

REPORT ON H.R. 2490, TREASURY,
POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL
GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2000

Mr. KOLBE, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-231) on the bill (H.R. 2490) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 1 of rule XXI, all points of order against provisions in the bill are reserved.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 243 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2466.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2466) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, with Mr. LATOURETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) had been disposed of. The bill has been read through line 6 of page 21.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GEORGE MILLER
OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment and I ask unanimous consent that it be considered at this time.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California:

Insert before the short title the following new section:

SEC. ____ None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to directly construct timber access roads in the National Forest System.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be joined by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) in offering this amendment. This is intended to be a friendly amendment, one that is consistent with the committee's recommendation in its report on page 91.

After many years of debate and close votes on this floor, this amendment would put the House clearly on record to end the controversial practice of using taxpayer subsidies to construct roads for commercial timber sales on national forest land. It is a straightforward amendment.

Mr. Chairman, the taxpayers have helped construct over 483,000 miles of authorized roads in our national forests. That is a road system that is eight times, eight times longer than the interstate highway system, enough to circle the globe 15 times. While the administration has been happy to request and Congress has been happy to provide funding for new road construction in the past years, we have not been very adept at providing funds for maintaining existing roads.

As a result, the Forest Service estimates that there is a backlog of \$8.4 million in capital improvements needed on forest roads for heavily used passenger vehicles. Less than 20 percent of the roads are being maintained to the safety and design standards.

Under Secretary Jim Lyons and Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck have testified repeatedly before Congress that it is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible to keep building new roads when they do not have the budget to address the annual maintenance needs or begin to address the backlog of maintenance on the existing road system. While I appreciate the committee has provided a \$19 million increase in road maintenance, that is still much less than the \$500 million annually needed that the agency estimates is necessary to catch up with the backlog of needs.

Recognizing that they have a major problem on their hands, the Forest Service is in the midst of an 18-month moratorium on new road construction in roadless areas in most national forests. The purpose of this time-out is to develop a long-term road policy and identify nonessential roads and those roads that should be reconstructed and maintained for safe and environmentally sound practices.

In my view, the remaining roadless areas in our national forests are vital reserves and must be maintained for clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, low-impact recreation, and wilderness values. I have joined with the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), and the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), along with 162 of our colleagues, in urging the administration to come up with long-term protections of these critical roadless areas.

In closing, I wish to recognize the chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), for their work in the committee report to resolve what has been a contentious issue in past years. I also want to acknowledge the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) and our former colleague, Mr. Joe Kennedy,

who were pioneers in this effort to reduce taxpayer subsidies to timber roads.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the adoption of this amendment.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word and to engage the author of the amendment, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), in a colloquy.

I would like to ask the gentleman from California if he could help me clarify his amendment. Is it the gentleman's intention that his amendment apply only to appropriations for direct construction of timber access roads and not to any of the necessary planning, engineering, management, and support activities conducted by the agency?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I would say to the gentleman that he is correct.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, if the amendment is written to specifically target only appropriations for direct construction of timber access roads, I am pleased to support it. What I believe the gentleman is trying to accomplish is codification of the language already contained in the interior appropriations report on this matter.

For clarification, this amendment addresses the issue of appropriations for direct construction of timber access roads and does not affect the other necessary planning, engineering, management, and support activities of the Federal land management agencies. It will also not reduce or prohibit any funding which enables the agency to comply with necessary environmental regulations such as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I would say the gentleman is correct.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the RECORD information regarding the Urban Park and Recreation Fund.

The following is according to the fiscal year 2000 budget justification submitted by the National Park Service in support of the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program:

URBAN PARK AND RECREATION FUND

Funding provided in the past has also contributed to the development of programs and projects such as the innovation project established in Tacoma, Washington. The goals of this innovative project were to provide at-risk youth alternatives to gangs and drugs through participation in outdoor recreation activities, and to develop life skills such as self-esteem, leadership, decision-making, and cooperation. The program was designed to operate as an extensive partnership involving professionals from the disciplines of parks and recreation, education, city government, social services and criminal justice. It