

INTRODUCTION OF CLEANER
BUSES FOR CLEANER CITIES ACT

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation that would eliminate federal transportation funding to any person or agency that purchases diesel-fueled buses to be used in any ozone, particulate, or carbon monoxide nonattainment area under the clean Air Act. Black clouds of diesel exhaust are all too commonplace in many urban areas. My bill, the Cleaner Buses for Cleaner Cities Act, will help alleviate the devastating environmental and health problems caused by diesel exhaust.

Diesel exhaust negatively impacts millions of Americans every day. Diesel emissions are a large source of harmful oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and diesel particulate matter (PM). NO_x is the main ingredient in ground level ozone (or smog) and a contributor to acid rain. Diesel PM is especially dangerous because it is fine enough to become lodged deep into the lungs, aggravating respiratory ailments such as asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia. Furthermore, diesel exhaust has been linked to cancer, lung damage, and premature death.

In my own district of New York City, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) has carelessly proposed to purchase 756 diesel buses, more than two times the number of alternative fuel buses they plan to acquire. Its decision and any other local agency's similar decision endangers the air quality and health of their communities. Many highly polluted cities like Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, and Houston are phasing out diesel buses and switching to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. CNG emits almost no toxic particles and significantly less smog-forming gases. Federal policy should applaud and encourage such environmentally beneficial measures, not provide funding for practices that sustain health hazards.

The elderly and children residing in poor minority communities suffer the most from the environmental hazards of diesel fuel. Asthma is the most common cause of hospitalization for children and asthma related deaths of children have risen 78% from 1980 to 1993. In certain parts of Manhattan and the South Bronx in New York City, the child asthma rates are five times the national average. The use of federal taxpayer money to perpetuate such a public health risk is illogical and irresponsible.

All available measures should be taken to better the quality of life in our cities, especially for our children. Enactment of the Cleaner Buses for Cleaner Cities Act would bring us one step closer to our goal.

IN PRAISE OF THE EFFORTS OF
BRIG. GEN. HARRY GATANAS,
COMMANDING GENERAL OF
WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE,
NM

HON. JOE SKEEN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I call attention to an important event which will occur in my con-

gressional district in southern New Mexico next week, on November 16th, 1999. On that day, Brig. Gen. Harry Gatanas will turn over the reins as Commanding General of the U.S. Army's White Sands Missile Range to incoming Brig. Gen. Steven Flohr.

Gen. Gatanas is deserving of special recognition for his efforts as the Commanding General of one of the nation's major test and evaluation ranges and for instituting cost-cutting measures and retooling strategies to enable the Range to upgrade existing technologies and capabilities as well as to attract new business. His story offers insights and positive suggestions to all military commanders throughout the country.

Gen. Gatanas took charge of White Sands on April 13th, 1998. During his tenure at the Range, he demonstrated outstanding command performance of duty by significantly improving every aspect of the Range, while enhancing the well being of all with whom he served and was professionally associated. His command philosophy effectively focused on three principal elements simultaneously: mission, people and shaping White Sands for the 21st Century.

Upon assuming command at the Range, Gen. Gatanas immediately began rebuilding ties with several offices and customers of White Sands. During the last fiscal year (1999), White Sands Missile Range operated on a total budget of approximately \$550 million. Of that amount, only 30 percent was provided by the government in institutional (budget) funds, while the remaining 70 percent was generated from outside customers. All together, the Range employs almost 7,000 people, including military, government-contract labor and civilian labor.

To attract more business, Gen. Gatanas quickly implemented cost cutting efficiencies in test design and execution while streamlining test-support processes and procedures. The remarkable net effect of these efficiencies and processes not only increased White Sands' test activities by more than 18 percent during the last year, but also increased the Range's reimbursable income from 69 percent to 76 percent overall. By reinvesting dollars earned through well planned and executed efficiencies, White Sands has been able to invest over \$10 million of its budget dollars this year to accomplish modernization, while becoming one of the most cost-effective ranges for Project Managers to test rockets, missiles and weapon systems.

Gen. Gatanas' strategy for the 21st Century is already underway in many areas with modernized Range launch complexes currently under construction, test instrumentation upgrades being implemented, communication trunk radio networks and fiber optic local area networks being installed throughout the entire Range, and accelerated scheduled construction of the "state of the art" Cox Range Control Center which is nearing completion. I was pleased to work with the General to secure the necessary funds for these important projects in the 105th and 106th Congresses. The Range is pursuing technological breakthroughs in the development of miniaturized digital cameras and associated digitized test suites to allow White Sands to make finite measurements of sophisticated weapon systems.

Perhaps the General's greatest success was embodied in the Range's completion and

validated Year 2000 compliance of White Sands' 6,500 computers that support daily test, analysis and operations. In fact, Gen. Gatanas established White Sands as the Year 2000 frontrunner in the entire Department of Defense through flawless Year 2000 demonstrations on four separate occasions during tests of Range and infrastructure assets for compliance, including live fire tests of four major weapon systems and associated command and control computers in comprehensive integrated end-to-end demonstrations. These events received national media news coverage. Even the House Appropriations Committee, in its committee report accompanying the FY 2000 Defense Appropriations bill, called attention to the Range's efforts on these matters by noting, "the White Sands Missile Range deserves particular mention for its early and aggressive Y2K effort."

During the watch of Gen. Gatanas, White Sands Missile Range and the Army witnessed several firsts in the success of weapons systems developments. These successes include the first intercepts of the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) and the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile systems. The successes of these systems are a direct reflection on the great teamwork and capability of the White Sands work force.

Gen. Gatanas exercised great community leadership as the Commander of White Sands, especially in keeping good ties with the three major communities surrounding the Range: Las Cruces and Alamogordo, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. He also worked with the commanders of nearby bases—Ft. Bliss and Holloman Air Force Base—on important issues such as joint testing and training activities, federal land withdrawal legislation, air defense issues, and Air Force weapons development, testing and training concerns.

Gen. Gatanas took command of the Range at a time of intense conflict and turmoil as a result of military cutbacks in personnel positions and was immediately faced with the decline of over 400 civilian positions and over 100 soldier slots. He immediately designed a program that capitalized on early retirements and transfers in a manner which had minimal impact on the work force morale. Consequently, the plan was implemented without a single unresolved civilian issue or any complaint from a soldier family. In addition, Gen. Gatanas stressed the importance of a qualified work force by instituting several programs which focused on the needs and concerns of employees on the Range. He instituted the important Consideration of Others program ahead of schedule and made it a role model with the Army Test and Evaluation Command. He earnestly and efficiently implemented Disabled Employee Programs which earned the Range the 1998 Department of the Army award. And Gen. Gatanas implemented programs which earned the Range the 1999 IMAGE de Nuevo Mexico award for support of Hispanic employees, the 1999 National IMAGE award for education excellence for Hispanic employees and the 1999 Secretary of the Army award for Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity.

Gen. Gatanas made quality of life initiatives for soldiers and civilians a major priority at White Sands by implementing programs to improve housing, re-open facilities to provide recreation and dining support as well as making the gymnasium facility fully accessible to

soldiers and the work force. I was pleased to work with him in Congress to secure funds to make a host of needed repairs to Range building and workplaces, as well as improvements to roads and water and sewer projects. These efforts made White Sands Missile Range a finalist for the Presidential Quality Award. Further, he canonized the Hembriillo Battlefield where the 10th Cavalry fought a heroic campaign in the late 1800s by requesting its inclusion as a place on the National Register of Historic Places. He also continued the time-honored tradition to remember the New Mexico Veterans of the World War II Bataan Death March by recreating an annual march (begun in the early 1990s) through 25 miles of surrounding Range desert in tribute to the heroes of Bataan.

Throughout the past 18 months, Gen. Gatanas has effectively and continuously led White Sands and its work force on a journey of continuous improvement. He created a foundation of technical and infrastructure improvements which will serve the Range for generations and instilled a true spirit of professionalism and pride throughout the work force. The general's efforts have been noted throughout the work force. The General's efforts have been noted throughout the entire Materiel Development Community, the Army Staff, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Congress. His dedication to duty, selfless service and outstanding leadership mark him as a truly successful commander. These accomplishments are deserving of the highest attention and accolades, and it is only appropriate that after the completion of next week's change-of-command ceremony, Brigadier General Harry Gatanas will be promoted to the rank of Major General and will depart to take command of his next assignment as the Commanding General of the U.S. Army's Test and Evaluation Command in Alexandria, Virginia.

All of us in New Mexico have been blessed by an impressive cadre of commanding generals who have taken charge of the reins at White Sands since its founding in World War II. I've been pleased to work with each Commanding General at the Range for the past two decades.

Next month, the Range will celebrate its final firing of the century. Established on July 9, 1945, the first atomic bomb explosion occurred on the Range one week later, on July 16th at Trinity site. Since that time, over 42-thousand test firings have occurred at White Sands, which have included the initial test flights of all of the Army's missile systems including the V-2 rocket, the Nike Hercules, the Nike Zeus, the Redstone, the Hawk and the Pershing II.

I look forward to working with soon-to-be Major General Gatanas and the rest of the Army leadership in continuing the impressive technological contributions to our national security throughout tests, evaluations and operations conducted at White Sands Missile Range.

COMMENDING THE IRS LAGUNA NIGUEL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE OFFICE

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there are few jobs in the federal government for which public gratitude is a less common response than for those who are tasked with collecting our taxes. Not only must these public servants enforce our ever-burgeoning, byzantine Internal Revenue Code, they are expected to do so in a manner that is professional, responsive and fair to all.

During the past year, I have been witness to the performance of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Taxpayer Advocate Office in Laguna Niguel, California, headed by Ms. Connie Adams. This office, which services the 41st Congressional District and the surrounding region, is responsible for resolving difficult, complicated tax disputes between taxpayers and the IRS, and doing so in a manner that stresses, to the utmost, service and fairness to the American taxpayer.

It gives me great pleasure to commend the IRS Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office for meeting this difficult challenge during the past year. In handling over thirty complicated tax disputes which I received from constituents in my congressional district, the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office performed its duties expeditiously, with due diligence, and attention to detail. I would especially like to express my appreciation to the staff members at the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office, including Ms. Maryanne McGoldrick, Ms. Deborah Mata, Ms. Mary Haven, Ms. Katie Williams and Ms. Kim Alfrey for their responsiveness and consummate professionalism in performing their duties.

The preliminary evidence in my congressional district is that the IRS has responded with conviction to the reform requirements mandated by the 105th Congress. There are certainly other agencies in the federal government which would do well to learn from the laudatory example set by the Laguna Niguel Taxpayer Advocate Office. Again, my hat is off to these fine public servants for a job well done.

IN HONOR OF THE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF JUDGE J. JEROME PLUNKETT

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 10, 1999

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of a great man who has achieved a great milestone: the Honorable J. Jerome Plunkett, who will celebrate his 75th birthday tomorrow, November 11.

A distinguished jurist, a decorated soldier, a patron of education, and a devoted husband and father of eight children, Judge Plunkett has throughout his life been a leader for his nation, his state, his community, and his family.

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, one of five children of James P. and Anne Plunkett, the

young boy's early experiences helped shape his extraordinary life. For his eighth birthday he traveled to Washington, D.C.—by train, for James P. was the Solicitor General for the Great Northern Railroad—to watch his father argue a case before the nine Justices of the United States Supreme Court. Barely beginning third grade, Jerry Plunkett could not have known then that a quarter century later he would begin his own career as a judge. But without doubt that lasting memory was one of several influences that propelled him to the law and the bench.

That autumn Washington day in 1932, as every one of Jerry Plunkett's 75 birthdays, was Armistice Day. On the first Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, Americans had celebrated the end of World War I, which officially concluded when the armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. But the "war to end all wars" had done no such thing. Just months after graduating from St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul, Jerry—then 18 years old—entered the United States Army, as the storm clouds of World War II cast their dark shadow on America.

He enrolled in the Infantry Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and rapidly rose through the ranks. By 1944, he was a First Lieutenant with the Second Infantry Division, destined to participate in the Allied invasion of France to liberate Europe.

Lt. Plunkett, the infantryman, was wounded during the monumental struggle with Nazi forces at Normandy, code-named "Operation Overlord," and commanded by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He would later be decorated not only with a Purple Heart but the Bronze Star, but in June 1944 he continued to punch inland, securing safe landing zones for reinforcements, and waged the campaign through France and into Germany. The German failure to successfully defend the Normandy area from the Allied liberation forces in essence doomed Hitler's dream of "Fortress Europe," and marked the beginning of the end for the Nazis.

While Jerry survived the war, one of his two brothers, James F. Plunkett, did not. He was killed in action in France in 1944.

With victory came peace, and Jerry Plunkett returned home like so many other veterans to start a new life, and begin a career. He chose the law.

When he earned his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Minnesota, he went to work as a legal editor for the West Publishing Company, even then a long-established firm (founded in 1876) and the leading national provider of case law and statutes for all U.S. jurisdictions. His interest in the law was matched, however, by his interest in people and solving real-world problems, and barely two years later he had landed his first job in public policy, as the Assistant City Attorney for the City of St. Paul.

As barrister for the state capital, Jerry Plunkett earned experience in prosecuting criminals and managing civil cases in the courtroom. By 1954, he was presiding over those same cases as the Honorable Jerome Plunkett, appointed by the Municipal Court bench by then-Minnesota Governor C. Elmer Anderson.

His progress and accomplishments on the bench were as swift and commendable as they had been on the battlefield. He was made Chief Administrator of the court system.