediments before they reach Lake George. It is possible that sediment flow could be relieved in the unauthorized tributaries. In sum, future costs could be drastically reduced by developing and implementing a comprehensive management plan, which would result in less costly sediment traps and much