

war with no end in sight? Another question should be do we truly intend to spend billions of dollars on bricks and mortar for a new hospital instead of on our soldiers and their facilities?

Walter Reed, like other military hospitals, will not be what it should be immediately. However, we can immediately demonstrate that Congress means business by moving to stabilize the Nation's premier military medical hospital and then getting on with the rest of the job.

LETTER OF IDAHO GOVERNOR BUTCH OTTER REGARDING "THE EVOLVING WEST"

HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, Idaho Governor Butch Otter recently sent a letter to House Natural Resources Committee Chairman NICK RAHALL regarding a committee oversight hearing on "The Evolving West."

In the eyes of many environmentalists, "the evolving West" means replacing good-paying jobs in forest products, mining, oil and gas and ranching with an economy based on ecotourism and bed and breakfasts. In Idaho, we call this theory part of the "War on the West." Numerous reputable studies show that jobs created by natural-resource-based industries are several times higher than seasonal jobs based on tourism. Working families in Idaho cannot support themselves on seasonal tourism jobs.

Governor Otter clearly and concisely defends the economy, culture and livelihoods of Western when he states:

The entrepreneurs, workers and families who devote their lives to agriculture, timber and mining have "evolved" with the landscape and the marketplace for generations. Such challenges as energy and transportation costs and reliability are changing their world at this moment.

But those are market-driven changes—issues of supply, demand and geography. Our people, and our way of life, deserve better than have our government further "evolve" them out of business.

Governor Otter further articulated the issue by stating "Most of the challenges facing such resource industries as agriculture, timber and mining in Idaho and throughout the West are the result of Federal Government policies that unreasonably restrict access, overregulate activity and discourage sustainable growth."

Madam Speaker, I would like to insert Governor Otter's letter in the RECORD and encourage my colleagues to read it.

BOISE, ID,  
February 28, 2007.

Hon. NICK J. RAHALL II,  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RAHALL: On behalf of the State of Idaho, and the people who value our lifestyle and their traditional resource-based livelihoods, thank you for the opportunity to enter a statement into the record for this hearing on the "Evolving West."

It's important to put "evolving" in context. The usual connotation evokes gradual change resulting from natural influences of environment and circumstance. However,

there is nothing gradual or natural about change in the West.

Most of the challenges facing such resource industries as agriculture, timber and mining in Idaho and throughout the West are the result of federal government policies that unreasonably restrict access, over-regulate activity and discourage sustainable growth.

From neglectful absentee land management that supplants local stewardship to on-the-ground environmental myopia, federal programs routinely provide disincentives to progressive collaboration. In a single generation they have changed much of the West from America's gilded hope for independence and self-sufficiency to a gelded collection of servile sycophants hopeful only for another round of government largesse.

Now some promote a "New West" that relegates resource industries to the status of historical relics. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy from those who urge even more federal control over our region's resources in the name of environmental urgency or modern realities. They blithely, yet earnestly, disregard the real people and real communities that were established and nurtured by previous pendulum swings in national priorities.

Make no mistake: Tourism, technology and even service are important and growing segments of our economy. They are adding to the diversity and vitality of Idaho and the West. However, they are no panacea for a region inhabited by people who have a special connection with the land, who understand their responsibility to it, and who still value self-reliance and individualism.

About 10 percent of Idaho's 1.4 million residents work in the forests, fields and on the land. The combined industries generate nearly \$10 billion a year in receipts. The residual impact generates thousands more jobs and additional billions of dollars.

As a member of Congress representing Idaho's 1st District, and now as Idaho's Governor, I see, hear and experience the resilience of people struggling to maintain their livelihood in resource-based industries every day. These citizens work through burdensome policies and regulations to provide for their families, support their communities and provide valuable products for U.S. citizens and the world.

Eighty-eight percent of Idaho is rural. About 63 percent of our landmass is controlled by the federal government. As a result, and to far too great a degree, we are not the architects of our own destiny. Yet the rugged geography and great size of Idaho—the ironically complementary qualities of remoteness and community—still draw people here.

Those people have used their ingenuity and resourcefulness to supply timber, food and a host of value-added products to the world. And our potential is far greater. If given the opportunity by our federal landlords, the people of Idaho could contribute mightily toward meeting America's future energy needs with home-grown, clean-burning renewable fuels found here in the "Evolving West."

Natural resource industries still provide some of the highest-paying jobs in our state. Counties with healthy timber, mining and agriculture operations have the highest per-capita income. The people working in these industries are conscientious stewards of the resources—relying on sound science and state-of-the-art technology to protect and wisely manage the natural resources for all to enjoy.

Viewing natural resource industries as "extractive" or "consumptive" gives unjustified short shrift to what made—and still makes—the West a dreamscape of opportunity and hope for people around the world.

The entrepreneurs, workers and families who devote their lives to agriculture, timber

and mining have "evolved" with the landscape and the marketplace for generations. Such challenges as energy and transportation costs and reliability are changing their world at this moment.

But those are market-driven changes—issues of supply, demand and geography. Our people, and our way of life, deserve better than to have our government further "evolve" them out of existence.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to address the topic of this hearing. Please accept my warmest personal regards and best wishes for a successful 110th Congress.

As Always—Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"  
C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER,  
Governor of Idaho.

NATO FREEDOM CONSOLIDATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 987, the NATO Freedom Consolidation Act. In particular, I want to applaud my friend Mr. TANNER, and the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for taking care to support Ukraine's progress towards NATO membership and designating that country as eligible for assistance under the NATO Participation Act.

Last week, I participated in a meeting between Members of the Congressional Ukrainian Congress and Members of the Ukrainian Parliament. During that meeting, it was suggested that policymakers here in Washington might be experiencing "Ukraine fatigue."

We are not Ukraine fatigued; we are Ukraine concerned. We have seen clearly, both during the Orange Revolution and in last year's parliamentary elections, that democracy works in Ukraine, but we are concerned by what it has produced.

President Yushchenko, and indeed many in Ukraine, have signaled a strong desire to join NATO. While there have been differences of late over the pace at which Ukraine should make progress towards that goal, this legislation takes exactly the right approach in reinforcing our commitment to help Ukraine achieve it.

In particular, we can assist Ukraine in continuing a variety of reforms that not only move the country towards NATO eligibility, but also help the Ukrainian people build a prosperous and stable country more broadly. Further, it is critical that we help the Ukrainian people understand what NATO membership means, both its benefits and its responsibilities.

Again Madam Speaker, I strongly support this legislation to facilitate further expansion of NATO, particularly with regard to assistance for Ukraine, and I urge its passage.

IN HONOR OF JUDGE BRUCE J. EINHORN IN RECOGNITION OF HIS EXEMPLARY SERVICE

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today and recognize Judge