when it comes time to file their taxes. I urge my colleague to join me in promoting greater tax fairness for our nation's farmers.

HONORING JOEL PETT FOR HIS 2000 PULITZER PRIZE IN EDITORIAL CARTOONING

HON. ERNIE FLETCHER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, It is my honor to recognize today the outstanding achievement of Joel Pett for being awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in Editorial Cartooning.

Since 1984, Joel has served in the capacity of Editorial Cartoonist with the Lexington Herald Leader and has produced cartoons on local and national government. Since that day in 1984—Pett's outstanding and talented work has appeared in many newspapers and magazines around America. This is why it is not surprising that he was recognized with such a prestigious national award.

With keen wit and acute perception, he has been able to highlight subtle perspectives that demand a more careful examination by the public. By presenting difficult topics in a comical way, Joel Pett is able to touch upon the core issues within the daily life of politics and government.

His distinction as the recipient of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning is one that highlights his creativity, inventiveness and intellect. Joel is a talented professional journalist who is dedicated to his work that he presents to readers throughout the year. I know that the Lexington Herald Leader, Lexington community and Commonwealth, of Kentucky are all proud of his outstanding achievement.

It is a pleasure to recognize Joel Pett, on the House floor today, for his superior work in political cartoons that has earned him the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in Editorial Cartooning.

MORATORIUM NEEDED ON FEDERAL LAND EXCHANGES UNTIL SYSTEM IS FIXED

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, land exchanges between private parties and the federal government have long been a source of contention in Congress and in local communities. Exchanges are supposed to provide the federal government a valuable tool to acquire lands with high public interest values, such as enhanced recreational opportunities or wildlife habitat, and to dispose of lands with less or limited public value.

According to a new General Accounting Office study that I commissioned, however, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service have wasted hundreds of millions of dollars swapping valuable public land for private land of questionable value, and the Bureau may even be breaking the law. In response to this report, I have called on Interior Secretary Babbitt and Agriculture Secretary Glickman to immediately suspend all land exchanges until the exchange programs can be fixed.

The GAO report was prominently covered earlier this month by NBC Nightly News, CBS Radio, the Washington Post, and other media outlets across country. Subsequently, my call for a moratorium on exchanges has received strong support from newspapers, organizations and individuals from across the country as well.

I commend to my colleagues three of the newspaper editorials that have appeared so far endorsing the call for the moratorium. I hope that my colleagues will review the GAO report and the call for a moratorium and will support such a move. The public is being taken advantage in these deals and their wallet and the environment are paying the price. ''Let's Make a Land Deal,'' The Washington Post, July 15, 2000; ''Public Land Deals Better Not Cheat The Public,'' The Bozeman (MT) Chronicle, July 20, 2000; ''Land Exchange Programs Troubled, But Well Worth Fixing'', Minneapolis (MN) Star Tribune, July 24, 2000.

[From the Washington Post, July 15, 2000]

LET'S MAKE A LAND DEAL

It seems like a simple idea: If the federal government owns some land it doesn't necessarily care to keep, and a private landowner has some land the government wants, and the two are roughly equal in value, then make a trade. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have had the authority to make those kinds of deals for years, with the idea that the exchanges would help the agencies consolidate federal lands and acquire important resources. But the transactions are often far from simple and, according to a General Accounting Office report released this week, the land-exchange program has shortchanged taxpayers by millions of dollars by undervaluing federal land or overvaluing private land in some of its deals.

The GAO said there are so many inherent difficulties in the land-exchange process that Congress should consider giving up the program altogether, opting for more straightforward sales and purchases. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management reacted sharply to the report, contending that GAO looked at too few transactions to justify its broad recommendation and that many of the cases it cited are old and have already been addressed. They say significant reforms are already underway.

Properly handled, land exchanges give the two agencies resources (public lands suitable for exchange) that they can use to acquire valuable and useful lands, including habitat for endangered species. If they lose that resource and wind up having to compete for funds for every proposed purchase, the likelihood is that their ability to obtain important land or consolidate holdings will be curtailed.

But it is important to be sure that those purposes are being served by the land swaps and that the public's interest is protected, both in terms of what land is being traded away and what value is being obtained for it. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), who requested the GAO report, has called for a moratorium on land exchanges until each agency ''demonstrates that it can insure all exchanges are in the public interest and of equal value, as required by law.'' That's a challenge they ought to be able to meet.

[From the Bozeman Chronicle, July 20, 2000]

PUBLIC LAND DEALS BETTER NOT CHEAT THE PUBLIC

(By Chronicle Editor)

Intelligent, well-meaning people can disagree over what's the appropriate amount of land for the federal government to own. But when the government strikes a deal to buy, sell or trade land, there should be no disagreement on the necessity of making certain the public is getting a fair deal.

That apparently has not been the case.

A recent General Accounting Office audit found that the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have lost millions of dollars from land exchanges by either buying too high or selling too low. This is a serious indictment of public land stewardship that should not be taken lightly.

Exchanges have become an important part of Western public lands policy as land managers seek to consolidate fragmented holdings, increase wildlife winter range and improve access.

All of these are important public benefits. But it is a serious breach of the public trust if land deals aimed at accomplishing those ends cheat the taxpayers out of land values that are rightfully theirs.

Several major land exchanges have involved Gallatin National Forest in recent years and have accomplished some important land management goals. The problem arises when negotiations and appraisals involved in these land deals are kept secret. Public land managers argue they must be kept secret because revealing proprietary business information from private parties involved in the negotiations could kill the deal.

But if the GAO report is correct in its dismal assessment of the outcome of many of these deals, maybe we'd all be better off if the deals were killed.

Public land managers need to find ways to conduct these negotiations in the open where all can see. If the lands involved are of sufficient value to arouse private parties' interest, then conditioning a trade on open negotiations and publicly revealed land appraisals will not kill deals.

Public negotiations allow anyone with an interest to step forward and point out aspects of the proposed trades that might be overlooked by agency officials. Open negotiations only invite more complete information about factors contributing to land value and reveal the public's priorities for managing these lands.

Public land managers need to remind themselves occasionally that the land they manage is not theirs; it belongs to the citizens of the United States, and those citizens are entitled to a say in how it's done.

[From the Minneapolis [MN] Star Tribune, July 24, 2000]

LAND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS TROUBLED, BUT WELL WORTH FIXING

There are outrages aplenty in a recent congressional audit of federal land-exchange programs: Nevada acreage valued at $763,000 was transferred by the government to private owners, who resold it the same day for $4.6 million. A 4,300-acre Douglas fir forest in Washington state was swapped to a timber company for 30,000 clearcut acres near Seattle.

These are patently bad deals. But do they, and others documented by the General Accounting Office in its recent report, justify ending the programs?

The GAO's auditors think so. Arguing that land-swapping is inherently problematical, they urge Congress to consider abandoning the practice—perhaps replacing it with a cash-purchase system, wherein the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management simply sell parcels they don't want and use the revenue to buy others they do.

But it's unclear how this approach would ease the key bedevilment of the exchange programs: the difficulty of establishing fair

value for tracts of land that may be remote, undevelopable, depleted, largely unmarketable to private buyers—or all of the above. Appraising such land is a wholly different task from pricing a farm, homestead or business based on recent sales of comparable properties.

This doesn't excuse the agencies' worst flubs, of course, but it does argue for some tolerance in reviewing their overall, performance—3 million acres of unwanted federal land traded, since 1989, for 2 million desirable acres whose acquisition protected habitat, improved recreation, consolidated fragmented holdings, buffered parks or wilderness from incompatible development. The GAO has carefully measured taxpayers' losses in a few dozen swaps, but not their gains in thousands of others.

Moving to a cash-purchase system would almost certainly slow the agencies' acquisition of valuable lands and subject their work to congressional micromanagement. Congress has long been reluctant to fully fund its own land-conservation commitments; in recent years the budgets for the land-owning agencies have come under increasing pressure, reflecting a sentiment against acquisition of public lands—especially in the West, where most exchanges occur.

Moreover, the Forest Service and BLM have adopted significant reforms since 1998, prompted by newspaper reports exposing their failings. Though the GAO audit was commissioned in part to review the effectiveness of these changes, most of the truly terrible transactions cited by the auditors—including the aforementioned Nevada and Washington deals—occurred before they were adopted.

It is certainly true, as the auditors observe, that the agencies' clearer policies, better training and more stringent review of proposed deals can't guarantee perfect performance. But it is also true that the agencies deserve a better chance to show results.

Rep. George Miller, the California Democrat and public-lands advocate who asked for the GAO study, isn't persuaded that the programs ought to be scrapped, but he has called for a halt to new swaps until the agencies can show they have shaped up. There's little chance that Congress will adopt such a moratorium this session, but the agencies shouldn't take that as a reprieve. Having overhauled their procedures, they must now strive to regain the public's trust in the outcome.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, due to the birth of my daughter Grace Elizabeth, I was not present for rollcall votes 416 through 428 on July 19 and July 20, 2000. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye'' on rollcall No. 416; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 417; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 418; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 419; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 420; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 421; ''nay'' on rollcall No. 422; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 423; ''nay'' on rollcall No. 424; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 425; ''aye'' on rollcall No. 426; ''nay'' on rollcall No. 427; and ''nay'' on rollcall No. 428. I also was not present on July 26, 2000 to vote on rollcall No. 422. I would have voted ''nay.''

IN HONOR OF COMMANDER GREGORY LAWRENCE

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor my dear friend, Commander Gregory Lawrence, a member of the Milpitas, California Police Department. I would like to congratulate Commander Lawrence on his retirement, September 8, 2000.

Commander Lawrence attended high school at William C. Overfelt High School in San Jose, California. Between the years of 1966 and 1969 he served as a Tank Commander in the U.S. Army. He continued his education at San Jose City College and San Jose State University. In 1979 he graduated from San Jose State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Administration of Justice. In 1995 he earned a Masters Degree in Management from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. During his 29 year police career he attended the FBI National Academy, the POST sponsored Supervisory Leadership Institute and Command College.

Commander Lawrence began his career with the Milpitas Police Department on June 18, 1971. Through hard work and dedication he rose through the ranks and was promoted to Senior Officer in September 1973, Sergeant in July 1980, Lieutenant in October 1991, and Commander on September 15, 1998.

Commander Lawrence served as a supervisor in patrol, traffic, community relations, personnel, and investigations. He was instrumental in the development and implementation of the first Community Relations unit where he taught drug resistance classes at Ayer and Milpitas High Schools. He was also one of the department's first Crisis Negotiators. He was the first and only Sergeant to ride motorcycles as a duty assignment and researched, developed, and implemented the department's driver training and bicycle programs.

Commander Lawrence served his community extremely well and I cannot thank him enough for his unselfish dedication to the city of Milpitas. He has accomplished a lot in his 29 years with the police department and has set a great example for dozens of other police officers, friends, and members of the community for years to come.

Commander Lawrence deserves great commendation, and I would like to ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating him on his retirement.

HONORING GOULD CONSTRUCTION

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize an exceptional group, Gould Construction, as well as its President Mark Gould, whom the Associated General Contractors of America honored with the Design-Build Award for 2000. The Associated General Contractors selected Gould Construction because of their dedication to Colorado and to its community.

Gould Construction succeeded in winning the Design-Build competition, which is new this year, of the 33,000 strong Associated General Contractors organization, because they demonstrated an ability to work under extreme circumstances. The selection criteria included difficulty of the job, project management, innovation, state-of-the-art advancement, sensitivity to the environment, client service, and contribution to the community. Gould Construction excelled in all these criteria when they worked for the city of Glenwood Springs to construct the Grizzly Creek raw water diversion. The Grizzly Creek water diversion dam was experiencing problems after close to a century of operation and after several natural disasters inhibited its functionality. Gould Construction worked in a challenging environment to restore the dam operation. The employees of Gould Construction worked nine weeks, suspended high above the narrow Roaring Fork Valley in the White River National Forest, to complete a plan that originally was scheduled for thirteen weeks.

Gould Construction worked endlessly under these treacherous conditions to complete this immense project; workers, food and construction material all had to be air lifted in to the site. The conditions were such that workers had to live in camps for the duration of each workweek. The nature of the project led to other challenges as well, Gould had to deal with environmental permits and had to operate to preserve the historical parts of the old dam; all in conjunction with creating a groundbreaking design that would deal with avalanches and rockfalls from the steep valley walls. Mark Gould, President of Gould Construction, said this about receiving the award ''I'm thrilled for our employees, this award recognizes that we're doing important and innovative work nationally, not just in the Roaring Fork Valley. I think it will help us attract employees who come to the area seeking a challenge.''

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious why Gould Construction was chosen as the Design-Build Award winner for 2000. Congress should extend a well-deserved recognition for the award and our thanks for their service and dedication to Colorado and to its outdoors.