

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, let me thank my friend from Arkansas for his input and his consistent effort to bring this issue before this Congress, and certainly the U.S. Senate.

I must differ with him on his interpretation. It is not unmitigated disaster. I think every Member of the Western States, and those States that have mining, recognize that there are certainly ills. But there is also an obligation and a pride to correct them, and those corrections are underway. But the suggestion that the Department of the Interior should have the broad authority to come in with sweeping new regulations that would in many cases have an adverse effect on the industry's ability to be internationally competitive is the threat proposed by the Department of the Interior. As a consequence, I would again expect to offer a motion to strike the amendment, and a tabling motion.

I yield the remainder of my time. I thank my good friend for the spirited debate. We will keep him informed of the progress and the eventual resolve of this issue, if we don't get it done today.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry. Is there 10 minutes equally divided beginning at 2:15 on this amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS. I thank the Chair.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m. recessed until 2:16 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

##### AMENDMENT NO. 3591

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 10 minutes equally divided with respect to the Bumpers amendment.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, both caucuses are still in session. I ask unanimous consent that the beginning of the debate, 10 minutes equally divided, begin at 2:20 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, there is now 10 minutes to be equally divided with respect to the Bumpers amendment.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for the start of the debate be extended to the hour of 2:25.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for the 10-minute debate previously ordered commence as of now, and I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Louisiana, Senator LANDRIEU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized for 2 minutes.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I join my distinguished colleague from Arkansas to add just a moment of my thoughts to the tremendous argument he has made to strike this language from the Interior appropriations bill and to try to move us on in a path of real reform on this issue, reform that is so long overdue. Since 1971, attempt after attempt after attempt has been made, either to pass laws to reform the 1872 statute—attempts that have failed because there is not enough support—or we have tried to take some steps through regulations. Yet delay after delay after delay has taken place.

I want to submit for the RECORD, to date \$71 billion in damages have occurred at taxpayer expense from hard rock mining—\$71 billion. Mr. President, we have 557,000 abandoned hard rock mining sites in the United States alone that have to be dealt with, 300,000 acres of Federal land left unreclaimed, 2,000 sites in national parks in need of reclamation, as well as 59 Superfund mining sites on the National Priorities List and 12,000 miles of polluted rivers.

When will the taxpayers get some relief from this law that is so far outdated and has long since met its original intent? Besides the giving away of the land for pennies, the taxpayers are then held to pick up the tab for the damage that is caused. There are some reasonable solutions that do not devastate the industry but they do begin to clean up our environment.

I support the Honorable Senator from Arkansas and ask all of our colleagues to join with him in this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: Is time to be charged against both parties when there is nobody speaking?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, let me just say to what few colleagues may be listening, in 1976, the Secretary of the Interior was charged with the responsibility of making sure that people who mine on Federal lands belonging to the taxpayers of America, not cause undue degradation of the land.

In 1981, the Secretary promulgated regulations to determine how mining would take place. It was obvious after that that the gold mining companies were using cyanide—cyanide—to mine gold. We have had three unmitigated disasters since 1981. We have cyanide running in the rivers and streams and our underground water supplies of this country.

In 1991, Secretary Lujan tried to change the rules so we could take care of that, as well as other things that needed to be taken care of.

In 1993, everybody said, "No, let's wait; we're going to get a new bill." Nothing happened.

In 1997, Secretary Babbitt started to promulgate rules to try to take care of underground leeching of cyanide poisoning, as well as a whole host of other things. Senator REID got an amendment put on last year that said every Governor in the West would have to sign off on that. We finally compromised by saying the Secretary would have to consult with Governors of the West, which he did and which they certified that he did.

This year, they come in and say, "No, let's don't do it yet; let's have the National Academy of Sciences study it."

It takes 27 months, 27 more months under this amendment to get these rules promulgated, carefully orchestrated to go past the year 2000 and, hopefully, to get a Secretary of the Interior to their liking so we can continue to pollute the rivers and streams of underground aquifers of this country with cyanide poisoning.

People of this country have a right to expect something better than that, and all I am doing is striking this so that the Secretary can go ahead and issue the rules on November 17. If the Congress doesn't like them, let them change them. But for God's sake, let's keep faith with the American people and say we are going to do something about Summitville, CO, 1992. The bond was insufficient. They took bankruptcy. Zortman-Landusky, MT, 1998; Gilt Edge, SD, 1998.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BUMPERS. I plead with my colleagues and simply say let the Secretary do the job we hired him to do and promulgate the rules we told him in 1976 he ought to promulgate.