

in cosponsoring this resolution: Senators MCCAIN, LEVIN, HUTCHISON, MILLER, BIDEN, JEFFORDS, LANDRIEU, BENNETT, MURRAY, JOHNSON, CARNAHAN, DAYTON, CONRAD, KENNEDY, DURBIN, HATCH, SESSIONS, CLINTON, and ALLEN. I also thank the entire Senate for adopting this measure by unanimous consent last evening.

I am reminded of the line from one of Wellington's troops that: "In time of war, and not before, God and the soldier men adore. And in time of peace, with all things righted, God is forgotten and the soldier slighted."

Mr. President, I am honored to live in a country that forgets not God and does not slight the soldier.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Missouri is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate remain in a period of morning business with Senators speaking for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator DURBIN or his designee will control the floor from 11 to noon and from 1 to 2 p.m.—and I ask within that timeframe, if no one seeks the floor, I may be recognized to introduce a bill—and Senator THOMAS or his designee will control the floor from noon to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 3 p.m.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes for the purpose of introducing legislation.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 967 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BOND. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

RURAL AMERICA

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, some weeks ago, I was on an airplane, and I had a laptop computer with me and my briefcase. Like most of my colleagues sitting on an airplane, I went through my briefcase and found a letter from the U.S. Park Service. I read the letter,

and it provoked me to get my laptop computer out of its case and put it on the tray table, and I started typing.

I created a message for the U.S. Park Service. Here is what their letter said to me. The U.S. Park Service wrote me a letter and said in the Teddy Roosevelt National Park, one of their picnic grounds was being colonized by prairie dogs. So they were going to do something called a "scoping" exercise and an EA, called an environmental assessment, to think about spending a quarter of a million dollars to move the picnic grounds.

I read and reread this Park Service letter about the scoping and the environmental assessment they were doing to spend a quarter of a million dollars to move the picnic grounds, and I sent them a letter.

What I said to the Park Service was that I found it interesting that they had the time to do scoping and EAs on these kinds of issues. I said, at the moment, we are in a rather complicated budget fight in Congress, but you have solicited my opinion, so let me give you a few thoughts.

I said: I am not unsympathetic to prairie dogs. I think they are cute little creatures. They, unlike the rats, were blessed with a furry tail and a button nose and they have a good deal more human sympathy, therefore, than rats do.

I asked the Park Service what would have been the Park Service's response if it had been a group of rats that had colonized the picnic area rather than prairie dogs. Then I thought better of asking because maybe they would have had a larger EA and scoping mission.

My point to them was: Do not waste the taxpayers' money; do not move the picnic grounds, move the prairie dogs.

I said: When I was growing up, about 50 miles from where they have this problem in the Badlands, I was growing up in Regent, ND, we had a group of rats "colonize," to use the Park Service's word, our horse barn. I was about 14 at the time, and my dad said the rats could live a very good life just 1 mile from our barn in the town dumps, which is where a lot of rats live, and he said he would like me to enlist a couple of my schoolmates and see if we couldn't move the rats.

It turns out these rats were no match for three 14-year-old boys. We very quickly retook the Dorgan horse barn. We understood that we could do that without a lot of effort.

Getting back to the prairie dogs, I told the Park Service that I figure there are about 1.4 million acres of ground in the Badlands in North Dakota in which prairie dogs can, do, and are colonizing. They have many prairie dogs in the Badlands. So the prairie dogs can colonize in a million and a half acres or so. They just cannot colonize in this picnic area.

I said: The way to handle these prairie dogs is to find somebody who can communicate with them. That is not hard. We have a lot of folks who ranch

and farm and spend a lot of time around animals, and one very quickly learns how to communicate with animals. I raised some horses. We raised cattle, and we learned how to communicate with animals.

I said to the Park Service: If you do not have anybody who knows how to communicate with an animal, go out in a ranching area and get some instruction, and once they have taught you how to send certain communications to animals, go back and have a little discussion with those prairie dogs and tell the prairie dogs they are not welcome in the picnic area; that you do not want to spend a quarter of a million dollars of the taxpayers' money to move the picnic area, and you want them to leave. And if they will not leave, I said to the Park Service, here is a cost-free way to deal with it: Get about three 14-year-old boys from somewhere in that area, and they will take care of that problem real quick for you.

As I was sitting on this airplane thinking about all the things we confront in rural America—yes in and near the Badlands where I grew up—I was thinking that we are not short of prairie dogs; we are short of people. We have Federal agencies that want to treat lightly that which is serious and then treat seriously that which is light, and they do not quite understand.

The real problem in our part of the country, where the Park Service is worried about prairie dogs and picnic areas, is that human beings are becoming an endangered species. All of our rural counties are shrinking like prunes. The counties are shrinking in population. People are leaving, not coming in. Farmers and ranchers are leaving the land at an alarming rate. Small towns are shrinking. Many rural counties are very fast becoming a wilderness area. That is not by Federal designation, it is the way things are working in rural America.

I said to the Park Service: When I received your letter about prairie dogs, picnic areas, and environmental assessments, and scoping, it just seemed to be such an unusual bureaucratic effort for such a minor issue.

Having prairie dogs move into a picnic area, in my judgment, does not rank up there with having people moving out of rural America. So I said: You have to excuse me for being a little impatient.

Just once, I told the Park Service, I would like to see a Federal agency crank up a little energy, a little emotion about the real problems facing rural America.

Have my colleagues ever heard of a Federal agency say: This county has shrunk 50 percent; we are going to do a scoping exercise to figure out what we can do to solve that problem.

Have my colleagues ever heard of a Federal agency cranking up an effort to do an environmental assessment of what is happening with the creation of

wilderness areas, where people are moving out, jobs are leaving, and people on Main Street are having a devil of a time keeping their front door open because rural areas are shrinking?

Have my colleagues heard a Federal agency say that matters to them; they are going to make an effort to find out about that?

No; oh no. Scoping and environmental assessments are reserved for dealing with furry little creatures that inhabit a picnic area. God forbid a Federal agency ought to spend its money and its time worrying about a few prairie dogs.

Again, we are just not short of prairie dogs, we are short of people in rural America. I would like very much just once to have a Federal agency, the Park Service, the Forest Service—you pick it—just once to have a Federal agency get aggressive on something that really matters to us in rural America.

I said to the Park Service: You probably regret asking for my advice. You probably certainly regret I had time on an airplane to read your letter and had a laptop available to respond to it. But, frankly, my advice is do not spend the taxpayers' money, do not spend a quarter of a million dollars; get those prairie dogs out of the picnic area and get your people, if you have the time work on things that really matter, to work on things with us that matter to rural America in a real way.

I know the Park Service has read my letter because they sent me another letter and said this is not just about prairie dogs and picnic areas, it is now about the bubonic plague or some god-awful thing, and they have developed several areas of new dimensions to this tiny little issue, as is always the case. I am sure they brought in four or five specialists now to respond to this issue that I have raised with them about worrying about all the wrong things.

Some days you just scratch your head and wonder whether bureaucracy has any common sense left.

I say to the Park Service, and all the others who are engaged in these Federal agencies: Give us some help from time to time on things that really matter to people living in rural America.

I live in a wonderful State. It provides a wonderful environment for people who want to live in an area where they have good neighbors, no overcrowding, and very little crime. It is a wonderful place with wonderful values. The fact is, we are fighting a losing battle in many ways trying to keep people, jobs, promote economic opportunity and a future that has some assistance for people who want to live in rural areas.

I say to Federal agencies: If you want to worry about something, do not worry about a few prairie dogs in a picnic area. Help us worry about promoting some economic help in rural America for a change.

If you don't want to do that, cut some of the positions out of some of

the agencies to say you have too many people working on some of the issues. Maybe we can cut down on the idle time.

It was therapeutic for me to say this on the floor. It probably was a slow water drip for the Presiding Officer. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter I sent to the Park Service on the subject of prairie dogs and picnic areas and scoping and environmental impacts, and I say to them, save your breath and save the taxpayers' money and work on things for a change that do matter.

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

MOVE THE PRAIRIE DOGS

(By U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan, D-North Dakota)

The National Park Service wants to spend nearly a quarter of a million of dollars to move a picnic area in Theodore Roosevelt National Park to accommodate a colony of prairie dogs that moved into the area. A quarter of a million dollars? To move a picnic area? To accommodate prairie dogs?

They must be kidding, right? No. They're serious.

Following is the text of a letter I'm sending to the acting Director of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C.:

DEAR MR. GALVIN: This is in response to the Park Service letter asking for my thoughts about how to deal with some prairie dogs that have "colonized" your picnic area in the south unit of the Badlands in North Dakota.

Your letter stated that you are "scoping" the issues and about to prepare an "Environmental Assessment" (EA) to determine whether you should spend \$223,000 to reconstruct the picnic area in a different location.

We're in the middle of a rather complicated fight about the federal budget here in Congress, but still, I'm pleased to offer a few thoughts about prairie dogs and picnic areas.

Now I want you to know that I'm not unsympathetic to prairie dogs. They are cute little creatures. Unlike a rat, the prairie dog was blessed with a furry tail and button nose and seems to have a better public image. But, I just wonder if it had been rats that had colonized the picnic grounds if you would be talking about spending a small fortune to fix the problem? Maybe I shouldn't ask...

My advice is this: don't waste the taxpayers' money. You don't have to move the picnic grounds. Move the prairie dogs!

When I was growing up in Regent, some rats "colonized" (to use your term) our horse barn. My dad told me that since it was our barn, and the rats could live a good life just a mile south in the town dump, I should get rid of them. I recruited a few school friends to help. We didn't do any "scoping" or "Environmental Assessment." The rats were in a foul mood, but they were no match for three fourteen year old boys. We reclaimed the Dorgan barn in no time.

Now getting back to the prairie dogs that are "colonizing" your picnic area, I figure that there are about 1,428,288 acres of ground in the Badlands that those little dogs can colonize. But they have no right to do it in your picnic area.

So here's what you should do. And it's nearly cost free. Find a way to communicate with those prairie dogs. If you don't know how, check with some of the neighbors living in western North Dakota. When you live on

a farm or ranch, you learn quickly how to communicate with animals.

Once your Park Service employees get the hang of communicating with prairie dogs, have them let those dogs know you're reclaiming your picnic area, with force if necessary. And if those prairie dogs won't leave, you go out and hire three or four teenagers from the area and tell them to get the job done. I guarantee you those kids will have this problem solved in just a couple of days. And it don't cost you \$223,000.

Don't misunderstand me. I am a supporter of our environment, of wildlife and, yes, of the Endangered Species Act. And so are most North Dakotans. But prairie dogs are not endangered in western North Dakota. To those who insist they are, I challenge them to put a male prairie dog and a female prairie dog in their own backyard and report back to us in a couple of years.

The fact is, we're not short of prairie dogs. We're running short of people!

The real endangered species, especially in the western part of our state, is the human species.

Farmers and ranchers are leaving the land at an alarming rate. Small towns are shrinking like prunes. Many rural counties are fast becoming wilderness areas.

When I received your letter about prairie dogs, picnic areas and environmental impact statements, it seemed such an unusual response to such a small issue.

Having prairie dogs move into a picnic area doesn't rank up there with the problem of people moving out of our state.

You'll have to excuse me for being impatient with federal agencies that treat the light too seriously and the serious too lightly.

Just once I would like to hear of a federal agency interested in doing an impact statement on what our country will lose when there are no family farms or ranches left in rural America. How about "scoping" that issue? Or how about an impact statement on the damage done to our farmers and ranchers from the mergers and monopolies that are being formed in the industries that farmers rely on such as the railroads, grain trade, packing plants and more.

By now you probably regret asking for my advice. Simply put, my advice is don't you dare spend nearly a quarter of a million dollars to move that picnic ground. Move the prairie dogs.

And then spend some time with me and others in Congress to help create a friendly environment for people to make a decent living on our farms and ranches in rural America.

Sincerely,

BYRON L. DORGAN,
U.S. Senator.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE) ordered.

THIS GREAT DEMOCRACY

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, this has been a tumultuous week in the Senate. We have had significant legislative accomplishments. I think it is an interesting process to watch the changes that are taking place. It always makes me value our Constitution