

Realtors fight enactment of POWDR Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Protect Our Wetlands and Buck Resources (POWDR) Act should not be enacted because it would deny reasonable use of private property and override state and local land use planning and management, the National Association of Realtors said today.

"Abrupt changes in public policy regarding federal financial assistance in wetland areas, as

proposed in the POWDR Act (H.R. 2268), will create economic hardships for landowners," Robert Elrod, a Windermere, Fla., Realtor, said. Elrod's remarks were made in testimony before the House fisheries, wildlife conservation and the environment sub-committee.

Although proponents of POWDR argue that the legislation does not prohibit owners from building on

then land, "the legislation effectively denies development opportunities by prohibiting almost all forms of federal involvement for development," Elrod said.

The POWDR Act would end generally available federal programs, such as federal flood insurance, sewage treatment grants and FHA and VA loans, in undeveloped wetlands of five acres

or more throughout the United States.

The legislation also would override local land use plans and management and retard growth opportunities, "thus having a detrimental effect on local economies," he said.

"While we recognize that there are wetlands of significant environmental value which need to be protected," Elrod continued, "the POWDR bill is both premature and excessively sweeping in its application."

The bill "contains no definition of wetlands, and does it clearly specify the type of wetlands to be designated," Elrod said.

"Congress should not take such dramatic action as that proposed in the POWDR bill without first knowing which areas of the country will be impacted," Elrod stressed.

Elrod also expressed concern over the POWDR Act premise that all wetland areas are unsuitable for development.

"Development of wetland areas does not necessarily pose a risk to the surrounding areas or to the wetlands themselves. Although some wetland area may require protection, this all-inclusive legislation in excessive in restricting development for all undeveloped areas," he said.

Elrod stated that H.R. 3082, the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, represents "a more balanced approach to the wetlands issue" than the POWDR Act because it calls for a study of wetland

development before proposing any affirmative action, he said.

In addition to studying the environmental and economic impact of eliminating federal expenditures in wetlands, as H.R. 3082 specifies, Elrod said the study should consider the impact of denying federal expenditures in wetland areas on private property owners and local communities.

Aside from the wetlands study, H.R. 3082 calls for substantial increases in funding for federal acquisition of wetlands habitat, which Elrod also commented on.

"We do not generally support federal acquisition of private property, but in the case of environmentally sensitive wetlands, it is more sensible and equitable for the government to purchase those properties outright than to indirectly deny property rights by eliminating development opportunities," he said.

Elrod recommended that the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act include policies and guidelines to be followed in the acquisition process to avoid "excessive costs to the government" and "undue hardships on landowners and local communities."

Elrod also encouraged Congress to explore the idea of providing tax incentives to property owners who wish to donate title to wetlands or easements for conservation purposes.

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assistance to needy persons in that country, according to Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture Alan T. Tracy.

In Colombia, the Institute Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar will distribute the milk to

children under seven years of age, pregnant and nursing mothers, children exposed to malnutrition, and families affected by the earthquake which occurred in March 1983 in Popayan and surrounding villages in the state of Cauca.

In Indonesia, the milk will be distributed by the Darhna Wanita Women's League to improve the nutritional status of children in public schools throughout the province of Java.

The donations are the eleventh and twelfth programs under recent legislation which amended Section 416 of the Agricultural Act of 1949 to allow the CCC to donate its surplus dairy products to help needy people overseas.

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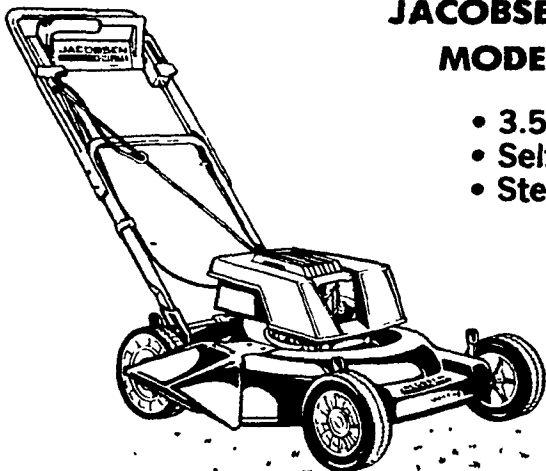
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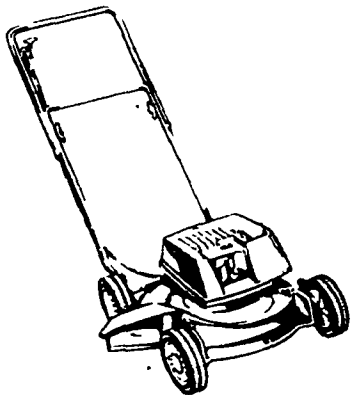


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