

hundred years of promoting positive youth activities. I was a proud member of the Bennington 4-H club, and I have very fond memories of my boyhood activities that I pursued through the 4-H program.

4-H was an excellent stepping stone to future achievements for me. 4-H taught me to set goals and then provided me with the tools and developed those talents needed to achieve my goals. In the same fashion, 4-H has continued to produce powerful and positive members.

In addition to a wonderful membership, the 4-H has a real strength in the Extension Agents and 4-H advisors around the world. These people are heroes and role models to our young people and should be recognized as such. Giving up much personal time and effort to promote the dreams and achievements of today's young people, Extension Agents and 4-H advisors are true examples of service to others.

As a former member of the House Appropriations Committee, I was proud to lend my support to measures that extended or enhanced funding to promote the 4-H. I have been very supportive of this remarkable organization in the past, and I will continue to be in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the 4-H is one of the premier youth organizations of the world. The 4-H motto is, "to make the best better." I believe the 4-H is truly one of the best, and I look forward to watching this ever-changing and evolving program become even better.

INTRODUCTION OF THE URBAN SPRAWL AND SMART GROWTH STUDY ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth Study Act. This bill is designed to shine a bright light on the influence of federal actions on urban sprawl and assure that federal agencies consider how their actions may add to this problem.

Mr. Speaker, communities in Colorado and throughout the country are struggling to preserve their special character and quality of life in the face of burgeoning populations. The expected benefits of moderate, planned growth are being overtaken by the economic and environmental costs of rapid, unmanaged growth. Especially in the West and South, extreme population growth has resulted in the continual build-out of cities and the loss of surrounding farmland and open space.

In my state, this residential and commercial growth is also spreading along interstate highways into the mountain valleys and forested regions. The resulting sprawl is creating congested highways, more air pollution, greater energy consumption, overtaxed city services, and crowded schools and shopping centers. Local governments are facing rapidly increasing demands for costly public services that accompany such growth.

According to the recent census, Colorado is one of the most rapidly growing states. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. population grew by 13.1 percent. During the same period,

Colorado's growth was 30.6 percent! And in many of our counties the rate was even higher.

What does this mean? Let me highlight some issues that are occurring in my district north of Denver.

The growth of businesses and homes along US Highway 36, the major road between Denver and Boulder, is causing tremendous pressures on this roadway and greatly increasing congestion and traffic woes. The communities along its route are working together to address this problem, and I have been doing what I can to help by securing funds for the reconstruction of one of the more complex and troublesome overpasses near Broomfield. Clearly the Federal government can and should have a helpful role in addressing transportation issues like US Highway 36.

The growth has also created the risk that communities along Denver's Front Range will "grow together" and thereby create an unending metropolis from Fort Collins in the north to Colorado Springs in the south. The communities in this region are doing what they can to control this development and preserve their special character. But they could use help from the Federal government to make sure that Federal policies do not hamper their ability to keep their communities intact.

Indeed, these problems are neither inevitable nor incurable. Citizens in Colorado are asking their leaders to address the symptoms of sprawl and to help them control and manage growth more effectively. We got started with this effort in 1994, when then Governor Roy Romer initiated his "Smart Growth and Development Initiative." That initiative focused attention on the problems of sprawl, the unevenness of growth and development (some rural areas welcome more development), and the role of federal, state and local governments in creating and managing sprawl and its impacts.

Other states from North Carolina and Georgia to California and Oregon have been experiencing similar growth pressures. Many are developing processes and mechanisms to deal with these problems. Some states have used growth control legislation creating urban service areas. Others have relied on their local communities to slow down or temporarily cease the issuance of building permits. Many have appropriated funds or created sales tax initiatives to purchase and protect open spaces and agricultural lands.

All of this has been done with an understanding that state and local governments are the best place to plan for and manage growth and sprawl issues. Armed with zoning and other developing management authorities, they are best suited to gauge the pulse of their citizens and determine where, when, and how growth should best occur.

But the efforts of state, local and tribal governments to plan for and manage urban growth and sprawl can be thwarted by actions taken at the federal level. A well-developed plan by a local community can be swept aside by the routing of a major highway or the construction of a poorly sited post office. The cumulative effects of a number of small federal actions and policies together may create or foster the very sprawl that communities have fought so hard to control.

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The bill I am introducing today is designed to focus attention on the many federal deci-

sions and projects that can either foster or ameliorate sprawl. It does this through the existing requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), one of our nation's premier environmental laws. NEPA requires all federal agencies to evaluate their proposed activities and projects for social and environmental impacts and to take timely steps to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

Specifically, since 1970 NEPA has required all federal agencies to include in the planning stages for all "major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" a detailed statement by the responsible official on the environmental impacts of the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects that can't be avoided, alternatives to the action, the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources should it be implemented.

This analysis is what is essentially required in an environmental impact statement (EIS). It is not the only document required for agency decision-making, but is meant to guide agencies to consider potential environmental impacts and alternatives in making important decisions.

Most federal agencies have done a reasonably good job in implementing NEPA. However, when it comes to considering the cumulative impacts and indirect effects of federal actions—such as on sprawl—much of the NEPA analysis has not been adequate. Too often, federal agencies look at the localized short-term impacts of a proposed project and neglect to review the broader "spill over" impacts that the activity may have on a region, especially when viewed cumulatively in relation to other ongoing or planned actions influencing regional growth and development.

This observation was in fact identified in a September 2000 General Accounting Office report entitled "Community Development: Local Growth Issues—Federal Opportunities and Challenges." This report looked at the various ways that federal actions can foster sprawl or assist communities to better address sprawl impacts.

The report also noted that although NEPA requires that federal agencies review the "indirect and cumulative" impacts of federal actions or projects (such as sprawl), often that review is rather thin and not well explored. The report noted that when it comes to evaluating the "indirect and cumulative" effects of proposed federal actions (such as highways), "few agencies consider the effect of a proposed [federal] project on growth" in their NEPA reviews.

Contributing to this weakness is the fact that Federal agencies often substitute a less rigorous environmental assessment (EA) for a full EIS. On average, in recent years, Federal agencies prepared 30,000 to 50,000 EAs annually compared to only 500 to 700 EISs.

An EA report is usually much shorter and less comprehensive than a full EIS. Generally, the purpose of the assessment is to help determine whether a proposed action would result in an impact significant enough to require preparation of an EIS. Unlike an EIS, however, the treatment of alternatives is often cursory. No formal public review or comment process is required for EAs. Indeed, it is often difficult to obtain a copy of an EA report, since

there is no requirement that it be made publicly available or sent to a public document repository.

CEQ STUDY

The bill that I am introducing today will address these problems. Specifically, this bill would direct the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the agency that implements NEPA, to study how well federal agencies have been evaluating sprawl impacts of proposed federal actions in conducting their environmental reviews.

CEQ has done this type of review in the past. In 1974, CEQ studied the impacts of sprawl and produced a widely-praised report entitled "The Costs of Sprawl." In 1981, the CEQ also looked at the loss of agricultural land due to sprawl in its "National Agricultural Lands Study."

My bill would require the CEQ to update these studies by reviewing a variety of recent EISs and EAs from at least 15 federal agencies. CEQ would analyze how well these documents have examined the impacts of proposed Federal actions on growth and urban sprawl.

Among the programs to be reviewed are land and facility management programs, such as those in the Departments of Interior, Agriculture and Defense and the General Services Administration. Also transportation programs, such as those of the Federal Highway Administration and other agencies within the Department of Transportation; infrastructure programs of agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and some within the Environmental Protection Agency; regulatory programs, such as those of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and development assistance programs, such as those in the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Commerce, to name a few.

The bill further requires the CEQ to involve the public in this review by holding hearings in at least five different regions throughout the country that are experiencing an increase in urban sprawl. A city like Denver or Boulder would be a prime place, along with others in the northeast, south, mid and far west.

Within 18 months, the CEQ would be required to provide a report to the Congress on its review. This report would include findings concerning the economic, environmental and land use effects of urban sprawl. It would describe how well federal agencies have been examining the sprawl impacts of their actions and projects, and make recommendations on how their environmental reviews can be improved.

CEQ would also make recommendations for nonregulatory actions that Federal agencies can take to assist States and local communities in promoting the beneficial effects of smart growth and to minimize actions by the agencies that result in adverse effects of urban sprawl.

The bill would also require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide written comments of any proposed federal action or project on its potential for causing sprawl. This provision will clarify EPA's oversight role to make sure federal agencies are looking at the sprawl effects.

CONSULTATION

The bill also does one other very important thing. It would require greater interaction between the federal agencies and those persons affected by agency decisions.

Since the effect of federal actions or projects will be most acutely felt at the state and local level (including by Indian Tribes), it is critical that federal agencies work with these levels of government to ensure that potential growth and urban sprawl effects are addressed in Federal environmental reviews.

In that regard, the bill would require federal agencies to be more open early in the process of preparing EAs as well as EISs. Agencies would be required to notify persons that may be significantly affected by the proposed action, including each State and local government, Indian tribe and private property owner. Agencies must conduct discussions with such persons on their proposed actions and alternatives, and seek to address their concerns, if any.

This process would assure a more thorough NEPA analysis if a state governor or a lead local or tribal governmental official requested the preparation of a full EIS, due to the proposed project's impact on urban sprawl. Although the decision is not dictated by such a request, the agency would be required to give it great weight in deciding to whether to do an EIS.

Through this process, state, local and tribal governments gain extra power to make sure that the sprawl impacts of federal actions or projects are thoroughly identified and reviewed—and potentially mitigated or addressed. In so doing, the bill would help communities plan for and manage such impacts on their communities and also help federal agencies to develop actions and projects that do not exacerbate sprawl.

Obviously, this bill addresses just one federal dynamic related to sprawl. There are hosts of other ways that the federal government can help communities address sprawl issues and retain their quality of life. These include federal assistance for open space purchases, providing incentives to preserve and keep agricultural land productive, affordable housing assistance, alternative energy planning, mass transit options, and so on.

But the first step in helping communities grapple with growth and sprawl is to give them the tools they need and to make sure that proposed federal policies are not working at cross purposes. My bill is an attempt to increase the coordination between federal actions and local efforts so that communities can preserve the quality of life for their citizens and still grow in a positive, more sustainable and livable fashion. It is our obligation as federal officials to make sure the federal role is similarly positive, complementary and preserves our overall quality of life.

I submit a brief outline of the bill's provisions.

OVERVIEW—URBAN SPRAWL AND SMART
GROWTH STUDY ACT
(By Rep. Mark Udall)
SUMMARY

Federal actions and projects can significantly impact the ability of States, Tribes and local governments to plan for and manage growth and urban sprawl. The Urban Sprawl and Smart Growth Study Act would help address these impacts in two ways:

(1) Direct the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to review how well federal agencies are considering the impacts their actions have on urban growth and sprawl; and

(2) Require Federal agencies to give greater weight to the input of state, local and tribal officials in considering these impacts.

BACKGROUND

One mechanism to address the federal role in sprawl is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This Act requires federal agencies to analyze the social and environmental impacts of major actions and to take timely steps to avoid or minimize these impacts. A September 2000 GAO report, "Community Development: Local Growth Issues—Federal Opportunities and Challenges," identified this mechanism and noted that federal agencies could do a better job of reviewing projects for sprawl impacts.

What the bill does:

Smart Growth Study: The bill would require the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to review environmental documents of at least 15 federal agencies and examine how well they are considering urban sprawl and growth impacts of their projects.

Public Participation: In conducting this review, CEQ would be required to hold at least 5 public hearings throughout the country to gather public input on the adequacy of the review of growth and sprawl impacts of federal action or projects.

Smart Growth Report: CEQ would be required to issue a report to Congress on its findings and make recommendations on how federal agencies could do better in incorporating potential sprawl impacts in environmental reviews.

Comments on Sprawl: EPA would be required to include written comments of sprawl impacts of federal actions or projects during the course of their reviews of Federal environmental documents.

State, Local and Tribal Governmental Consultation: In preparing environmental documents, federal agencies would notify affected state, local and tribal governments, who could then request that the agency conduct a more thorough environmental analysis under NEPA if the project would have an effect on sprawl. Federal agencies would be required to give great weight to such requests and document their decisions in writing.

What the bill does NOT do:

Amend or alter NEPA: The bill does not amend or otherwise alter NEPA and the rules and procedures adopted under this law.

Address the Totality of the Federal Role on Sprawl and Growth: The bill does not attempt to address the full range of federal policies and actions that can have effects on growth and sprawl; it focuses on the environmental analyses that are required under NEPA.

Overturn any particular Federal Action or Project: The bill does not overturn past Federal decisions, but would increase the coordination between federal actions and local efforts so that communities can preserve the quality of life for their citizens and still grow in a positive, more sustainable and livable fashion.

HONORING FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR
DEANNA STRAND

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like Congress to take this moment to honor local flight instructor Deanna Strand who was named Federal Aviation Administration "Flight Instructor of the Year" in both the Salt Lake City District and the Northwest Mountain District. Deanna has been an instructor for 18 years, and wouldn't have it any other way.

Deanna has been around planes for more than 30 years, but her true passion has always been teaching. She owns and operates