

already announced their commitment to strike a new tone and to unite the interest of the American people. I will work with our leaders to get our work done for the families in West Virginia and across our country.

FEDERAL DISASTERS IN OREGON

Mr. SMITH. I rise on the Senate floor today to lament a state of emergency in the rural parts of my State. The emergency we face is related to natural resources but different from those of drought and hurricane that the Senate has discussed and responded to.

The disasters in Oregon are not acts of God but of an infinitely more fallible entity—the Federal Government. Adverse decisions on forest and fisheries management are imperiling entire communities and entire ways of life.

I am not seeking, at this time, to reverse those management decisions. Although they deserve intense scrutiny. What I am seeking is that this Government recognize that its decisions have a cost—one that is borne on the backs of those who can least afford it. These people and communities need relief as much as those burdened by other disasters not of their creation.

Over a decade ago, the Federal Government sought fit to bring tens of thousands of loggers and mill workers to their knees by stopping timber harvest on Federal lands in Oregon. It did so in the name of the spotted owl, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. I should add that after 15 years of negligible harvest on these lands, the owl is still not recovering and its habitat is being incinerated in catastrophic wildfire.

That timber war had more casualties than just jobs in the woods. County governments receive a share of timber receipts from Federal land—25 percent from the Forest Service and 50 percent from the BLM. For generations these funds have offset the inability to tax Federal property—which makes up the vast majority of most counties in my State.

When timber harvest evaporated, so did county budgets. In 1999, I came to this floor to describe to my colleagues what was happening in rural Oregon. Schools went to 4-day weeks, dropped sports and extracurricular activities, and curtailed other programs. Communities were forced to make heart-breaking decisions over whether to cut back social service programs or school funding—or to sharply reduce sheriffs' patrols and close jails or to cut out all extracurricular activities at their schools.

Fortunately, Congress created a safety net in the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. This provided funding to counties based on historic rather than current timber harvest levels. And not just Oregon counties. In the life of that legislation, California received California received \$308 million; Idaho, \$102 million; and Montana, \$63.4 million.

That program expired, on our watch, 2 months ago.

My colleague from Oregon and I have left no stone unturned to find money for an extension. Those efforts have been unsuccessful and we stand here, with our timber dependent counties, at the mercy of the Government.

Their plight is compounded by a second Federally created disaster in Oregon's commercial salmon fishing industry, delivering a double blow to many of the same counties. Commercial salmon fishing remained this season along more than 400 nautical miles, stretching from Florence, OR to Pigeon Point, CA. Estimates put the impact of this closure to Oregon and California fishing communities around \$60 million. This year marked the first time in history that there was no commercial salmon harvest in Curry and Coos counties in Oregon. Curry County also stands to lose \$6,591,993 or 62.3 percent of its road and general discretionary funds with the failure of Congress to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

Mr. President, the clock is winding down on the 109th and soon Members of Congress will leave town to return to their districts or States. We will be leaving without extending this important safety net for our rural counties and without completing action on the annual appropriations bills to fund the Government. I can only tell my counties and Oregon's fishermen that the fire will not die on these issues, it will only grow more intense when the 110th Congress convenes.

IRAQ

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, this past Wednesday, Washington felt a little like Hollywood. In fact, not many blockbuster movies have gotten the kind of massive press and critical acclaim that we saw yesterday for the release of the Iraq Study Group report. Official Washington rushed to embrace the report—understandably, since it reflected the same flawed mindset that led so many here to embrace the war in Iraq 4 years ago. Unfortunately, that same mindset is now what is keeping too many here from fixing an Iraq policy that many now agree is badly flawed.

The administration still believes that Iraq is the be-all and end-all of our national security. So, too, does most of Washington. Unfortunately, the Iraq Study Group report does too little to change that flawed mind-set. I respect the serious efforts of the group to correct the administration's misguided policies, and the report has some valuable ideas. But the very name, the "Iraq Study Group" says it all. We need recommendations on how to address Iraq, but those recommendations must be guided by our top national security priority—defeating terrorist networks operating in dozens of countries around the world. We can't just look at Iraq in isolation—we need to

also be looking at Somalia and Afghanistan and the many other places around the world where we face grave and growing threats.

The report doesn't adequately put Iraq in the context of a broader national security strategy. We need an Iraq policy that is guided by our top national security priority—defeating the terrorist network that attacked us on 9/11 and its allies. Unless we set a serious timetable for redeploying our troops from Iraq, we will be unable to effectively address these global threats. In the end, this report is a regrettable example of "official Washington" missing the point. The report may have gotten a glowing reception at its DC premiere, but I don't think it will get the same response once it goes on the road. Maybe there are still people in Washington who need a study group to tell them that the policy in Iraq isn't working, but the American people are way ahead of this report. It has been just over a month since the American people told us clearly what they were thinking about Iraq. They recognize that we need a timetable to bring the troops out of Iraq. They know that a flexible timetable is needed to preserve our military readiness, to prevent more unnecessary and tragic American casualties in Iraq and to protect our national security. They are the ones we should be listening to—not the insiders, politicians and think-tankers who believe they have cornered the market on wisdom.

Unfortunately, the focus of this commission, and the amount of attention being given to this single report, show just how myopic this administration and Members of Congress are. The long-running debate here in Washington about whether and when to re-deploy our troops from Iraq always centers on the situation on the ground there, and whether a drawdown of troops will make it better or worse. Those are important considerations. But even more important are the issues that are largely ignored—the fact that our commitment of troops and resources in Iraq is dangerously weakening our national security and the opportunity cost of ignoring the growing threats elsewhere in the world.

As the administration and Congress mull over the Iraq Study Group's recommendations, it comes as no surprise that the group's work includes what the New York Times had called a "classic Washington compromise." But we need much more than a compromise to fix our national security policy. We need a dramatic and immediate change of course in Iraq—a timeline to re-deploy our troops from Iraq so that we can refocus on the terrorist networks that threaten the safety of the American people.

The war in Iraq was, and remains, a war of choice. The administration has tried to create a false choice, between staying in Iraq with no end date in sight and "cutting and running." They want us to believe that Iraq is the central front in the war on terror, just as