

DISSENTING VIEWS OF THE HONORABLE ROB BISHOP

There are significant concerns with H.R. 4192 because it promotes expensive beachfront land acquisition and an expansion of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) while our country faces an exploding budget deficit and almost 10% of our fellow citizens are out of work. At the January legislative hearing on H.R. 4192, the Department of the Interior claimed that this bill effectively does nothing except change the facility's name, done under the guise of "elevating the visibility" of certain federal properties to encourage tourism.

However, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) made it very clear that what this bill actually does is authorize acquisition of private land with taxpayers' money. The government already has vast expanses of land under its control and a significant maintenance backlog to prove it is unable to manage what it already has. While the current recession has lowered the price of beachfront property such as this, it hardly means that the federal government is in any position to buy it.

This is yet another example of the dangerous appetite of the NLCS. Proponents of the system claim that the designation changes nothing, but somehow protects against everything, including the perceived evils of multiple use. You can't have it both ways.

A recent investigation by the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior revealed illegal lobbying by employees of the NLCS. Despite the illicit behavior of the officials running this program, the Committee Democrats pushed through this bill which expands the acreage under their supervision.

When properly managed under multiple use principles, BLM land can contribute to our twin goals of good stewardship and a strong economy with good-paying jobs. Unfortunately, this bill is a step toward accomplishing former Clinton-era Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt's plan to use the NLCS to block balanced multiple use by imposing an ever-increasing National Park-like regime that endangers our access to secure, domestic resources and increases our dependence on foreign sources of food, lumber, energy, minerals and other necessities.

ROB BISHOP.

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