

it is not just our car manufactures that are in trouble right now. In almost every sector of our economy, we have trouble, and we cannot neglect one area of our economy in an effort to help another area of our economy.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KOHL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KOHL. Madam President, I ask that it be in order to make a point of order en bloc on several pending amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2225, 2226, 2246 2248, AND 2288

Mr. KOHL. Madam President, I make a point of order that the following amendments are not germane postcloture: amendments Nos. 2225, 2226, 2246, 2248, and 2288.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is well taken. The amendments fall.

Mr. KOHL. I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 p.m., the Senate resume consideration of the Coburn amendment No. 2244; that Senator HARKIN be recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes, to be followed by Senator COBURN for as much time as he consumes; that following Senator COBURN's remarks, the Senate then proceed to vote in relation to the Coburn amendment No. 2244, with no amendment in order to the amendment prior to the vote; further, that upon disposition of amendment No. 2244, the Senate then resume the following amendments, with 2 minutes of debate prior to each vote: amendments Nos. 2245, 2243; that no amendments be in order to either amendment prior to a vote; and that no amendments be in order to any of the amendments listed here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KOHL. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:22 a.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2244

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of

amendment No. 2244 offered by the Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. COBURN.

Mr. COBURN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the Senate Agriculture appropriations bill contains \$4.9 million to help public television stations meet the Federal mandate to provide over-the-air digital signals to rural areas, similar to last year's funding level. Rural public television stations throughout the country are at extreme disadvantage when faced with the task of converting their stations and vast network of translators from analog to digital transmission. Why? Because they are spread over a larger geographic area—private and some of the network stations—and they have a much smaller population base to draw upon when funding system improvements than their urban counterparts. Urban stations have a bigger population base.

To date, most rural stations have focused their resources on converting transmitters to meet the Federal mandate. The funding provided in this Agriculture appropriations bill will be critical to helping stations transmit their signals far enough to reach people in rural areas far from the transmitters. Generally, stations have these transmitters send a signal out over the airwaves, but in a large number of cases they need translators. They take the transmitter signal at a certain point and then they boost the power so they can send it further out. That was also true under the old analog system. Obviously, the analog translators would not work for digital, so we need digital translators. In most cases, for technical reasons, the digital translators cover less of an area, particularly in places that are hilly or mountainous, so additional translators are needed.

At present, we have millions of people living in rural America who simply cannot get the over-the-air digital signal. These funds are allocated on a peer-review process within the Rural Utilities Service of the Department of Agriculture. For example, in my State of Iowa, a large number of people in the Dubuque area are not receiving the Iowa public TV digital over-the-air signal now because of the lack of a digital translator which gets its signal from a Cedar Rapids-Waterloo transmitter. I understand also that the Oklahoma public television system received considerable funding through this program a few years ago. But many other State systems have very real needs that have not been met. Few public TV stations are able to acquire the needed funds to

do this. In the current 2009 round, public TV stations requested about three times the available needed funding we have in the USDA program. While it is true that both the Department of Commerce and the Corporation for Public Television do provide equipment for public TV stations, it is also true that these funds are both inadequate to fully meet all the needs they are intended for, and they have not been providing significant funds for translators.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting provides about \$36 million for public TV and radio stations for equipment. They have provided digital equipment, shifting analog libraries to digital, and power equipment. But they have not focused on digital translators. It is not their mission to focus on the special needs of rural areas such as the Rural Utilities Service must do. Even if they do in the future provide some funding for translators, the total we now need is going to be far more than the funds that will be available in the coming fiscal year. Even if they did have the funds, they asked for three times the amount of funding that we have in this bill to build these translators. The Department of Commerce also has a program which provides equipment, again not focused on translators. They provide equipment such as network operations equipment that allows stations to take signals from a national broadcast and send them out over their transmitters. They provide emergency funding when there is a local equipment failure but, again, they have a very limited amount of money for translators.

Again, there is a considerable need for additional funds for digital TV to reach rural America. The lack of a single translator can mean that 100,000 households are not able to get over-the-air digital signals. These funds are badly needed. I thank my friend from Oklahoma for letting me go first because I have to chair a hearing at 2:30. I wished to make these comments because I have real-time experience with these translators in my State in Dubuque. But there are other places in rural Iowa that are on the fringes of where the transmitters are, and they have to have these translators to get the signal out.

Again, one could say: Well, they charge the people. But there are not that many people. They deserve to have public television also. That is what this money was for, the \$4.9 million, to help them get these translators. It is not only Iowa, any State that has a lot of rural area, especially if it is hilly or mountainous, needs translators. I am not an expert in this area whatsoever, but I know they cost money. I do know the need is there. All I can say is, they had asked for three times more than what we have in this bill. So if there are some other funds in Commerce or in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, I rather doubt they will be able to anywhere meet the need that is out there, and they will be