

Mr. Speaker, this week, we celebrate Earth Day, Thursday, April 22. Many will use this occasion to highlight major policy issues, as well they should, issues dealing with greenhouse gases, the effects of global warming, and the pollution of our world's oceans.

However, I feel that the real power to be demonstrated is at the other end of the spectrum, dealing with individual actions. Many of us here on Capitol Hill will celebrate Earth Day with a bike ride. People from the Capitol, commuters, business people from all over the region, will converge on Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue, illustrating the impact that people can have dealing with this very simple and efficient mode of transportation. Yet, we do not need to have everybody trade their car in for a bicycle. If people in our community will choose to take just one less trip a week, whether that is by foot, by transit, by bicycle, or simply consolidating their other journeys to produce that one trip reduction, it can have a phenomenal impact in terms of reducing air pollution, congestion, and the requirement for more investment in infrastructure.

The most important thing is for people to think about their behavior and think about the little things we can do to make things better: Shopping locally, or treating their own yard like they would like farmers and industry to conserve their property. Whether it is conserving water, dealing with native vegetations, using less toxic herbicides or fertilizer, we can all make a big difference.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is plenty of room for us in Congress to have an impact on the environment. To be sure, I hope this session will deal with things like water policy, spending our money in more environmentally responsible ways, in Superfund reform, but I would hope that this Congress will also continue the effort to try and focus on the little things that we can do to make a difference.

I am pleased that this year we have finally caught up with the rest of America, as the Federal Government has for years told the private sector to reduce employee commute trips by single-occupant vehicles. Congress has finally started to do what we have asked the private sector to do by providing an opportunity for our employees to have subsidized Metro passes.

I am, however, continually embarrassed, as I know most Members of Congress are, when the reports come out, as they did last week, about our abysmal record of recycling here on Capitol Hill. In the 3 years I have been a Member of Congress, the total proceeds from all of our recycling effort for over 8,000 employees on Capitol Hill has been less than \$27,000. I am sure that there are Boy Scout troops in my community that have raised more money from recycling Christmas trees, bottles and cans than the entire U.S. Congress did in those 3 years. For the

year of 1997, the net proceeds was \$7.51 for recycling high-grade paper. There are homeless people around Capitol Hill that make more than that in a day recycling bottles and cans.

Mr. Speaker, I hope as we have a lot of rhetoric around Congress that we want to live by the rules that we apply to other people. I hope that in the final analysis we will apply that to our individual offices, and step up to behave the way we are asking the rest of America to behave in terms of recycling. I think our record ought to be something that we ought to be proud of, not something that makes us cringe, and I hope that each Member of Congress will dedicate themselves this Earth Day to make it a record that we can, in fact, show to the American people and be proud of.