

when developers sell unimproved lots, and using sales contracts, retain title until the debt on the property is fully paid. They often do not have adequate water and sewage access.

These conditions create a serious public health, safety, and environmental risk to the border regions. Perhaps more importantly, they represent third-world conditions in the United States. I believe, and the Secretary of HUD agrees, that we must make the eradication of such conditions within the United States a national priority.

It is my hope that my colleagues will accept this amendment, addressing the problems of the colonias has been a national priority, and I believe that it should remain one.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I know that this amendment is supported by Senators on this side, the Senator from New Mexico and the junior Senator from Texas. We are making inquiry to determine whether they wish to speak on this amendment.

Mrs. HUTCHISON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I wish to add my statement in support of Senator BINGAMAN's amendment of which I am a cosponsor. I do appreciate this 10 percent set-aside for the colonias. Colonias are places that we did not know existed in America. You would not believe it. I have walked in a colonia. They are places that people live that do not have good water, and they do not have sanitary systems or sewage treatment. They are terrible.

What we are we doing with this amendment is to say that it is a priority for our country to clear those places up so that every American has the ability to live in sanitary, basically clean conditions. I support the amendment. I appreciate Senator BOND taking this amendment for us to make sure that we serve the people in need.

The issue of designating a portion of border States' CDBG money for housing is one of giving proper recognition and emphasis to the development needs of severely distressed, rural and mostly unincorporated settlements located along the United States-Mexico border. Colonias are located within 150 miles of the Mexican border, in the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

Texas has the longest border with Mexico of any state.

In 1993, Texas reported the existence of 1,193 colonias with an estimated population of 279,963 people. In 1994, New Mexico reported 34 colonias, with a population of 28,000 residents.

Senator BINGAMAN and I believe it important to formally recognize the scale of this challenge.

For fiscal year 1995, VA, HUD appropriations report language specified 10

percent of the State's share of CDBG money for housing in colonias. The conference report did not specify, "colonias," but instead, folded that commitment into \$400 million for a number of new initiatives.

That money came under a sunset provision. It requires new action to continue the formal commitment from us at the Federal level.

This does not involve any new or additional funds.

It is merely a statement of urgent priority that these funds be available for housing in the colonias upon application.

This money only comes from the border States' shares. It does not impinge on any other States or their resources.

Mr. President, I urge we reaffirm that commitment to the people of the colonias that they are truly a part of American society and America's priorities.

I urge my colleagues to support the Bingaman-Hutchison amendment.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest we proceed to a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2791) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I am honored to have the opportunity to welcome, on behalf of the entire Senate, a distinguished delegation from the European Parliament here for the 43d European Parliament and U.S. Congress interparliamentary meeting.

Led by Mr. Alan Donnelly from the United Kingdom and Ms. Karla Peijs of the Netherlands, the 18-member delegation is here to meet with Members of Congress and other American officials to discuss matters of mutual concern.

No doubt about it, the European Parliament plays a pivotal role in shaping the new Europe of the 21st century. There are many challenges ahead—assisting the new democracies as they build free-market economies and defining relations with Russia, among them. Continued contact and good relations between the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress are essential in developing better economic ties with Europe and in reinforcing our common goals.

I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming our distinguished guests from the European Parliament.

[Applause.]

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of the delegation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the list was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. Alan Donnelly, Chairman, Party of the European Socialists, United Kingdom.

Ms. Karla Peijs, Vice Chairman, European People's Party, Netherlands.

Mr. Javier Areatio Toledo, European People's Party, Spain.

Ms. Mary Banotti, European People's Party, Ireland.

Mr. Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, European Liberal Democratic and Reformist Party, Netherlands.

Mr. Bryan Cassidy, European People's Party, United Kingdom.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Cot, Party of European Socialists, France.

Mr. Gerfrid Gaigg, European People's Party, Austria.

Ms. Iona Graenitz, Party of European Socialists, Austria.

Ms. Inga-Britt Johansson, Party of European Socialists, Sweden.

Mr. Mark Killilea, Union for Europe Group, Ireland.

Ms. Irini Lambraki, Party of European Socialists, Greece.

Mr. Franco Malerba, Union for Europe Group, Italy.

Ms. Bernie Malone, Party of European Socialists, Ireland.

Mr. Gerhard Schmid, Party of European Socialists, Germany.

Mr. Josep Verde I Aldea, Party of European Socialists, Spain.

To be determined, European People's Party.

SECRETARIAT, INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Dr. Manfred Michel, Director-General for External Relations.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION DELEGATION

Mr. Jim Currie, Charge d'Affaires, European Commission.

Mr. Bob Whiteman, Head of Congressional Affairs, EC Delegation.

RECESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess so that we may personally greet Members of the European Parliament.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:40 p.m., recessed until 1:44 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SANTORUM).

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending committee amendments be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2792

(Purpose: To make funds available to support continuation of the Superfund Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative)

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. CHAFEE] for himself and Mr. LIEBERMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 2792.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 142, line 20, after the period, insert the following: "Provided further, That the Administrator shall continue funding the Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative from available funds at a level necessary to complete the award of 50 cumulative Brownfield Pilots planned for award by the end of FY96 and carry out other elements of the Brownfields Action Agenda in order to facilitate economic redevelopment at Brownfields sites."

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, today I offer this amendment on behalf of myself and Senator LIEBERMAN to preserve a very small but important part of the Superfund Program, EPA's brownfields economic redevelopment initiative. We all know what brownfields are—they are the abandoned plant that might be contaminated, or might not be. No one knows exactly what the problems at these sites are, so people are afraid to invest in them or redevelop them, people are afraid of liability. So rather using old industrial sites, new development flees the city and tears up our open space, greenfields. In the meantime, these old sites remain a blight and a big hole in local tax bases.

EPA's brownfields economic redevelopment initiative—its brownfields program—is a Superfund success story. The brownfields initiative is a cost-effective means of ameliorating some of these unintended consequences of Superfund, especially in economically depressed urban areas. Real risk reduction is achieved when brownfields sites are cleaned up, and it is private investment money that does most of the work. The small amount of money EPA allocates to brownfields is highly leveraged.

This effort includes 50 planned pilot projects across the Nation to demonstrate that we can reuse existing contaminated sites for economic development instead of undeveloped clean sites. Each of these pilot projects are awarded up to \$200,000 over 2 years. These funds are used to help with the up-front investigations and evaluation that must take place before deciding on how best to clean a site.

To date, EPA has awarded about 18 out of 50 planned grants. I think it's vitally important that EPA's brownfields effort continue as a high priority, and the purpose of my amendment is to make sure that this happens.

What is the consequence if we fail to encourage the private sector to take on brownfields sites? Often, the sites remain abandoned or orphan—as many are—they may migrate onto the NPL or State lists for publicly funded clean-up. The Superfund bill Senator SMITH is working to bring forward in the next few weeks will contain provisions to make brownfields redevelopment easier.

This is a good way to spend some of the limited Superfund dollars available this year. We get real risk reduction by examining and evaluating these sites. We are learning valuable lessons at each of the pilots on how to create public and private partnerships between the Federal Government, State and local government, and the private sector to get abandoned urban eyesores back on the tax rolls, producing jobs in cities like Providence. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to preserve one of the best things EPA has done on Superfund in the past several years.

I commend Senator BOND, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee as well as chairman of the Committee on Small Business and the Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over Superfund, for his interest in Superfund and his commitment to helping us move forward with Superfund reform this year.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the junior Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. SANTORUM] be added as a cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I am delighted that the Senator from Rhode Island has offered this amendment. I am very glad he called it to our attention. We have, in St. Louis, MO, a significant impact from the brownfields question. I think this is one of EPA's better initiatives. It may make one suspicious to look at the breadth of support of this.

But David Osborne, author of "Reinventing Government," said:

This is an important initiative. The barriers to cleaning up urban Superfund sites have stopped redevelopment in its tracks time and time again. This initiative will begin to solve that problem. It will bring businesses back to the city, create jobs and increase the urban tax base.

Gregg Easterbrook, author of "A Moment on the Earth," said:

EPA's Brownfields initiative represents ecological realism at its finest, balancing the needs of nature and commerce. This path-breaking initiative shows that environmental protection can undergo genuine regulatory reform, becoming simpler and more cost-effective, without sacrifice of its underlying mission.

Philip Howard, author of "The Death of Common Sense," said:

EPA's Brownfields initiative represents an important change in direction. It will help the environment and the economy at the same time by dealing with the problem of contaminated properties in a commonsense way.

I think this is a win-win proposition for everybody. We are delighted to accept the amendment on this side.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I wish to congratulate the Senator from Rhode Island who came forth with this amendment. Not only do we not object to the amendment, we enthusiastically support it.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I wanted to thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland and also the manager of the bill, Senator BOND, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Both have been very helpful to us as we worked our way through this amendment. I particularly am grateful to all staff who has also been very cooperative.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2792) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CHAFEE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2793

(Purpose: To provide funding for the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Program)

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. THURMOND] proposes an amendment numbered 2793.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 3, line 19, strike "\$1,345,300,000" and insert "\$1,352,180,000."

On page 3, strike line 24 and add "as amended; Provided further, That of the amounts appropriated for readjustment benefits, \$6,880,000 shall be available for funding the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training program as authorized by sections 4481-4497 of Public Law 102-484, as amended."

On page 10, line 18, strike "\$88,000,000" and insert "\$872,000,000."

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, this amendment will provide funding for the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act, known as SMOCTA. SMOCTA is the common name for it.

It will provide job training for unemployed veterans, veterans whose occupational specialty in the military is not transferable to the civilian work force, and for veterans rated 30 percent disabled or higher. The amendment

provides funding to continue the program for 1 year. It is paid for by transferring less than 1 percent of VA's general operating expense account, \$8 million. In other words, the general operating expense fund contains \$880 million; this amendment transfers only \$8 million, less than 1 percent.

Mr. President, the SMOCTA program was created by the fiscal year 1993 Defense Authorization Act as a pilot program to provide training wage subsidies to employers who hire recently separated unemployed service members for new careers in the private sector. The 1993 Defense Appropriations Act appropriated \$75 million for SMOCTA. Those funds have been largely obligated, and any remaining balance will not be available for obligation after September 30, 1995. This amendment will provide a minimum level of funding to carry out the program through its period of authorization, September 30, 1996. Mr. President, although there were some initial bureaucratic delays in getting the program implemented, the program has been very successful. Over 8,300 employers have certified training programs, including national corporate chains. Those employers have filed nearly 15,000 notices of intent to employ veterans. Over 50,000 veterans have been certified for the program. Approximately 10,700 veterans have been placed in job training, for a period of 12–18 months, at an average cost per veteran of approximately \$4,000.

The Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs have worked hard to establish this program. It would be a mistake to let this program expire at this time. To not extend this program would send a message to the veterans of our Nation, caught in the military downsizing, that we do not care about their futures. It would tell employers that the Federal Government cannot be trusted in partnership agreements. I do not believe these are messages the U.S. Senate wishes to send.

Mr. President, without this amendment, SMOCTA funding will terminate at the end of the current fiscal year. My amendment will cure the conflict between the authorization period and availability of appropriations for this program.

Mr. President, there has been some debate over the proper funding source for this program. This results partly because the original funding for this program was from Defense appropriations. However, let me emphasize that this is not a program directly related to our funding military readiness or modernization. It is a program for veterans. The authorization recognized this program would require a partnership between the Defense Department, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Passing funding responsibility from one agency to another will not aid our veterans who rely on readjustment benefits.

Mr. President, the SMOCTA program has strong support in the business com-

munity and the veterans community. I encourage my colleagues to join in supporting this amendment.

Mr. President, as I understand it, both sides have agreed to accept this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2793) was agreed to.

Mr. THURMOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BOND. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. THURMOND. I wish to thank the manager of the bill on behalf of the veterans of this country.

AMENDMENT NO. 2794

(Purpose: To direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency not to act under section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act to prohibit the manufacturing, processing, or distributing of certain fishing sinkers or lures to giving notice to Congress)

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I offer an amendment on behalf of Senator HARKIN. I send the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending amendment is set aside.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI] for Mr. HARKIN, proposes an amendment numbered 2794.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. . The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall not, under authority of section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2605), take final action on the proposed rule dated February 28, 1994 (59 Fed. Reg. 11122 (March 9, 1994)) to prohibit or otherwise restrict the manufacturing, processing, distributing, or use of any fishing sinkers or lures containing lead, zinc, or brass unless the Administrator finds that the risk to waterfowl cannot be addressed through alternative means in which case, the rule making may proceed 180 days after Congress is notified of the finding.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this legislation deals with lead sinkers. It has been worked out on both sides. Senator HARKIN wished to have this amendment adopted. It has been cleared, I believe, by both sides, and I move its adoption.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, since my State of Missouri is not only a leading manufacturer of fishing lures and therefore very much interested in it—Missouri happens to host a large number of people who enjoy fishing—it is therefore with great pleasure on behalf of this side that we are willing to accept the HARKIN amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2794) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2795

(Purpose: To provide HUD with the authority to renew expiring section 8 project-based contracts through a budget-based analysis. This will provide HUD with the tools to begin to address the high-cost of section 8 project-based assistance while Congress begins to fully address options in lieu of the renewal of section 8 project-based assistance. This amendment will help provide HUD with tools to avoid foreclosure and possible displacement of tenants)

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk, and I ask the pending amendment be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report. The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND] for himself, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. MACK, proposes an amendment numbered 2795.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 105, beginning on line 10, strike "SEC. 214." and all that follows through line 4 on page 107:

"SEC. 214. SECTION 8 CONTRACT RENEWAL.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall renew upon expiration each contract for project-based assistance under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 that expires during fiscal year 1996 in accordance with this subsection.

"(b) CONTRACT TERM.—Each contract described in subsection (a) may be renewed for a term not to exceed 2 years.

"(c) RENTS AND OTHER CONTRACT TERMS.—Except as provided in subsections (d) and (e), the Secretary shall offer to renew each contract described in subsection (a) (including any contract relating to a multifamily project whose mortgage is insured or assisted under the new construction and substantial rehabilitation program under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937):

"(1) at a rent equal to the budget-based rent for the project;

"(2) at the current rent, where the current rent does not exceed 120 percent of the fair market rent for the jurisdiction in which the project is located; or

"(3) at the current rent, pending the implementation of guidelines for budget-based rents.

"(d) LOAN MANAGEMENT SET-ASIDE CONTRACTS.—The Secretary shall offer to renew each loan management set-aside contract at a rent equal to the budget-based rent for the unit, as determined by the Secretary, for a period not to exceed 1 year.

"(e) TENANT-BASED ASSISTANCE OPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may, with the consent of the owner of a project that is subject to a contract described in subsection (a) and with notice to and in consultation with the tenants, agree to provide tenant-based rental assistance under section 8(b) or 8(o) in lieu of renewing a contract to provide project-based

rental assistance under subsection (a). Subject to advance appropriations, the Secretary may offer an owner incentives to convert to tenant-based rental assistance.

“(f) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—If a contract described in subsection (a) is eligible for the demonstration program under section 213, the Secretary may make the contract subject to the requirements of section 213.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—

“(1) BUDGET-BASED RENT.—For purposes of this section, the term “budget-based rent”, with respect to a multifamily housing project, means the rent that is established by the Secretary, based on the actual and projected costs of opening the project, at a level that will provide income sufficient, with respect to the project, to support—

“(A) the debt service of the project.

“(B) the operating expenses of the project, including—

(i) contributions to actual reserves;

(ii) the costs of maintenance and necessary rehabilitation, as determined by the Secretary;

(iii) other costs permitted under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as determined by the Secretary.

“(C) an adequate allowance for potential and reasonable operating losses due to vacancies and failure to collect rents, as determined by the Secretary.

“(D) an allowance for a rate of return on equity to the owner not to exceed 6 percent.

“(E) other expenses, as determined to be necessary by the Secretary.

“(2) BASIC RENTAL CHARGE FOR SECTION 236. “A basic rental charge” determined or approved by the Secretary for a project receiving interest reduction payments under section 236 of the National Housing Act shall be deemed a “budget-based rent” within the meaning of this section.”.

“(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.”.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of myself, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. MACK. This is designed to provide HUD with authority to renew expiring section 8 project-based contracts through a budget-based analysis.

Now, what that means is that we are working with HUD, with OMB and the Congressional Budget Office to resolve a very difficult problem where project-based certificates have been issued in the past. The cost is above market rate. These are expensive projects.

HUD knows, we know, the budget offices know, we have to resolve this problem. Since we were unable to get an agreement on a measure to fix the problem this year and stay within our budget allocations, there was a prospect that in some areas where there was very little available housing, people who live in project-based section 8 housing could be displaced.

This problem was particularly acute in Salt Lake City, UT. Senator BENNETT brought that to our attention. We found that there are many other areas around the country where it is possible that the developments could be converted to private use, people displaced. Even though we would make available section 8 certificates for those people displaced, as a simple matter of fact, there may not have been enough housing to take care of them. This is particularly true for the elderly and disabled.

This amendment tells the Secretary to use a budget-based analysis to take a look at the costs of operating the Department and the debt service, to renew the contracts for a year on a basis which is fair both to the owner of the property and to the Federal Government so that we may continue to work on the problem of resolving the question about the expenditure on project-based certificates which are far above market rate.

This is a fix that I think is acceptable on both sides. I hope my colleagues will accept it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to rise in support of the amendment offered by the Senator from Missouri. I absolutely concur with his remarks.

In our hearings in the subcommittee, we found that the issues related to market rate are quite severe. They need to be addressed. They need to be addressed with some promptness and urgency. Otherwise, we could be facing the debacle not unlike some of the issues we faced in the S&L crisis.

Senator BOND of Missouri is really an expert on this issue. I believe we should follow his lead on this amendment. I support it. I am willing to accept it.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I would like to ask the distinguished chairman for assistance in dealing with an issue that is very important to myself, Senator EXON and the people of the rural areas of Nebraska. As you are aware, there is currently a large differential in rents between rural and urban areas in our country. I am concerned that too large a variance would have a significant adverse effect on low income elderly populations. We must enable developers to continue to provide our rural areas with this valuable service. This is a problem not just in Nebraska but also in neighboring States that have large rural populations. I understand the need for the budgetary constraints that have been placed upon your committee. However, unrealistically low fair market rents will have a devastating impact on the numerous rural beneficiaries of assisted housing. As the fair market rent levels decline, the negative effects of excessive rent differentials between urban and nearby rural areas become more significant. I respectfully ask the chairman to do what he can to rectify this unfortunate situation in the conference.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I share the concerns expressed by Senator KERREY. Obviously there will be some real variances between smaller, rural communities and our larger, metropolitan areas. Nonetheless, we need to continue to provide a realistic incentive for developers to build projects in areas that are experiencing a shortage of affordable housing. I would also urge the committee to review the current mechanism.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the leadership that Senator KERREY has taken on this issue. One of the reasons that the current situation regarding fair market rents in small

towns is so unfair is the history of how many of these projects were developed up to 20 years ago. The rent limitations that were used at the time were about the same for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Now, at contract renewal time, the projects in smaller towns outside metropolitan areas are subject to far different rent standards than urban areas face. There are some projects that face rent levels that will actually be lower than the rents approved 20 years ago when the projects were built. These very low rent levels create a situation where projects will not be able to be maintained. Projects may be forced into foreclosure or conversion to regular rental housing. Current renters in my State, mostly the elderly and disabled, will face deteriorating buildings or eviction. They may get new section 8 certificates. But, the availability of affordable housing in homes near elderly resident's families will not, in a large number of cases, be available. I ask that this problem be examined in conference and relief fashioned to treat projects in small towns outside metropolitan areas in a fair and even handed manner.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator's comments. I certainly understand the severity of this problem. Missouri, as well as Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa is home to a largely rural population. I, too, am concerned for the future of this program. I will work with Senator MIKULSKI and members of the conference to address this issue. We include in this bill provisions which will make available budget-based rent renewal levels for project-based contracts which will remove the artificial impediment of the current “fair market” calculation. I hope this will help address this serious concern.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2795) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MACT

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I rise for the purpose of engaging in a short colloquy with the distinguished Senator from Missouri, the chairman of the VA/HUD Appropriations Subcommittee. Will the Senator assist me in clarifying an issue in the bill under consideration today?

Mr. BOND. I would be pleased to assist my colleague, the senior Senator from Mississippi and senior member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. COCHRAN. I thank the Senator from Missouri. The issue I wish to clarify is the Appropriations Committee's intent regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's refinery maximum achievable control technology [MACT] rule. This rulemaking is of deep concern to me, as I am sure it is to the Senator from Missouri.

In promulgating the refinery MACT rule, EPA has ignored the principles of sound science, used outdated data to establish emissions controls, developed extremely questionable estimates of the benefits to be gained from these emissions controls, and failed to take into account the impact of these regulations on the smaller refiners around the nation, including those in my home State of Mississippi.

Does the Senator from Missouri share my concerns?

Mr. BOND. Yes, sir, I do. In fact, the concerns of the Senator from Mississippi reflect the concerns of the Appropriations Committee. In the committee's report on this bill, we expressed our disapproval with the way in which EPA promulgated the refinery MACT rule. To quote from the committee report: "The committee strongly encourages EPA to reevaluate the refinery MACT and other MACT standards which are not based on sound science".

Mr. COCHRAN. I thank the Chairman. One further point. Would the Chairman agree that there is significant sentiment on the Appropriations Committee and in the Senate to talk further, and perhaps take stronger, action on this issue next year if EPA does not engage in a serious reevaluation of the refinery MACT rule during fiscal year 1996?

Mr. BOND. That is indeed the sentiment of many members of the committee. I have heard from many of my colleagues, both on the Appropriations Committee and the authorizing committee—the Environment and Public Works Committee—on the refinery MACT issue. The Senator and his colleagues can be assured that if EPA does not heed the directive contained in the Committee report on this bill, the leadership of the committee will be prepared to take additional action in the future.

Mr. COCHRAN. I thank the Chairman. I appreciate this willingness to address the refinery MACT issue in the committee report.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with chairman of the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. I want to discuss the need for regulatory reform at the Environmental Protection Agency.

As the chairman knows, I have been extremely concerned with the petroleum refinery MACT regulation. MACT is the acronym for the term maximum achievable control technology. I would like to thank him for adding report language which reflects the committee's concerns with this rule. I strongly

encourage EPA to reevaluate this rule because it is not based on sound science.

In 1980, industry did not have the extensive controls and technologies that are now in use. In fact, in 1980, the requirements from the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments had not yet kicked in. Obviously, in the last 15 years, refineries have made significant improvements in reducing emissions. EPA has simply ignored all of these improvements and based a rule on 15-year-old data in order to inflate its benefits.

This rule will cost refineries and fuel consumers in this country at least \$100 million each year. This puts refineries in Montana and throughout the Nation at economic risk. And what about the jobs these refineries provide the local communities? Well, they are at risk, too. Almost \$20 million of this will be spent to meet the paperwork and monitoring requirements of the rule which do nothing to improve public health or the environmental protection.

Mr. President, I would like to make one final point. All of the information is based on EPA's own data and analysis. None of this information is based on any kind of industry study. This information can be found in the final rule published in the Federal Register on August 18, 1995. Refiners in Montana have simply asked that this rule be based on sound science, including accurate and current data. They have not asked for any rollback of environmental regulations. Since the data are the basis for the entire rulemaking, it seems to me that EPA must go back to the beginning and redo the rule from scratch.

I look forward to working with the chairman in conference regarding the refinery MACT rule; and I thank him.

Mr. BOND. The Senator from Montana has valid concerns. Other members of the subcommittee have also questioned the basis for this rule. I will work with him and other members in the conference committee regarding the regulation. This rule will serve as an important precedent for subsequent MACT regulations for other industries.

Mr. BURNS. I appreciate the chairman's comments and support.

BREVARD AND LEAVENWORTH VA FACILITIES

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, it strikes me that the VA has not given a great deal of thought to defining its mission for the next century. In its fiscal year 1996 budget submission, the VA requested funding for two new hospitals. However, it is clear that our veterans would be better served if the VA, like the rest of the Nation's health care providers, began focusing on outpatient and ambulatory care. I note with interest that the committee has not funded the VA's hospital construction request. I believe that is a result of the committee's concern about VA's lack of strategic planning as well as budgetary concerns.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, my colleague is correct. Today, the VA is unable to provide a strategic vision of VA

health care for the next century that squares with facility investment decisions. The VA's fiscal year 1996 request continues to emphasize costly and inefficient health care delivery systems that are out of step with the overall national trends in health care. Given the fact that private-sector health care providers have moved in the direction of outpatient care, coupled with plummeting Federal budgets and the demographic trends related to veterans, it would not be prudent to build additional hospitals. Similarly, other investment decisions such as building new ambulatory and long-term care facilities cannot be made rationally without an overall plan that reconciles facilities to health care goals and populations. I am also concerned about the budgetary requirements of building new facilities. Not only is construction costly but operating costs will put additional pressures on a declining budget.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, east central Florida is a critically underserved area with a growing population of retired, limited-income veterans. Florida has the highest percentage of veterans 65 years and older in the Nation. They currently represent 30 percent of the State's veterans population and, contrary to GAO's recent report, the numbers are increasing daily. Certainly, Florida veterans, Senator GRAHAM, and I acknowledge the budget constraints before this Congress and the need for a balanced budget. For this reason, we have modified our present request to reflect fiscal reality while still meeting long identified medical service needs. Recognizing that neither the House nor the Senate intend to fund the original plan for a comprehensive medical facility at this time, we are requesting that the VA be able to use the previously appropriated fiscal year 1995 funds for the design and construction of an outpatient medical facility and long-term nursing care facility which will provide immediate relief to Florida veterans.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I stand along side my colleague, Mr. MACK, in calling this Congress to take action in providing long promised and much needed medical services to Florida veterans. While Congress squabbled over the location of the facility, our veterans continued to wait. Finally, with the issue of location resolved, the President's fiscal year 1996 budget request included this facility, and veterans thought they saw the light at the end of the tunnel. We were extremely disappointed to say the least when that request was ignored by the House VA/HUD Subcommittee.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, rather than a new hospital, I propose a nursing home facility and an outpatient clinic which will help complete the southeast regional and statewide network of veteran health care providers while addressing the need to provide long-term care service to veterans in east central Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I concur with my colleague from Florida regarding downgrading the request for funding a comprehensive hospital to an outpatient clinic and long-term nursing care facility. This proposal is to construct a nursing home care facility and outpatient clinic on the site contributed for the East Central Florida Medical Center to provide specialized care which is not currently available.

A 120-bed nursing home care unit will have, in addition to regular nursing home care, the capacity to provide psychogeriatric care—including that for Alzheimer's patients—and ventilator-dependent care. The ambulatory care clinic will be available to serve all veterans in the area. Approximately 30,000 patient visits per year will be accommodated. The total cost would be \$35 million. We have existing funds of \$17.2 million which was appropriated in fiscal year 1995 for the design and planning of the VA medical facility. We would like to use those funds toward the design and construction of the alternative proposal. In the near future, we would request that Congress provide the balance of \$17.8 million to complete the project. This proposal is more than a Band-aid to the problem and is surely a more reasonable request for our veterans to make of this Congress.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I agree that outpatient, ambulatory care should be the focus of future construction by the VA. In my home State of Kansas, I have been working closely with the staff of the Dwight D. Eisenhower VAMC in Leavenworth to improve outpatient care for our veterans with the addition of a new ambulatory care clinic. Currently, primary care treatment processes at the Leavenworth VAMC are unnecessarily fragmented and severely deficient in the space required for their functions. This clinic is a must if the Leavenworth VAMC is to retain its College of American Pathologists accreditation.

Last year, the Congress provided funds to begin planning and design of this facility. It is my expectation that the VA will include this project in next year's budget. However, if they do not, it is my understanding that the committee will give this project every consideration. I would ask my friend, the Chairman, is that correct?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the majority leader is correct. The committee is well aware of the need for the Brevard County and Leavenworth facilities. We understand that the Department of Veterans Affairs will be in a position to begin construction of the Brevard facility during fiscal year 1996 and the Leavenworth facility in fiscal year 1997. Like my colleagues, I expect the Department to consider including these projects in its fiscal year 1997 budget submission. However, if they do not, we will carefully consider both projects.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES REGISTRY

Mr. GLENN. I would like to commend my colleague from Missouri and the Chairman of the VA-HUD Sub-

committee for continued funding of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry study on minority health. I believe this is important work. I would also like to speak to a complementary research effort that will help to protect minority populations, women, infants, and other populations from the adverse health effects of consuming chemically contaminated fish. In particular, this study identifies specific populations residing in the Great Lakes basin that may be at higher risk of exposure to chemical contaminants present in one or more of the Great Lakes. To date, ATSDR has learned about the trends in Great Lakes fish consumption. For example, fish is an essential component of diets of minority populations such as Native Americans and sport-anglers. The preliminary findings from this ATSDR study are helping to clarify the actual impacts of chemical exposure through fish consumption to these specific populations. In some cases, certain effects are not as prominent as feared, but the study corroborates that there are human health effects and helps to pinpoint the trends.

However, continued research is needed to identify other susceptible populations, exposure pathways and correlation of exposure levels to health effects. Most importantly, we need to mobilize a public education effort to help members of at-risk populations and the medical community learn about the adverse human health effects of contaminated fish consumption and identify ways to minimize these harmful effects. Without continued funding the money and time invested in this research will be wasted and we will not have critical information to prevent risks to human health from contaminated fish consumption.

Mr. KOHL. The Senate has proposed a \$14 million cut from fiscal year 1995 for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the House proposed a \$7 million cut from fiscal year 1995. The House report on H.R. 2099 specifically calls for continued ATSDR funding for this study on consumption of contaminated fish and the harmful human health effects. Continuing this incomplete study will allow us to develop strategies of prevent harmful human health effects from consumption of contaminated fish. Understanding the consumption trends of Great Lakes fish is only helpful if we can draw conclusions from that information and then develop strategies to prevent harmful human health effects from this significant exposure pathway. Will the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies be willing to work with our colleagues in the House to ensure adequate funding to complete this important, far-sighted research?

Mr. BOND. I appreciate the concerns expressed by the Senators from Ohio and Wisconsin about this ATSDR study and I have a better understanding of

the significance of continued funding for the research on chemically contaminated fish. I will give close consideration in Conference to securing adequate funding for the ATSDR study on the human health effects of contaminated fish consumption.

SAVANNAH SEWERS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the Chairman's attention a critically needed project in Savannah, GA. Savannah, has been plagued with repetitive and devastating flooding over the last 15 years. The population affected is primarily low-income, distressed, and minority. These families have repeatedly been forced to leave their homes and businesses with great economic consequences.

The Federal, State and local governments have had to, on several occasions, commit significant resources to address the emergency needs of these areas. Consequently, the city of Savannah, in collaboration with the private and nonprofit sectors, has created a highly innovative plan to provide permanent solutions to the core flood areas that will significantly reduce long-term Government expenditures.

The overall plan involves over \$100 million in carefully constructed engineering solutions. The city has already committed and raised \$32 million of this total. They have also devised a series of retention structures, canal widening and station collector system improvements that will save the Federal Government money over the long-term and represent a true abatement commitment.

Mr. President, I seek the Chairman's support for Federal participation in this unique partnership, albeit on a limited basis. If the conference committee should decide to provide funding for EPA sewer treatment grants, I would appreciate his careful consideration of the Savannah project. The City of Savannah requests \$900,000 for critical engineering studies for pumping, engineering, and canal widening work in these flood-prone areas and \$10 million for crucial collector system improvements at the primary pumping station.

I would remind the Chairman that the city has already raised \$32 million toward the overall cost and plan components. Therefore these EPA funds would be matched with proven commitments.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Senator for his comments and request. I am aware of the serious flooding and wastewater/sewer problems confronted by the city of Savannah. Like the Senator from Georgia, I have firsthand knowledge of the devastation that such repetitive flooding can have on families, homes and small businesses. I am impressed by the level of resources already committed by the City of Savannah to resolve this problem in a more efficient, cost-effective manner. The Senator from Georgia and the city of Savannah are to be commended for his new private-public partnership concept.

Accordingly, it would be my intention that this project receive priority consideration in conference for funding through the fiscal year 1996 allocations made under this bill for water infrastructure needs.

CIESIN FUNDING

Mr. LEVIN. I would like to engage the distinguished manager of the bill in a brief colloquy regarding concerns that have already been raised by the junior Senator from Michigan. This matter regards the fiscal 1996 funding situation of the Consortium for International Earth Science Information Network [CIESIN].

I am grateful that the Chairman has provided some assurances that CIESIN will not be prohibited from competitively bidding on NASA contracts in the future, despite the Committee's concurrence with the "House recommendation" regarding specific funding for CIESIN. I would appreciate the Chairman's assistance in clarifying this statement just a little further. It is my understanding that the House report language, while not funding CIESIN specifically, does not in any way limit the opportunity for CIESIN and NASA to continue to operate under the terms of the existing contract, including option years.

Mr. BOND. The Senator from Michigan is correct. While we do not identify specific 1996 funds for CIESIN within this bill, nothing interferes with the rights and options that either party has under the existing contract.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator from Missouri for that clarification and appreciate his willingness to address our concerns. If the manager of the bill will yield further, the committee's report suggests that NASA should seek greater commercial, international, and Government participation in the EOSDIS program, with the goal of reducing costs. And, the Committee has highlighted the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland and the Earth Resources Observation System Data Center in Sioux Falls, SD, as core elements of a revamped EOSDIS.

Given that CIESIN has already developed international partners, is broadly supported by university researchers, and has won recognition for its innovative software, including this year's Smithsonian award for innovative software development, would the Chairman concur that CIESIN should be afforded appropriate recognition by NASA in the agency's development of its fiscal 1997 appropriation request, especially since the committee's report already urges NASA to integrate CIESIN activities within its EOS plan for fiscal year 1996?

Mr. BOND. That matter will, of course, be up to NASA and the administration. But, given that CIESIN is already meeting standards that this committee has set out for other components of EOSDIS, we would expect that CIESIN would be given full and fair consideration in the development of NASA's fiscal 1997 budget request.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Chairman for assisting me in clarifying the committee's intentions. I also want to acknowledge and thank the distinguished ranking member for her assistance in funding CIESIN in past years.

TENANT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am wondering if the Chairman of the Subcommittee will engage in a colloquy with me regarding the Tenant Opportunity Program.

Mr. BOND. I would be pleased to yield to my colleague from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. I thank my friend. Mr. President, the Tenant Opportunity Program—known as TOP—was created by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide technical assistance and training for public housing residents to organize their communities. Its goal is tenant empowerment. That may be a noble goal. But, TOP is not, in my view, the best way to achieve it.

The program is poorly designed, loosely structured, and ripe for abuse. Just how ripe was evident earlier this year in the city of Wilmington, DE. Six Wilmington public housing projects were each awarded \$100,000 TOP grants, and a consultant—a consultant—tried to claim \$60,000 of each grant. Incredible as it may sound, my colleagues heard me correctly: 60 percent of each TOP grant in Wilmington, DE was going to be paid to a consultant. That's a total consultant fee of \$360,000 from just six grants.

Mr. President, this may sound like one bad apple. And, the Department is to be commended for investigating this case, discovering that the application procedures were violated by the consultant, and canceling these particular six grants. But, the more I look into the whole program, the more I am convinced that the problem here is with the program itself.

For example, the most disorganized public housing projects in Wilmington—the ones that need this program the most—were unable to get a TOP grant because they were not organized enough. That is a classic Catch-22 situation. Another example: no where does the program require that the recipients of the grants specify exactly how the taxpayers' money will be used. And, the major beneficiary of this program seems to be consultants, not public housing residents.

Now, I would like to ask the chairman of the Subcommittee about the Committee's intention regarding funding for TOP. The House, in its version of the VA-HUD Appropriations bill, provided \$15 million for the program. As I read the Senate version of the bill, no funding is provided for TOP. I want to ask the chairman if my understanding is correct—that it is the committee's intent to kill this program.

And, before he answers, let me just say that I ask this question because the Department created TOP in the first place without an explicit authorization from Congress. My concern is

that without an explicit statement from Congress that TOP is to receive no funding, I fear that the Department may try to fund the program anyway, using unearmarked funds from the annual contributions for assisted housing account or funds from the Supportive Services Program under the Community Development Grants.

In other words, I am concerned about the Department playing shell games, and I want to be absolutely clear for the record. Is it the Committee's intent that no money whatsoever is to be spent on the Tenant Opportunity Program?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, yes, the Senator from Delaware is correct. This bill provides no money for the Tenant Opportunity Program—and the Department is not to use any funds to continue the program.

What we are trying to do in this bill is to make better use of limited HUD dollars—and to make sure that those dollars benefit the residents of public housing. I agree with the Senator that TOP appears to have a lot of problems in the way it is administered, and it is clearly not providing the benefits to residents that it should.

I should note, however, that within the broad parameters of the new supportive services block grant under the community development block grant appropriations, localities are encouraged to provide services and technical assistance to public and assisted housing residents to encourage and promote employment. To this end, activities with goals similar to the TOP program are permitted, but I would certainly concur that the excessive consultant payments would constitute an abuse which we will not tolerate.

Mr. BIDEN. I thank the Senator, and I yield the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I rise to enter into a colloquy with my colleagues Senators BOND and MIKULSKI regarding NASA's plans to consolidate all research and science-based aircraft at Dryden Flight Research Center.

Mr. BOND. I am interested to discuss this important matter with the Senator.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I am also pleased to have this opportunity to discuss NASA consolidation, an issue about which I have been deeply concerned.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. As my colleagues know, NASA has offered a plan to consolidate all flight research and science platform aircraft at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center in California. While I agree with the goals of NASA consolidation to save taxpayers money, I have strong concerns that this aircraft consolidation plan could cost more than it would save. The current aircraft consolidation plan drafted by NASA considers the costs of moving the aircraft to Dryden Flight Research Center, but does not include the costs to operate these aircraft from their consolidated location.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask Senator Feinstein if any other sites have been evaluated for this aircraft consolidation?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I do not believe so. The only consolidation plans I have seen move aircraft to Dryden. While, I certainly do not oppose Dryden as the consolidated site, I think that steps should be taken to ensure that this consolidation will truly save the taxpayers money.

Mr. BOND. Would the Senator from California be amenable to requesting that NASA submit their cost justifications for this consolidation to the subcommittee before they proceed with consolidation?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Yes, that would be an excellent course of action. Perhaps NASA's justifications should include the costs of and cost savings resulting from this consolidation and the operation of this aircraft from their consolidated location for the next 5 years.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Perhaps we should also request NASA provide the subcommittee with a cost-based justification of the movement of these aircraft before NASA takes action.

Mr. BOND. I think both of those suggestions are acceptable and would be happy to work with Senators MIKULSKI and FEINSTEIN to develop this language in the report of the conference with the House.

NASA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ZERO-BASE REVIEW AND ITS AERONAUTICS PROGRAMS

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, when Dan Goldin became NASA Administrator in early 1992, the agency's annual budget was about \$17.5 billion and headed to about \$22 billion by the end of the decade. Now, however, the annual budget is declining from \$14.5 billion and will likely be below \$13 billion by the end of the decade. In terms of FTE's NASA's work force has been cut too—from about 24,000 in January 1993 to less than 21,000 today, and headed to about 17,500 by the year 2000.

In order to manage these drastic cuts, over the last 9 or 10 months Mr. Goldin has conducted a so-called zero-base review. The purpose of this often painful process was to solicit ideas and develop plans on how the agency could function more efficiently. The review was conducted assuming that all existing missions will continue, but functions and missions would be streamlined or downsized. Mr. Goldin has made clear that any further budget cuts will result in elimination of core missions.

Now Mr. President, let me be clear that I think Dan Goldin has done an outstanding job in a very difficult situation. There are very few people I know who have the vision, energy, and knowledge of the NASA Administrator. He has been criticized for making the tough decisions, but these decisions have to be made. Many of the recommendations resulting from the zero-base review are now beginning to be implemented, and I believe it is imperative that Congress carefully monitor the changes taking place at NASA so that we may be sure that we are getting the most from the taxpayers' dollar. Change for change's sake alone is not always the best policy.

One recommendation of the zero-base review has been brought to my attention, and that of my colleagues, in particular the distinguished Senator from California, Senator FEINSTEIN. This proposal regards consolidating flight operations management of all aircraft, except those in support of the space shuttle, at Dryden Flight Research Center. The review concluded that after an initial investment of \$23 million, about \$9 million could be saved annually if this recommendation is implemented.

Currently NASA owns 65 research aircraft that support a wide range of NASA programs. Eighteen of these aircraft are scheduled to be retired by the end of fiscal year 1996 as a result of the programs they support being completed. The proposed consolidation would result in an additional 11 aircraft being retired, leaving just 36 aircraft in NASA's inventory. The proposal would also result in a reduction of 80 contractor and Federal FTE's, from 400 to 320.

Mr. President. It seems to me that the first "A" in "NASA" is at risk. As a result of budget cuts, it appears that we are nearly halving a vital component in our Nation's aeronautic research base.

These cuts hit particularly hard at a NASA facility which has made substantial, significant contributions over the past 50 years to our Nation's aeronautics industry. I am speaking about NASA's Lewis Research Center in Brookpark, OH. Currently seven research aircraft are based out of Lewis, including a newly refurbished DC-9 which is a centerpiece of Lewis' microgravity research program. It is my understanding that at least 5 of the 7 aircraft stationed at Lewis may be transferred to Dryden under the proposed consolidation.

Now I understand that it may be possible to achieve some savings through consolidation of flight operations. However, if this action adversely impacts the ability of NASA scientists and engineers to perform their mission—and to do their research—then I think we are being penny wise and pound foolish. It is my understanding that the managers of this legislation have agreed with the Senator from California, that a closer look needs to be taken at this aspect of the zero-base review before it is finally implemented. I believe that such a review is appropriate and I look forward to studying its results, as well as other ongoing studies and audits of components of the zero-base review.

OVERSIGHT

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment to ensure that the Congress is permitted to conduct appropriate oversight of a new research program proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

This program is known as the Science To Achieve Results or STAR Program. I want to be sure that the Agency fully advises the Congress of

how and at what level this program will be funded and which active research programs will be affected by this redirection of funds.

Mr. President, I recognize the need to provide the Agency with adequate flexibility to direct scarce research dollars to those problems posing the greatest risk to public health and the environment. This program, however, it not aimed at responding to environmental problems. The STAR Program is aimed at making grants to universities to do basic science research at the expense of ongoing EPA-sponsored research.

I am convinced that the result of implementing STAR will be that ongoing research for the Agency's regulatory programs will suffer, private sector contracts will be interrupted, and research currently conducted by the academic community will be terminated.

It is my understanding that EPA originally proposed to fund the STAR Program at approximately \$100 million. As the committee does not provide any additional funds to finance this program, the committee gives EPA the flexibility to reprogram funds, without congressional approval, from other research accounts. I am concerned that to fund the STAR Program the Agency will move funds from laboratories it currently operates to its headquarters to dole out to a few selected universities.

Mr. President, it appears that EPA is clearly attempting to move itself into a new area of research that is already being conducted at the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. This duplication of basic science research will result in severe shortfalls in the applied science program.

I want to be sure that my colleagues understand that it is applied science research that is critical to providing information to support the Agency's regulatory program. As a member of the Environment Committee, I am concerned that EPA's regulatory programs suffer from a lack of sound science principles. Further degrading this research effort will only result in wasted dollars and regulations that are not based on sound scientific evidence.

Mr. President, if the aim of the STAR Program is to expand Federal support for university-based research, I submit that this aim is already being accomplished by the Federal laboratories under cooperative agreements. The STAR Program will simply take research dollars from some universities to give to other universities.

My greatest concern with EPA's proposal is that the Agency has failed to justify the need for such a significant redirection of resources and is attempting to fund a program without full disclosure to the Congress.

The Agency has failed to demonstrate the trade offs that will occur from implementing the STAR Program

and failed to disclose the negative impacts that will be imposed on ongoing research.

In my view, the Agency should at the very least fully document these impacts and disclose to the Congress how this program will be funded and at what level.

My amendment does not prevent the Agency from using funds for this program. My amendment simply asks the Agency to report to the Congress on the details of this program and receive congressional approval before they move forward with the STAR Program.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member for recognizing the merits of this amendment and supporting its adoption.

IMPOSITION OF CHEMICAL USE DATA AND THE
COMBUSTION STRATEGY—MACT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to engage in a colloquy with my colleague from Missouri, Senator KIT BOND, the distinguished chairman of the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. I want to discuss two topics. The first deals with EPA's expanded reporting requirements for hazardous chemicals. The second is to clarify the Senate's position on EPA's lack of statutory authority to pursue a combustion strategy.

For the first issue I am referring to EPA's plan to expand the toxic release inventory [TRI] under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act [EPCRA]. EPA is now working on regulations to require the reporting of data on toxic chemical use, and to extend TRI reporting requirements to additional facilities. At a time when Congress is trying to provide responsible relief from unnecessary reporting, these actions would significantly increase administrative burdens costing hundreds of millions of dollars without commensurate benefits to enhance either human health or the environment.

Moreover, the addition of chemical use data would not further EPCRA's goal of reducing chemical releases. Chemical use bears no direct relationship to emissions, waste generation, health risks or environmental hazards. Risk is a function of hazard and exposure. Chemical use will not indicate exposure. Furthermore, EPA's plans to expand regulatory requirements under the Toxic Substances Control Act to gather chemical use data is equally inappropriate.

For all of these reasons, I believe that this program requires reexamination and redirection—not expansion along the lines that EPA intends. Clearly, there is an immediate need to first compare the reduction in risks by recent substantial reductions in emissions, before simply adding new informational requirements or facilities. Risks now need to be evaluated on a benefit-to-cost or a risk-to-risk basis.

One of EPA's guiding principles in its strategic plan is pollution prevention. With the Pollution Prevention Act

[PPA] of 1990 Congress established a national policy to focus EPA's actions on the reduction of wastes and releases into the environment. According to the act, pollution should be prevented or reduced at the source whenever feasible. While pollution that cannot be prevented or recycled should be treated safely, whenever possible, and safe disposal should be employed only as a last resort.

While PPA prefers reduction of wastes and emissions at the source, EPA has reinterpreted the statutory definition of pollution prevention to place an inordinate and sometimes exclusive emphasis on reduction of toxic use at the source. This mandates reductions in material or chemical use without consideration of emissions and risks posed by the substance. EPA's policy is based on two false assumptions. One, that use indicates risk, and two, that all chemical use is harmful and should be eliminated. This approach has prompted me to examine the direction this administration is taking EPA with its new TRI reporting requirements.

It is contrary to the basic objective of the manufacturing process, which is to harness reactive and toxic materials for useful and beneficial purposes. While product reformulation and substitution of less toxic substances do have a vital place in pollution prevention, the key to efficiently reducing pollution is to allow industry the flexibility to use as many tools as possible to achieve emissions reductions. Congress wisely established the pollution prevention hierarchy to allow for this flexibility. It must remain.

I believe that a timeout needs to be called on these recent changes to the TRI Program. The usefulness of chemical use data as well as expanding the list of facilities required to report data needs to be assessed through public dialogue and objective analysis before it is required.

In fact I believe, EPA's new TRI reporting approach would exceed its statutory authority. When Congress enacted EPCRA, it specifically considered the issue of whether or not EPA should have the authority to collect use information, as distinct from chemical releases information. Congress decided that EPA should not have this authority.

A majority of the Senate, as reflected through a recorded vote, believes that TRI needs to be reexamined and redirected—not expanded along the lines EPA is considering.

While I am not going to offer an amendment today to address this matter, I think the Conference Committee should accept a legislative provision that calls for a pause while Congress examines the direction in which EPA is taking the TRI Program. I look forward to your continued leadership and support of this effort.

Mr. BOND. The concerns of the Senator from Mississippi are valid and very timely. During the debate on

S.343, the Senate voted to retain provisions to reform the toxic release inventory's listing and delisting criteria along the lines sketched out by the Senator. The central feature of those reforms is a greater focus on the risk posed by these chemicals. As the Senator correctly notes, risk is a function of hazard and exposure. For this reason, I too am very troubled by EPA's proposal to require reporting of the mere use of materials. It is inconsistent with a risk-based approach, and I believe there is no statutory authority for expanding the TRI to include use reporting.

I also share the Senator's concerns with the expansion of the TRI to additional types of facilities. Just last year, the EPA nearly doubled the number of chemicals subject to TRI reporting. The current reporting cycle will be the first cycle to incorporate this expansion. No further expansion should be considered until the scope of the current expansion is fully apparent and it is clear the EPA has the resources to manage the increased amount of data. I believe we should work with the House to craft mutually acceptable language redirecting EPA's efforts toward higher priority activities in fiscal year 1996, and to encourage EPA to work with Congress in the interim to develop risk-based legislative reforms to TRI.

Mr. LOTT. I appreciate the Chairman's comments on TRI reform. Now, I would like to explain the issue regarding the establishment of an MACT floor. Although the current provision does not directly reference combustion or any other particular MACT standard, it does deal with an issue of concern to industrial on-site incinerators and boilers and industrial furnace operators. It is my understanding that the Report language does not prohibit EPA from pursuing its combustion strategy, but only requires certain legal and procedural safeguards be followed.

In short, the report language seems to support the conclusion that EPA cannot use appropriated moneys on: First, the use of permit conditions without required site-specific finding; second, the setting of an MACT standard under any authority other than the Clean Air Act; and third, the setting of an MACT standard without making the required finding that certain facilities are already achieving the standard.

Mr. BOND. The Senator is correct. The committee report makes particular reference to the MACT standard for refineries, as an illustrative example of the overall problem. The committee based its conclusion on input it received regarding a number of proposed and final MACT standards under consideration, including the proposed MACT standard for on-site incinerators and boilers and industrial furnace operators. Therefore, it is my belief that the provision is applicable to all MACT proposals that may be inconsistent

with past precedent, the proper administrative process or the text of the Clean Air Act.

One of the most important requirements of the Clean Air Act is the proper establishment of the so called MACT floor. The act states that the MACT floor is "the average emission limitation achieved in practice by the best performing 12 percent of existing sources" that qualify for the given category or subcategory. The EPA must establish that the limitations on emissions that constitute the MACT floor are achieved, or exceeded, in practice by 12 percent of the qualifying facilities. In addition, we are also concerned that in determining the MACT floor for a given source category, EPA may divide the source category into smaller parts and calculate the MACT floor separately for each part or pollutant. The results of this impermissible approach is that typically no single major source in a source category can meet the MACT standard without installing additional controls. Congress clearly contemplated that if MACT is set at the MACT floor, the top 12 percent of major sources in a source category should not need to install additional controls to meet MACT. Of course, EPA may then go beyond the MACT floor by determining that the additional emissions limitations are justified in light of their cost, non-air quality health and environmental impacts and energy requirements. The report language is not intended in any way to stop the MACT program, but to limit the program to those efforts previously authorized by Congress.

Mr. LOTT. I sense a disturbing trend at EPA. First, EPA is conditioning Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA] permits on requirements that have not been subject to full administrative process. Second, EPA is in the process of choosing the most severe result from separate statutes to create a hybrid. Congress did not intend EPA to mix and match its authority under the Clean Air Act and RCRA. Thus, ignoring the independent limitation on authority and process imposed by each statute. Finally, EPA expressed its intention to set a separate MACT floor for each hazardous air pollutant. By adopting such an approach, EPA would be able to set multiple MACT floors that no single facility may be able to meet in practice. I believe the MACT language in the Act does not allow EPA to do this. My bottom line is that EPA should comply fully with the statutory and administrative controls on rulemaking.

Mr. BOND. The EPA has stated that its use of the so called omnibus permitting authority under RCRA must be accompanied by site-specific findings in the administrative record supporting a permit that any conditions are necessary to ensure protection of human health and the environment. I expect EPA to comply fully with its own procedural requirements for omnibus permitting authority under RCRA, for

MACT standards under the Clean Air Act and all other authorizing statutes. The committee would oppose any attempts by EPA to ignore its legal obligations.

I will carefully consider the views of the Senator from Mississippi on these issues, who I understand speaks for many other Senators with similar concerns, and work to ensure that EPA implements its statutory authority consistent with the intent of Congress and its own rules and regulations.

TRANSFERRING FAIR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the issue of transferring fair housing enforcement authority from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Department of Justice is no small matter. I am pleased that Senator BOND has agreed to delay any such transfer for 18 months. During this time, I expect the Judiciary Committee to review this issue. It may be that some or all of HUD's fair housing functions should be transferred. If so, some functions may be better transferred to agencies other than DOJ.

I have no doubt that excesses in HUD's enforcement policies have given rise to the idea of transferring its fair housing enforcement authority elsewhere. I hope HUD gets a message from this episode and reviews its policies and practices.

MERCURY-CONTAINING LAMPS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to bring up an issue that Senators GREGG, SNOWE, and SMITH and I have been working on during the consideration of the VA/HUD Appropriations bill. The report accompanying H.R. 2099 includes language regarding the waste disposal treatment of mercury-containing fluorescent light bulbs. I think it is important to clarify some of the issues raised in the report and provide additional context for the rule.

The Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] has been considering a rule which would either conditionally exempt mercury containing lightbulbs from existing hazardous waste requirements or allow lamps to be treated under the universal waste rule. The report language does not reference the two options available. Is it the Chairman's understanding that the EPA does indeed face this choice in finalizing a rule?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, the Senator is correct. The rule does contain two options.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I understand the concerns raised by my colleagues about this rule. The point has been made that the EPA should not create a major disincentive for switching to energy efficient lamps by requiring burdensome treatment of the lamps. On the other hand, 42 States have consumption warnings for eating the fish from the streams and lakes in our towns. Mercury containing lamps are the largest single contributor of mercury to the municipal waste stream, and our policies should take

that fact into consideration. Our country has a mercury pollution problem that warrants our attention, and I share the chairman's concern about addressing the problem in a way that makes sense in cost-benefit analysis context.

I also understand the Chairman's concern about expediting the final rule. However, I want to point out that we are considering this bill only 3 days from the end of the fiscal year. Final passage of the conference report may not occur until late next month. The deadline included in the report language may allow for only a month for EPA to decide, with holidays. I just want to emphasize that this is a very tight timeline, and it does not provide the recycling industry enough time to adjust if necessary. I would like to work with other Senators to ensure that there is an adequate adjustment period.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I want to get the rule out soon, but I will work with other Senators to ensure that there is time for a reasonable transition.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to thank the chairman for discussing this issue on the floor. Mercury pollution is an important issue. There are some areas where almost everyone agrees, such as the need to end incineration of mercury-containing lamps.

SUPERFUND NPL PROVISION

Mr. GORTON. Madam President, would the chairman of the VA-HUD Subcommittee yield for a question?

Mr. BOND. The Senator would be happy to yield.

Mr. GORTON. I thank the Senator. The Senator has included the fiscal year 1996 VA-HUD bill a provision that prohibits the addition of any new sites to the Superfund "National Priorities List," with one exception. The language enables the "governor of a state, or appropriate tribal leader" to veto the EPA Administrator's request that a site be placed on the NPL. With one reservation, I support the provision in the VA-HUD bill because this Senator wants to see Superfund reauthorized, and the prohibition provides an important time out from adding new sites to the NPL. My reservation is this: I am concerned that the phrase "appropriate tribal leader" expands the authority of tribes, beyond that which they are granted under current law, to veto a site recommended by the EPA Administrator for listing on the NPL.

The fiscal year 1995 rescission bill included a provision similar to that included in the bill before the Senate, with one exception. The bill currently before the Senate gives the authority to both the Governor of a State, or an appropriate tribal leader to veto the EPA Administrator's request that a site be added to the NPL. Was it the intent of the subcommittee chairman to expand the authority of Indian tribes under the Superfund law with this provision?

Mr. BOND. The Senator is correct, it was not the intent of the subcommittee to expand the authority of Indian tribes in this provision.

Mr. GORTON. Would the Senator yield for another question on the same issue?

Mr. BOND. The Senator would be happy to do so.

Mr. GORTON. As the Senator from Missouri knows, the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund is working hard to put together a Superfund reauthorization bill, and bring it to the Senate floor this year. There are an entire range of issues associated with the fact that Indian tribes are not currently treat as persons under the Superfund law, and are not liable for clean up of waste that a tribe may have contributed to a site. I have discussed this issue with Senator SMITH and he told me that these issues will be looked at as he develops legislation to reauthorize the law. Consequently, I would ask that the Senator drop out the "or appropriate tribal leader" provision during conference with the House over the fiscal year 1996 VA-HUD bill.

Mr. BOND. I would be happy to work with the Senator to address this issue during conference.

AMENDMENT NO. 2781

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate voted not to restore funding for the AmeriCorps Program and with great reluctance, I opposed the amendment offered by the distinguished Senator from Maryland. I did so not because the Corporation for National and Community Service is a bad investment. In fact, I am a strong supporter of the AmeriCorps Program and believe community service can make a big difference in our society. Unfortunately, the amendment restored AmeriCorps funding at the expense of other important Federal programs.

Mr. President, I have seen first hand the positive results of the AmeriCorps Program. It has shown great promise in addressing today's urban and rural problems by uniting communities. Program participants in Wisconsin have worked hard to fight hunger, provide child care, combat illiteracy, and build low-income housing.

By dedicating service to their communities, participants receive a small stipend and assistance to further their education. Corps participants are also able to leverage private resources in carrying out their activities, which adds to the effectiveness of the Federal investment.

I am distressed that the Senate has decided not to fund the national service program and strongly believe the AmeriCorps Program merits continuation. But the amendment relied on alternative funding sources that I could not accept, including raising FHA's loan limits.

Mr. President, it is no secret that in the past I have opposed efforts to raise the FHA's loan limits. My position on this issue is clear and I will not take

this time to recite all of the reasons that I oppose raising the loan limits. I will, however, say that raising the loan limits will not help the low and moderate-income home buyers who should be the prime beneficiaries of FHA's efforts. For the record, I also note that I would have gladly worked with the authors of the amendment to find other more appropriate offsets, if only I had received sufficient advance notice of the amendment.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise in strong support for the community development financial institutions (CDFI) fund.

The CDFI fund is a key priority for President Clinton. He and Vice President Gore campaigned in 1992 to create a new partnership with the private sector to revitalize economically distressed communities. The President and Vice President spoke passionately about their vision for supporting local community development banks.

After the election of 1992, both Republicans and Democrats in the last Congress turned the President's vision into ground-breaking legislation that created the CDFI fund. The legislation passed the Senate unanimously and was approved by a 410 to 12 vote in the House.

Unfortunately, the CDFI fund is now a hostage of partisan politics. Under this appropriations bill, the CDFI fund is terminated. Before even giving this program a chance to succeed, this bill kills it. That is a real shame.

The fund is a small but very innovative program. For a modest \$50 million budget, the fund has the potential to make a significant impact in distressed communities.

The fund's investments would create new jobs, promote small business, restore neighborhoods, and generate tax revenues in communities desperate for community development.

How would the CDFI fund succeed in areas where more traditional financing has failed?

The fund would create a permanent, self-sustaining network of financial institutions that are dedicated to serving distressed communities. These financial institutions include a fast-growing industry of specialized financial service providers—community development financial institutions. The fund would also provide incentives for banks and thrifts to increase their community development activities and invest in CDFIs.

The CDFI fund's initiatives would be an innovative departure from traditional community development programs because they leverage significant private sector resources. It is estimated that every \$1 of fund resources would leverage \$10 in non-Federal resources. And these locally-controlled CDFIs would be able to respond more quickly and effectively to market-building opportunities than traditional community development organizations.

The CDFI fund has caught the interest of many community development organizations across the Nation. Unfortunately, these fine community development organizations and many others throughout the country may never get the opportunity to receive assistance from the CDFI fund. I strongly believe that would be a short-sighted mistake—putting partisan politics ahead of our distressed communities.

I urge my colleagues to restore funding for the CDFI fund if the Senate revisits this bill during the appropriations process.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, community development financial institutions [CDFI] play an important role in my home State, and I join my friend from Vermont, Senator LEAHY, in expressing my strong support for the CDFI fund.

Community Development Financial Institutions are essential to serving communities that often find it difficult to cultivate financial support. CDFI's prove that private sector, locally controlled financial institutions can combine rigorous fiscal management with a commitment to improving communities by offering capital access along with related training and technical services when other institutions may not. CDFI's provide capital to distressed communities, as well as increase the number of joint venture loans between Federal, State, and private entities.

Mr. President, Cascadia Revolving Fund, of Seattle, is a prime example of how CDFI's can complement traditional financial institutions. Cascadia is a nonprofit community development loan fund which makes loans and provides technical assistance to low-income, minority- and women-owned businesses in addition to businesses in economically distressed areas. Over the past 10 years, Cascadia has lent over \$3 million, and 90 percent of the businesses they have assisted are still in business today.

The Community Development Banking Act of 1994, which created the CDFI fund, received broad bipartisan support in the 103d Congress. The legislation passed the Senate unanimously, and was approved by a 410 to 12 vote in the House. Today, there are roughly 310 CDFI's operating in 45 States that manage more than \$1 billion in primarily private sector money.

Mr. President, it would be a shame to terminate this program designed to revitalize economically distressed communities before even giving it a chance to succeed. If the Senate has the opportunity to revisit this bill during the appropriations process, I urge my colleagues to restore funding to the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

Mr. BRADLEY. Mr. President, things are finally beginning to turn around in urban America. We have finally taken some small, tentative steps to give children a safe and nurturing environment, to help communities repair

themselves, to help individuals find and get jobs, to help poor people develop assets for the future, and to restore strong financial institutions that help communities save their own money, invest, borrow, and grow.

But just as the economics of urban America were starting to improve, this bill pulls out one of the most vital initiatives to bring capital, initiative, savings, and growth to those who have been isolated from it: the Community Development Financial Institutions Program. This initiative evolved from the Community Capital Partnership Act that I introduced in 1993. I am very disappointed that the committee included no funds for community development financial institutions, and I want to remind the chairman of the subcommittee that there is significant, passionate support in the Senate for the continuation of this program.

Most of us take basic financial institutions for granted. We have savings and checking accounts, our bank lends our money to businesses in our communities, and we borrow ourselves when it comes time to buy a home or we have an inspiration to start a business. But in most American cities, the only financial institution they know is the check-cashing cubicle, which charges up to 5 percent just to cash a Government check, and takes the money back out of the community. People who want to save have nowhere to go and businesses have no access to capital. Within the 165 squares miles that make up the areas most affected by the Los Angeles riots, there are 19 bank branches, as compared to 135 check cashing establishments.

People who want to borrow have even fewer opportunities. They can buy a car or furniture on time, or on a rent-to-own plan, but if they want to borrow to get ahead, by starting a small service business or a store, they're out of luck. The "McNeil-Lehrer Newshour" last year interviewed some ambitious entrepreneurs in rural Arkansas, one of them a woman named Jesse Pearl Jackson, who owns a beauty salon. She needed a loan for new equipment, and when she went to a bank, she says the loan officer "laughed me clean out the door. She said, 'You want money for what?' She said, 'You don't walk in here and ask me for an application for a loan. That is not the way you do it.' I said, 'Well, if you will tell me what to do, then I will come back, and I will do it right the next time.' She was laughing so hard and making fun of me so bad I never went back." There is money to be made here, for any bank willing to take entrepreneurs like Ms. Jackson seriously, but large financial institutions without roots in the community are unlikely to see those opportunities.

But there are islands of hope for people who want to save and invest in troubled communities. Last year I visited La Casa de Don Pedro, which operates a credit union in a very poor section of Newark. La Casa is a multi-pur-

pose community organization that just happens to have a credit union. While I was there, a stream of members poured into the small building which houses the credit union, day care center, and other programs, depositing \$20, \$50, and \$100 at a time. I did not see any banks in the vicinity of La Casa. If it were not for the credit union, many of the community's residents would have no place to deposit their money, secure small loans, or take advantage of other services we often take for granted.

This fund does not, and should not, seek to create organizations that will be perpetually dependent on Government for support. Instead, it seeks to reach in at a point of leverage in capital-starved communities and get them started. It does not set development strategies for either the institutions or the communities they serve. Instead, it lets those involved in the struggle for economic recovery find their own path.

There has been such widespread support for the idea of expanding community financial institutions, even though it is a relatively new idea to many people. I still hear some wariness, though, about this investment from people who argue that poor people do not save and that distressed communities do not have the resources to support economic development.

The evidence contradicts this cynical view. In Paterson, NJ, last year, I visited one of the few banks that had not left that city. I struck up a conversation with a customer, who volunteered that she was depositing \$100. Surprised, I asked her how much she generally saved in a week. She told me that she and her husband had five children and earned \$20,000 last year—below the poverty line. But even on this income, they saved \$3,000 that year, for health emergencies, for college, or to give their children a chance at a better life. Their experience tells me that saving for the future is a fundamental value of our country, not limited to the middle class, and that if we all had access to the institutions that make capitalism work, we could all be a part of vital, self-sufficient communities.

Mr. President, I know we expect this legislation to be vetoed, because it sets all the wrong priorities. The defunding of the CDFI initiative is only one example. I hope that we will have an opportunity to reconsider this bill, to put all its priorities in order, and that when we do, we will find a way to continue to support community development financial institutions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I want to express my strong support for the community development financial institutions [CDFI] fund.

Created by legislation enacted in 1993, the CDFI fund, in a new partnership with the private sector, would revitalize economically distressed communities. The fund would create a per-

manent network of financial institutions that are dedicated to serving these communities.

Today many low- and moderate-income Americans across the country are unable to cash a check, borrow money to buy a home, or secure a small loan to start or invest in a business. Rural communities, because they are remote, have unique problems in this regard.

Designed to encourage community development through lending to underserved low- and moderate-income people and communities, CDFI's are especially important to the people in these communities who do not have affordable credit, capital, and basic banking services.

The CDFI's would go a long way toward stimulating the economy in those communities by helping to create new jobs and promote the development of small business. And at a small cost, CDFI's are required to provide a minimum of \$1 of matching funds for each Federal dollar received.

When enacted in 1993, the CDFI fund had the overwhelming support of both Houses of Congress. The President is a strong advocate of the fund. It is not a large program; but it can be an extremely effective one. It should not be terminated before having a chance to succeed.

Mr. President, I strongly urge my colleagues to reinstate funding for this vital program.

EPA PROVISIONS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, as we consider the VA-HUD Appropriations bill, we will set the budget for the Environmental Protection Agency, and this budget for EPA turns back the clock on 25 years of bipartisan progress and tips the balance from the protection of people to the protection of the special interests of some industries.

The Gingrich majority and the extremists on the right have placed in jeopardy the gains we have fought for, and the progress we have made to protect the environment and ensure the health and safety of every American in the last 25 years.

Ironically, for 19 of the last 25 years Republicans were in charge of the EPA. It was Richard Nixon who signed into law the National Environmental Policy Act and declared protection of the environment to be a national priority. And today the Republican majority is turning its back on its own promise.

Twenty-five years ago environmental organizations let their voices be heard and the message was loud and clear. We must find that voice again. We must unite in our efforts and let the message resound across this Nation and through the halls of Congress—that we will not turn back the clock on environmental protection.

We will not retreat. We will not give in. We will fight for clean air, clean water, and the preservation of our land and oceans and rivers so that the world we leave our children will be the same magnificent world that was handed down to us.