

about the relationship of people to their lands and waters.

Our nation continues to need opportunities to reflect on the importance of preserving our national world. The celebration of Earth Day each year on April 22nd is an effective way to remind us of the significance of the environment and of accomplishments such as the Wilderness Act. S. 864, the "Earth Day Act", is a bill that I introduced last April along with Senator CHAFEE. It has since gained nine additional bipartisan cosponsors. The purpose of S. 864 is to officially and permanently designate April 22nd as Earth Day.

The first Earth Day was 29 years ago, in 1970, and was first conceived of by our former colleague, Senator Gaylord Nelson. That first Earth Day involved some 20 million Americans. Since then, Earth Day has focused the attention of the country and the world on the importance of preserving and maintaining our environment. I believe the nation owes a great debt of gratitude to Senator Nelson for his leadership in creating Earth Day, and that we should recognize the importance it has assumed in our nation's life.

It is my sincere hope the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold hearings on S. 864, and that the Senate will pass the bill by the end of this year. It is my goal to have the President sign S. 864 into law by the time Earth Day 2000 arrives. I invite all of my colleagues to cosponsor this bill.

#### GOVERNMENT LAND PURCHASES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank Senator GORTON and Senator BYRD for all their hard work on the Appropriations Interior Subcommittee for bringing this bill to the floor.

In 1994, I authored the Desert Protection Act, which created two new national parks, Joshua Tree and Death Valley along with the Mojave National Preserve and 100 wilderness areas; thereby promising to protect more than 6 million acres of desert property. However, these parks and wilderness areas still contain hundreds of thousands of acres of private inholdings.

Earlier this year, the Wildlands Conservancy, a California non-profit, negotiated a one-time deal whereby nearly 500,000 acres of these inholdings, many of which are owned by the Catellus Corporation would be purchased by matching \$36 million in funds from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund with \$26 million in private donations.

Catellus, the Wildlands Conservancy, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management subsequently signed a letter of intent to sell to the Federal Government up to 437,000 acres of California desert owned by Catellus. An additional 20,000 acres of property owned by others within Joshua Tree National Park would be bought and preserved.

All told, up to 483,000 acres of private inholdings in the California Desert will

be acquired, ensuring public access to over 4 million acres of Federal national parks and wilderness areas in the California Desert.

The location of these particular inholdings are significant because this area serves as the gateway for both private landowners and for people who wish to use the public portions of the preserve. Acquiring this checkerboard of inholdings is the only to assure public access for the lands provided for in the California Desert Protection Act.

If the government does not purchase these lands the Historic Mojave Road and the East Mojave Heritage Trail are likely to be closed and it is also possible that there will be no more public access to large portions of the Mojave!

Government acquisition of these lands will protect endangered species habitat, keep the fragile Desert ecosystem intact, and improve recreation opportunities and access for millions of Americans.

This proposal enjoys overwhelming support from community activists, conservationists, private industry, elected officials, Democrats, Republicans, and everyone who recognizes what a great deal this is for the U.S. Government. In fact, even most opponents of the California Desert Protection Act support this appropriation because of the issue of public access. If these lands are not purchased by the government, 1,500 miles of roads will be closed off to hunters, recreationists and the general public.

This Interior Appropriations bill contains a line item of \$15.1 million for the phase 1 purchase of these lands. Presently, there is no allocation in the House Interior Appropriations bill to fulfill the Federal Government's end of the bargain. These purchases have been held hostage in the House as a result of an unrelated U.S. Army expansion. Although this military issue does not directly affect any of the Catellus land holdings, it is preventing the appropriation of the necessary funding to execute these land purchases.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Conference committee to ensure that the government follow through on its commitment to purchase these lands.

#### 1999 NATIONAL MINORITY MANUFACTURER FIRM OF THE YEAR

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an outstanding Oklahoman, John Lopez, whose achievements have just earned him a major award—his firm, Lopez Foods, has been selected by the U.S. Department of Commerce as the 1999 National Minority Manufacturer Firm of the Year.

John spent several years honing his business skills as an independent owner-operator of four thriving McDonald's restaurants. Seven years ago, he sold his restaurants and purchased controlling interest in the company that now bears his name. John is

Chairman and CEO of Lopez Foods, an Oklahoma City meat producer that is among the select few beef and pork suppliers for McDonald's 25,000 restaurants.

John took a struggling company and turned it into a vital force in Oklahoma's economy. He has had tempting offers to relocate to other states but has remained steadfastly loyal to Oklahoma and his workers. Leveraging his understanding of McDonald's standards and management philosophy, he has continually expanded and modernized his operation, bringing it to the forefront in food safety, worker conditions, and diversity. Today, a \$160 million business with over 300 employees, Lopez Foods is ranked third among all U.S. Hispanic-owned manufacturing companies.

A long time champion of minority employment opportunities, he has strengthened his diversity program, such that minorities now make up nearly 55 percent of his workforce. John was selected by the National Hispanic Employees' Association as its 1997 Entrepreneur of the Year.

John also actively supports charitable endeavors that give back to the community, notably the Ronald McDonald House Charities. The United Way and the Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Foundation benefit from his support as well.

Mr. President, the Commerce Department's award is a fitting tribute to a dynamic Oklahoman who continues to make a difference for our state and our nation. Congratulations to John Lopez, community leader, compassionate citizen, and founder and head of the National Minority Manufacturer Firm of the Year.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry treaties which were referred to the appropriate committees.

#### REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO UNITA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 58

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

#### *To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the