

Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding me this time to speak against the Nethercutt amendment and in favor of the Dicks amendment.

First, as it relates to what my friend from Spokane has advanced, I think it is important to allow the Columbia Basin Ecosystem plan to proceed. If adopted by this chamber, the Nethercutt amendment would retain the anti-environmental rider, which would block the implementation of this Pacific Northwest plan for forests, watersheds and endangered species.

It is true that it has grown somewhat in terms of scope and dimension. It has done so because that is what has been dictated as in the best interests of the region that we all care about and in terms of what will make the most difference. Careful long-term planning is a help, not an impediment, to the various challenges that we face in the Pacific Northwest.

I have heard my colleague more than once on this floor talk about the problems how this has stretched out over 7 years at a cost of \$45 million. Well, adoption of this amendment, and subjecting yet another requirement to this plan, is only going to make the process more expensive and more time consuming. And, indeed, Congress itself is in no small measure a culprit. Every year that I have been here, since 1996, the Committee on Appropriations has been interfering with the orderly implementation of this review.

Now, as the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Dicks) pointed out, the extension of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act to this study is something that has never before been required. It is vigorously disputed as to its applicability. But most important it opens up a very real possibility that we are going to block the potential Federal Government activity to improve the environmental and management activities in the Columbia River basin.

It is going to make it more likely, not less likely, that a court is going to intervene, possibly issuing a decree that could mandate management plan changes and entirely halting the production of goods and services on Federal lands in project areas throughout its deliberations, and the variety of little pieces that are involved there. It is wrong. We ought to get on with this business. It has the greatest potential of solving some very real problems that we in the Pacific Northwest face.

I would like to speak, if I could for a moment, to something that I consider even more

insidious, and that is the underlying amendment that would include restrictions on the ability to have funding to implement the National Monuments Act.

This is a major policy adjustment, as has been suggested by my colleague from Washington, and it would have severe, I hope unintended, consequences. Some may applaud at the prospect of not having law enforcement on our public lands, but that is an extreme position that would not be approved by my constituents, nor I think by the constituents of at least most of us in this Chamber.

It is not going to do us any good to not be able to regulate off-road vehicles, law enforcement, mining, the grazing activities. This is categorically wrongheaded, and it is, in and of itself, why the administration will veto the bill. They would have no choice. But it is an example of the environmental extremism that we hear so often about on the other side of the aisle.

If my colleagues do not like the Antiquities Act, they should go ahead and repeal it. If they do not like what the President has done in any specific designation, they should have the courage to bring a specific bill to Congress and undo it. They do not because these are popular actions, they are things that would be supported by this Chamber, and the environmental extremists on the other side of the aisle would rather play havoc with our ability to manage public land in an orderly fashion.

I would just conclude by expressing three things.

First, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Dicks) in attempting to balance a very complex set of issues that we deal with in the Pacific Northwest. And oftentimes I know he must feel like he is the man in the middle. But I think he has addressed this in a direct and forthright manner.

I do not think there is anybody in the Pacific Northwest who has worked harder to reach out to try to find middle ground and to avoid the catastrophe, I think, on all sides of these controversies. If we are going to cede our ability to plan in a thoughtful and manageable fashion and have it done on a piecemeal basis via the courts, I think we ought to move forward in terms of supporting what the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Dicks) has proposed.

I want to make clear that, as far as the national monuments are concerned, my Republican colleagues have been in control here for the last 4 years, and they have been unable to fashion a compromise acceptable to the American public to go ahead and repeal this legislation. And we have been in fact left with, and I am pleased that we still have, an Antiquities Act that has been utilized by 14 Presidents over the course of the better part of this last century, since 1906, Republicans and Democrats alike.

I think it would be a tragedy for this House to use this back-door attempt to try and take away a power to have disastrous consequences on lands that belong to the American public, and they want us to exercise this sort of stewardship.

I would ask them to at least have the decency to bring forward legislation to repeal the Antiquities Act and do this in a straightforward fashion.