

Mr. Speaker, there are also suggestions to bolster technology by creating institutes of excellence at various locations throughout the country. This is a novel concept. However, in an age of integrated technology these miniature NTC's would lack synergy. This Member is afraid that in a few years someone will suggest reorganization that combines all the institutes into one or two units. They might even be called technical centers.

Mr. Speaker, this Member is also concerned about the proposed realignment of U.S. Forest Service regions to coincide with the NRCS regions because there is not that much commonality between their functions and responsibilities. This may seem like a reasonable idea for those at the undersecretary level, but it is not a good idea for the vitality and future of the NRCS. Colocation with the Forest Service would not be for the benefit of the citizen or for programs of mutual concern. The NRCS and the Forest Service clearly serve different constituencies. Because there is little overlap between the agencies' responsibilities and areas of focus, a regional division which makes sense for one of the agencies would not necessarily work for the other.

Furthermore, colocation of the NRCS with the Forest Service would, most likely, lead to the swamping of the NRCS and its programs by the larger agency. This Member believes there is a danger that the NRCS would eventually be absorbed into the larger Forest Service, rather than the two serving as coequal agencies. Also, since the Forest Service budget has been included in the Interior appropriations bill, this Member believes this is an added complication that may not have been thoroughly considered. The anticipated savings in administrative costs, as a result of colocation with the Forest Service, may also be a bit misleading since administration of the NTC's is usually a shared function between the NTC's and the State office of the NRCS.

If new administrative regions are a good idea, and they may be, then it would seem to make sense to utilize the facilities of the existing technical centers as a base of operation within the four proposed regions in which technical centers are now located. Historically, the SCS has shared locations with the ASCS, now part of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency [CFSA], because of mutual program components and for the convenience of the citizens that utilized the services. In fact, colocation of NRCS and CFSA is being required at the local level.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Member does not believe that the recently passed reorganization legislation was intended to change the mission of the old Soil Conservation Service. However, anonymous, but highly respected USDA employees have told me that NRCS officials have indicated that NRCS is no longer in the business of production agriculture! The SCS was born as a result of a calamity caused by nature and poor stewardship of the soil. The NRCS should be dedicated to assisting the private landowner in the production of food and fiber in a sustainable and conservation-friendly manner. Sweeping changes in the mission and basic structure of the NRCS should not be undertaken in haste and need the concurrence of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly urges the USDA to carefully reexamine the current proposal to reorganize the NRCS at the national, regional, and State levels. The pro-

posed changes are, on balance, a very bad idea. I hope our distinguished former colleague, Dan Glickman, will send the USDA teams back to the drawing boards when he takes charge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

COMMERCIAL SPACE ACTIVITIES ON CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. SEASTRAND] is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss one of the most important opportunities before the United States of America today. That opportunity lies in the commercialization of space and the development of commercial spaceports. In the coming weeks I will introduce Federal spaceport legislation, but I want to take a few minutes at this time to discuss some of the important strides the State of California, and the central coast in particular, have made in fostering the growth of commercial space.

In recent years I have been a leading proponent of commercial space activities on the central coast of California. But, well before me, there was a group of enlightened men and women who looked into the future and saw an industry that was waiting to be discovered.

Following the tragic Challenger explosion, it became increasingly clear that the long-planned shuttle launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base would not take place. In addition, between 1965 and 1986, the Air Force had spent in excess of \$5 billion for a military manned-space facility at Vandenberg. The Air Force ultimately canceled the Vandenberg shuttle program and the result was a loss of 4,000 high paying jobs. It was in this environment that a group of Lompoc community activists got together with a mission to transfer Vandenberg's shuttle facilities from Air Force to NASA control. This too failed.

The next logical step was to look forward and what they saw was the small satellite commercial space market so they applied to NASA for a center for commercial development of space at Vandenberg Air Force Base. This pursuit of NASA support and funding

seemed to be the most logical way to preserve both local capabilities and the region's growing aerospace industry. Moreover, NASA was already supporting 16 commercial launch centers across the country to the tune of \$1 million a year for each one. However, after 5 years of vigorous pursuit, it became clear that NASA had little interest in funding technology development west of the Rockies.

In 1991, with the assistance of then-Congressman Bob Lagomarsino, Vice President Quayle visited Vandenberg and saw first hand its commercial space capabilities. In addition, he significantly raised its profile. The Vice President commented that America had entered a new phase in space launches that would bring an increase in the importance of commercial launch.

In the subsequent months, the Air Force made a recommendation to Motorola that Vandenberg be used as the launch site for their Iridium satellites—a potential \$2.3 billion project as it was originally outlined. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, Motorola concluded that Vandenberg would not be a suitable site and the United States was faced with a half-billion loss in booster sales to France.

Through the efforts of local activists, specifically a determined community, State, Air Force, and congressional lobbying campaign, Motorola reversed its decision on Vandenberg. They signed \$1.1 billion in satellite and booster contracts with American companies Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas.

The decision by Motorola was a critical step on the road to turning what could have been a several billion dollar white elephant at Vandenberg Air Force Base into a commercial space launch facility with tremendous economic potential.

Mr. Speaker, when I was elected to the California State Assembly in 1990, I took an active role in promoting commercial space activities along the central coast of California. This included bringing these issues to the attention of Sacramento lawmakers. In 1993, I introduced legislation which designated the Western Commercial Space Center as the California Spaceport Authority. In addition, we supported the establishment of a commercial space office within the California Department of Transportation to serve as an advocate and watchful eye for available Federal resources. We also worked to obtain a sales tax exemption for qualified property used in launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base. Gov. Pete Wilson, a commercial space supporter, earmarked \$350,000 in 1993 matching funds.

In 1994, I introduced legislation to expand the charter of the California Spaceport Authority to encompass responsibility for development of regional technology alliances, legislation, and determinations concerning

the commercial space business. Also in 1994, the State of California's earmarked matching funds rose to \$550,000.

What worked for us in California was removing the issue of spaceport development from the larger issue of commercial space. We made a successful argument that the narrow issue of spaceport development was largely a transportation infrastructure issue. After all, if there is no facility from which to launch, there would be no launches.

The first thing was define a spaceport? A spaceport, in its best description, is a transportation center. It should be viewed in the same way as an airport or a seaport. A spaceport puts semi-trucks—rockets—on end and drives—launches—them into space. In the current environment this is an expensive proposition because these vehicles can only be used one time. It is my belief that commercial business will drive down these high costs and encourage developments in reusable launch vehicles.

It is important to recognize that facility development is separate from the overall commercial space industry. In the United States, the available parts of the market are launch bases, boosters, and satellites. The missing piece of the puzzle is a facility for the launches. Currently, launch facilities are controlled by the Air Force, but California is building the first commercial facility. What makes the California Spaceport special is the fact that it will be the first one capable of launching in polar orbit. Market reports and international competitors prove that polar orbit launches are the future of commercial space.

As with most things in life, timing is a very key issue. It is imperative that spaceport development progress quickly in order to maintain the other elements of the market. In the international arena, competition is fierce. This competition is currently headed by the European Space Agency [ESA] and propelled by the French. Other strong competitors are the Russians, Japanese, Chinese, and Canadians, while still others, including the Australians, are looking to get in.

Currently, the French now launch roughly 60 percent of the world's commercial satellites. From its first launch in December 1979, the spaceport in French Guiana has progressed rapidly. They have moved from 6 launches a year to a potential for 36 launches per year by the end of the decade.

The United States has many potential launch bases and two existing ones—the California and Florida spaceports. The question we must ask is, with existing spaceport facilities—plus all of the potential launch bases—and a healthy market for boosters and satellites, why isn't the United States in a better position to compete with our international competitors for a bigger share of the commercial launch market?

Mr. Speaker, in California we are no longer in the position of encouraging commercial space activity, we are there. A limited partnership between ITT and California Commercial Spaceport, Inc. puts to work \$10 million in Federal and State grants and a \$30 million investment by ITT toward the development of commercial space launches at Vandenberg.

This limited partnership, called Spaceport Systems International [SSI], is working hard to open the spaceport launch facility by 1996. They recently announced they will launch four Taurus vehicles in 1999. They had previously projected 15 launches by the end of 1997. Those payloads will include low Earth orbit [LEO], Earth observation, research, education, and government.

These customers will use the California Spaceport to launch LEO satellites into polar orbit—a unique ability that will generate significant business and jobs—400 to 500 for the construction phase and 700 to 1,000 when operational. However, the big jib numbers, in the tens of thousands, will be in the satellite manufacturing that will be drawn to this low-cost access to space provided by the California Spaceport.

The spaceport philosophy is a commitment to user-friendly environments, integrated launch services, and low-cost access to space. The economic potential for California and, more importantly, the Nation, is unlimited. In California the growth of spaceport helps in the revitalization of high-technology industries which have been hurt by defense cuts. This means more high paying jobs and improving local economies with new hotels, homes, shopping centers, education centers, and research facilities.

It is my hope that California can be used as a model for future spaceport development. We have stepped out of the box with a fresh perspective on space. Space is no longer the jurisdiction of little men in funny suits, Star Trek movies, or the Shuttle. The international commercial space industry is our highway into the 21st century and holds the promise of enormous economic benefits to our entire Nation.

□ 1520

PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2, LINE-ITEM VETO ACT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during further consideration of H.R. 2 pursuant to House Resolution 55 the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment, and that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may reduce to not less than 5 minutes the time for voting by electronic device on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote by

electronic device without intervening business, provided that the time for voting by electronic device on the first in any series of questions shall be not less than 15 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I will not object, but I want to inquire of the majority leader, it is my understanding that what we are trying to arrange here is a system for voting, in consideration of the rest of the line-item veto bill on Monday, so we can start at 2 p.m., have amendments with a 30-minute time limit for the amendments that are left, have an hour time limit on the substitutes that are left, that we would not begin the consideration of the Stenholm substitute until 5 o'clock, and that the order of voting when the voting would begin would be on the amendments first and then ending finally with the Stenholm substitute, and then on to final passage of the bill. Is that generally a correct statement?

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman will yield, the gentleman is absolutely correct.

Mr. GEPHARDT. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I would just like to engage the distinguished majority leader in a short colloquy about the family-friendly nature of the schedule and also the productivity and effectiveness of the congressional schedule.

Many of us, as the gentleman from Texas knows, are frustrated with the current schedule, whether we have young children, whether we are on the east coast, the west coast, or in the Midwest. We see we are starting voting at 5 o'clock and 6 o'clock at night. We are all working 70 or 80 hours a week, but we are working many of these in the middle of the night where we never see our families. We are having votes overlap between committees on floor votes. Certainly the distinguished gentleman from Texas is as frustrated as anybody with this schedule, and while a bipartisan committee was appointed to work on this for the first 100 days, I did not sign that resolution on the bipartisan committee because I was afraid this would happen. It has happened. We have got angry and angrier families.

□ 1530

I am hopeful, if the majority leader would commit to working with us as he has in the past on improving this, if not immediately, then sometime in the next 90 days.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?