Dakota, 1Minnesota, and Iowa. The project and legislation recognize the tremendous need the people of this region have for access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water. 1

The need for water development in South Dakota is great. In our state, water is a matter of health, economic development, and rural development. The ability of rural America to survive and grow is directly related to the ability of rural areas and growing communities to have access to adequate supplies of safe drinking water. Without a reliable supply of water, these areas cannot attract new businesses and cannot create jobs. In a rural state like South Dakota, the link between the creation of jobs and adequate water supplies cannot be emphasized enough.

Some cities and towns throughout the Lewis and Clark project region are preventing new building and development, just to preserve the existing water supplies. Because of these limitations, these same communities have permanent restrictions on the use of water for washing cars and watering the laws—something most of us take for granted. Further, over 75 percent of the population relies upon shallow wells and limited water supplies, posing the risk of exposing these residents to dangerous levels of contamination. Each of these factors point to the strong need for a comprehensive, regional solution to meet this most basic of needs.

The people of these three great states recognized this same need when they organized to form the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System almost nine years ago in 1990. Since that time, they have worked tirelessly to see their dream of clean, safe water become a reality. The project has been supported strongly by all three states, with the South Dakota legislature having already committed $400,000 to Lewis and Clark. The state legislatures of Minnesota and Iowa have authorized similar levels of support. The support of the Members of this body who represent the Lewis and Clark service area further demonstrates the regional cooperation at play. The regional approach offered by the Lewis and Clark System maximizes the number of people that can be served, and it also serves to offer the most cost-efficient manner to provide water.

This legislation, originally introduced in the 104th Congress and reintroduced in the 105th Congress, has been the subject of numerous hearings in the House and Senate and countless hours of discussions and negotiations between the project sponsors, the Administration, and many of our colleagues in Congress. Last September, the Senate companion bill met important success in its approval by the full Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I am optimistic that we will see similar action on this important legislation here in the House.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate the importance of this vital project. People most familiar with the project have clearly seen that the need for water is great and indisputable. Likewise, the roll of the federal government in both participation and funding rural water supply has been set by numerous and lengthy historical precedents. Now it is up to the House to respond to this need. Congress has the opportunity to do so by supporting this important piece of legislation and moving forward with plans that will allow over 180,000 hard-working taxpayers the opportunity to turn on their taps and receive what many of us take for granted—a cool glass of clean, fresh water.

I look forward to working with each of you in seeing this dream for many South Dakotans, Minnesotans, and Iowans come to fruition.

YOUTH TOBACCO POSSESSION PREVENTION ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing the Youth Tobacco Possession Prevention Act today because I believe we have fallen well short of our responsibility to protect children from tobacco marketing. Last year, we considered a variety of ''comprehensive'' solutions to reverse the trend of youth smoking—all of which failed.

Now that the States have settled their cases with the tobacco companies, it is even less likely that the federal government will pass such broad legislation. However, there is one very important issue that still needs to be addressed that could significantly reduce the number of youth smokers is the issue of youth possession of tobacco products.

It is estimated that 3,000 young people start smoking every day. Worse yet, one third, or 1,000 of these people will eventually die from tobacco related disease. Consider the emotional and financial strain these horrible situations will place on American families in the future. In response to this national crisis, the public health community, State attorneys general, the U.S. Congress and even the tobacco industry proposed a variety of methods to reduce youth smoking rates during the 105th Congress.

Most of the proposals would have spent money on counteradvertising, tobacco cessation programs and tobacco education programs—all worthy and necessary components of comprehensive tobacco legislation. However, the leadership of the American government has been sending a mixed signal to America's youth and nothing in the proposed settlement would change this.

Under current law, it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 in all 50 States. However, if a person under the age of 18 is somehow able to obtain tobacco products—which it is painfully clear they are easily able to do—there are only a few States that have enacted laws regarding the possession of tobacco by these young people. I find it incredibly hypocritical that we, as a government (either Federal or State), are so willing to make buying tobacco illegal but are virtually silent on possessing tobacco.

Despite the strides that were been made by the recent states settlement, this is still a huge problem. Barely half of the states have enacted tobacco possession laws that actually make it illegal for someone under the age of 18 to possess tobacco products.

The Youth Tobacco Possession Prevention Act will help solve this problem. There are two key components to this bill. First, in dealing with the youth, it focuses on education rather than punishment. For first and second time offenders, youth will be required to complete tobacco education and cessation programs, as well as tobacco related community service. If they continue to disregard the law and their health, their driver's license would be suspended from three to six months. This last resort was suggested during one of our Subcommittee hearings by a local teenager, who told the Commerce Health Subcommittee that kids would only respond to this type of approach.

Second, the bill would require States to enact stern punishments for people over the age of 18 who provide tobacco products to youth. At that same hearing, many of our teen witnesses admitted one of the primary sources of tobacco are older people who buy for teens. This is simply not acceptable. I believe every adult has the responsibility and moral obligation to do whatever we can to prevent our nation's youth from starting this deadly habit.

Unlike many proposals, this bill will not punish States who choose not to enact the outlined legislation. It will, however, reward those States which act responsibly and do. Each State that passes the provisions outlined in this bill will receive 5 additional points on their Health and Human Services competitive public health service grant applications. This incentive will hopefully encourage States to take action and do the right thing.

THE LIBERTAD ENFORCEMENT ACT

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the LIBERTAD Enforcement Act and to reflect on the actions of the Clinton Administration toward Cuba.

Just yesterday, January 5th, the President announced several new measures to ''assist and support the Cuban people without strengthening the regime.'' While I understand that the regulations regarding these measures have not been developed, I am concerned about the proposal that would allow sales of food and agricultural inputs. Not only is it unclear whether President Clinton has the authority to make this change, but it is unlikely at this point that these sales would have much effect on the Cuban people, who it is designed to help. Without a private sector and very few non-governmental organizations, it will be difficult to get food to the people and keep it from Castro and his regime.

Cuba has been a dictatorship under Fidel Castro for some 40 years. During that time I think the world is fully aware of the many human rights violations this dictator has committed and his regime has committed. I think the world is probably also fully aware that Cuba and Fidel Castro remain only one of two Communist dictatorships left after the fall of the Soviet Union and changes around the world and tendencies towards more democracies, as we have seen in the last decade or so.

We have tried numerous times in small, incremental ways, to either oust Fidel Castro or to change his policies. It should be abundantly clear to anyone who has observed this man over the years that he is not about to change his stripes. He is not about to give up his ruthless power. And if he does, it will not be voluntarily.