funded for several years, and eliminate those that do not have commercial potential.

Management Position

Concur.

The Department has implemented a re-evaluation of Thrust 1 projects based on GAO's review.

Recommendation 9

Develop criteria and time frames for determining when Thrust 1 projects should be terminated if they do not meet the criteria of graduation to the program's next phase.

Management Position

Concur.

Based on GAO's review, this recommendation will be accomplished within 120 days.

B. Recommendations on Nuclear Cities Initiative

Because DOE plans to implement the Nuclear Cities Initiative in a relatively short amount of time (5 to 7 years) at a potential cost of up to $600 million during uncertain economic times in Russia, we believe it is critical that program implementation be based on solid thinking and planning which considers the problems experienced under the IPP Program. Therefore, we recommend that DOE:

Recommendation 10

Develop a strategic plan for the Initiative before large scale funding begins and include in the plan-program goals, costs, time frames, performance measures, and expected outcomes, such as the number of jobs created for each city.

Management Position

Concur.

The Department is preparing a strategic plan that will be published within 90 days.

Recommendation 11

Not expand the Initiative beyond the three nuclear cities until DOE has demonstrated that its efforts are achieving program objectives, that is, that jobs are being created in the civilian sector for displaced weapons scientists, engineers, and technicians.

Management Position

Concur, with qualification.

Some existing IPP projects in other closed cities may naturally transition to work under the Nuclear Cities Initiative. Similarly, the Department does not want to preclude the possibility of accomplishing significant reductions in nuclear weapons related activities in another closed nuclear city should the opportunity arise to assist in the shutdown of facilities there. It is also the intent of the Department to structure the second year of the Nuclear Cities Initiative based upon lessons learned the first year. The Department has a process for reviewing program objectives to determine lessons learned and next steps.●

POST OFFICE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a bill that my colleague Senator BAUCUS and I are re-introducing titled the, ''Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999.''

Aside from a few technical changes, the bill is similar to the one we introduced in the 105th Congress that was supported by so many of our colleagues in a 76–21 vote last July. Unfortunately our postal language was dropped from the underlying bill during conference with the House. However, I am hopeful that this year our bill will become law. I should add that this year we have coordinated our efforts with Representative BLUMENAUER of Oregon and an identical companion bill is being put forward in both the Senate and the House.

Mr. President, I live in a small town in Vermont. I understand the importance downtowns and village centers play in the identity and longevity of communities. Downtowns are the social and economic hearts of small communities. They are where neighbors catch up on the news, shop, worship, and celebrate national holidays.

Our bill will enable the residents of small villages and large towns to have a say when the Postal Service decides that their local post office will be closed, relocated, or consolidated. Local post offices are important tenants in any vibrant downtown. A recent article in USA Today cited a 1993 study that found that 80 percent of people who shopped downtown planned their visit around a visit to the post office.

There is much talk in the news today about revitalizing our downtowns and encouraging smart growth. I say to my colleagues, if you want to encourage smart growth, let's start by doing what we can to keep federal facilities such as post offices in downtowns.

Some of my colleagues may ask why this legislation is necessary. A story from my home state of Vermont will answer that question.

A few years ago the general store on the green in Perkinsville, Vermont went bankrupt and the adjacent post office wanted to leave the small village center for a new building outside of town. By the time the community was aware of the relocation, plans were so far along—the new building had actually been constructed based on the promise of the post office as the anchor tenant—that there was no time to fully investigate in-town alternatives. One elderly resident wrote that in contrast to families now being able to walk to the post office, ''we certainly won't be walking along the busy Route 106 two miles or more to get our mail.'' The State Historic Preservation Officer commented that as people meet neighbors at the post office, the threads of community are woven and reinforced. ''It may be intangible, but its real, and such interaction is critically important to the preservation of the spirit and physical fabric of small village centers like Perkinsville.''

In other Vermont towns such as Springfield, Arlington, and St. Albans, the threat of our legislation has encouraged the Postal Service to work more closely with these communities as plans are developed to expand their local post offices. Our bill would codify the process that communities should go through and would avoid a one-size fits all approach to community needs.

Mr. President, post office closings and relocations are occurring all across the country and especially in small and rural communities. My colleagues will quickly discover similar examples in their own states where the removal of the post office has harmed the economic vitality of the downtown area, deprived citizens without cars of access, and contributed to sprawl.

The basic premise for this legislation is to give the individuals in a community a voice in the process of a proposed relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of a post office. This bill does not give the citizenry the ultimate veto power over a relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction. Instead, the bill sets up a process that makes sure community voices and concerns are heard and taken into account by the Postal Service.

Additionally, this bill will require the Postal Service to abide by local zoning laws and the historic preservation rules regarding federal buildings. Because it is a federal entity, the Postal Service has the ability to override local zoning requirements. In some cases this has led to disruption of traffic patterns, a rejection of local safety standards, and concerns about environmental damage from problems such as storm water management.

Mr. President, post offices in Vermont and across the nation are centers of social and business interaction. In communities where post offices are located on village greens or in downtowns, they become integral to these communities' identities. I believe that this legislation will strengthen the federal-local ties of the Postal Service, help preserve our downtowns, and combat the problem of sprawl. I urge my colleagues to join Senator BAUCUS and I in support of this important legislation. I ask to have the text of the bill printed in the RECORD.

The text of the bill follows:

S. 556

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999''.

SEC. 2. GUIDELINES FOR RELOCATION, CLOSING, CONSOLIDATION, OR CONSTRUCTION OF POST OFFICES.

Section 404 of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

''(b)(1) Before making a determination under subsection (a)(3) as to the necessity for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of any post office, the Postal Service shall provide adequate notice to persons served by that post office of the intention of the Postal Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct that post office not later than 60 days before the final determination is made to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct.

''(2)(A) The notification under paragraph (1) shall be in writing, hand delivered or delivered by mail to persons served by that post office, and published in 1 or more newspapers of general circulation within the zip codes served by that post office.

''(B) The notification under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(i) an identification of the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of the post office involved;

''(ii) a summary of the reasons for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

''(iii) the proposed date for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

''(iv) notice of the opportunity of a hearing, if requested; and

''(v) notice of the opportunity for public comment, including suggestions.

''(3) Any person served by the post office that is the subject of a notification under paragraph (1) may offer an alternative relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction proposal during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the notice is provided under paragraph (1).

''(4)(A) At the end of the period specified in paragraph (3), the Postal Service shall make a determination under subsection (a)(3). Before making a final determination, the Postal Service shall conduct a hearing, if requested by persons served by the post office that is the subject of a notice under paragraph (1). If a hearing is held under this paragraph, the persons served by such post office may present oral or written testimony with respect to the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of the post office.

''(B) In making a determination as to whether or not to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, the Postal Service shall consider—

''(i) the extent to which the post office is part of a core downtown business area;

''(ii) any potential effect of the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction on the community served by the post office;

''(iii) whether the community served by the post office opposes a relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

''(iv) any potential effect of the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction on employees of the Postal Service employed at the post office;

''(v) whether the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of the post office is consistent with the policy of the Government under section 101(b) that requires the Postal Service to provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns in which post offices are not self-sustaining;

''(vi) the quantified long-term economic saving to the Postal Service resulting from the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

''(vii)(I) the adequacy of the existing post office; and

''(II) whether all reasonable alternatives to relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction have been explored; and

''(viii) any other factor that the Postal Service determines to be necessary for making a determination whether to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct that post office.

''(C) In making a determination as to whether or not to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, the Postal Service may not consider compliance with any provision of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.).

''(5)(A) Any determination of the Postal Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office shall be in writing and shall include the findings of the Postal Service with respect to the considerations required to be made under paragraph (4).

''(B) The Postal Service shall respond to all of the alternative proposals described in paragraph (3) in a consolidated report that includes—

''(i) the determination and findings under subparagraph (A); and

''(ii) each alternative proposal and a response by the Postal Service.

''(C) The Postal Service shall make available to the public a copy of the report prepared under subparagraph (B) at the post office that is the subject of the report.

''(6)(A) The Postal Service shall take no action to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office until the applicable date described in subparagraph (B).

''(B) The applicable date specified in this subparagraph is—

''(i) if no appeal is made under paragraph (7), the end of the 30-day period specified in that paragraph; or

''(ii) if an appeal is made under paragraph (7), the date on which a determination is made by the Commission under paragraph 7(A), but not later than 120 days after the date on which the appeal is made.

''(7)(A) A determination of the Postal Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct any post office may be appealed by any person served by that post office to the Postal Rate Commission during the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the report is made available under paragraph (5). The Commission shall review the determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination. The Commission shall make a determination based on that review not later than 120 days after appeal is made under this paragraph.

''(B) The Commission shall set aside any determination, findings, and conclusions of the Postal Service that the Commission finds to be—

''(i) arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law;

''(ii) without observance of procedure required by law; or

''(iii) unsupported by substantial evidence on the record.

''(C) The Commission may affirm the determination of the Postal Service that is the subject of an appeal under subparagraph (A) or order that the entire matter that is the subject of that appeal be returned for further consideration, but the Commission may not modify the determination of the Postal Service. The Commission may suspend the effectiveness of the determination of the Postal Service until the final disposition of the appeal.

''(D) The provisions of sections 556 and 557, and chapter 7 of title 5 shall not apply to any review carried out by the Commission under this paragraph.

''(E) A determination made by the Commission shall not be subject to judicial review.

''(8) In any case in which a community has in effect procedures to address the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of buildings in the community, and the public participation requirements of those procedures are more stringent than those provided in this subsection, the Postal Service shall apply those procedures to the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of a post office in that community in lieu of applying the procedures established in this subsection.

''(9) In making a determination to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct any post office, the Postal Service shall comply with any applicable zoning, planning, or land use laws (including building codes and other related laws of State or local public entities, including any zoning authority with jurisdiction over the area in which the post office is located).

''(10) The relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of any post office under this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470h–2).

''(11) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to apply to a temporary customer service facility to be used by the Postal Service for a period of less than 60 days.

''(12)(A) For purposes of this paragraph the term 'emergency' means any occurrence that forces an immediate relocation from an existing facility, including natural disasters, fire, health and safety factors, and lease terminations.

''(B) If the Postmaster General makes a determination that an emergency exists relating to a post office, the Postmaster General may suspend the application of the provisions of this subsection for a period not to exceed 180 days with respect to such post office.

''(C) The Postmaster General may exercise the suspension authority under subparagraph (A) once with respect to a single emergency for any specific post office.''.●

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to join others around the world in marking International Women's Day. This day celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of women worldwide, and also reminds us that, unfortunately, many women are still treated as second-class citizens. Gender-based discrimination and harassment, domestic violence, and sexual assault are far too common in too many places. The glass ceiling, while perhaps a bit cracked, still blocks the progress of many women who work outside the home. Lack of affordable quality child care forces many women to make a painful decision between their children and their careers.

The wage gap between men and women around the world is still vast. According to 1997 statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, American women working outside the home in non-agricultural jobs earn about seventy-five percent of what their male counterparts earn; that is, seventy-five cents on the dollar. International Labour Organization statistics from 1996 state that women in Japan make sixty-two percent of what their male counterparts earn; the figure in Kenya is eighty-five percent. Australian women fare better, earning virtually the same wages as men.

In many places, women and girls are not considered valued members of society. Rather, their basic human rights are curtailed, sometimes to the point of denial of adequate medical care and basic educational opportunities. The illegal trafficking of women and girls for purposes such as slavery and prostitution is rampant in some areas of the world. In some places, it is common for women to be burned with acid by their husbands if their dowries are not large enough.

The deplorable practice of so-called ''honor killing''—men murdering female relatives accused of things ranging from infidelity to objection to an arranged marriage—is again receiving international attention. What is even more deplorable is that the men committing these murders take pride in their crimes, which they justify as cultural tradition, and are routinely given light prison sentences. Some women endure voluntary imprisonment to escape male relatives who intend to murder them.