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In This Issue

Bush Solution to Forest Fires: Remove the Forest

The Bush administration sent a legislative proposal to Congress on Sept. 5 that would allow increased commercial logging of old-growth trees in national forests, purportedly to reduce runaway forest fires that have plagued the West in recent years, even though such trees are not the source of the problem.

Misleadingly labeled the "Healthy Forests Initiative," the plan seeks to eliminate legal tools to challenge logging initiatives -- waiving provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act and exempting most forest management projects from judicial review -- and would also exempt timber cutting from public notice and comment. Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID) is expected to offer portions of the Bush proposal to the Dept. of Interior spending bill, according to this Earthjustice action alert.

The catastrophic fires of recent years are the result of a buildup of small trees and underbrush, "due to a variety of Forest Service policies, including the practice of extinguishing low-intensity fires" while allowing timber companies to harvest "the larger, most fire-resistant trees," according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. The Bush plan sets forth a "goods-for-services" arrangement in which the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management could permit timber companies to cut large trees -- which are not the problem -- in exchange for removing the commercially worthless small trees and underbrush.

To oversee the "Healthy Forests Initiative," Interior Secretary Gale Norton has appointed libertarian Allan Fitzsimmons, who has questioned the existence of ecosystems, calling them a "mental construct," the protection of which should not

shape federal policy. Click here for more detail on Fitzsimmons.

OMB Speaks on Data Quality, Again

September 5, 2002, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sent a memo to the President's Management Council concerning its review of agency draft data quality guidelines. OMB identifies three process issues that it believes require greater cross agency conformity, and provides specific language it wants incorporated into each agency's final guidelines.

The 3 process issues and OMB's recommendations are:

1) **Use of websites to keep public informed about data quality**. OMB recommends that agencies make use of websites to inform the public about Data Quality Guidelines, what they are, how to submit a request, major decisions, etc. Many in the public interest community suggested during the public comment period that agencies establish an online docket providing information on who has submitted a complaint, the substance of the complaint, and the disposition of the complaint.

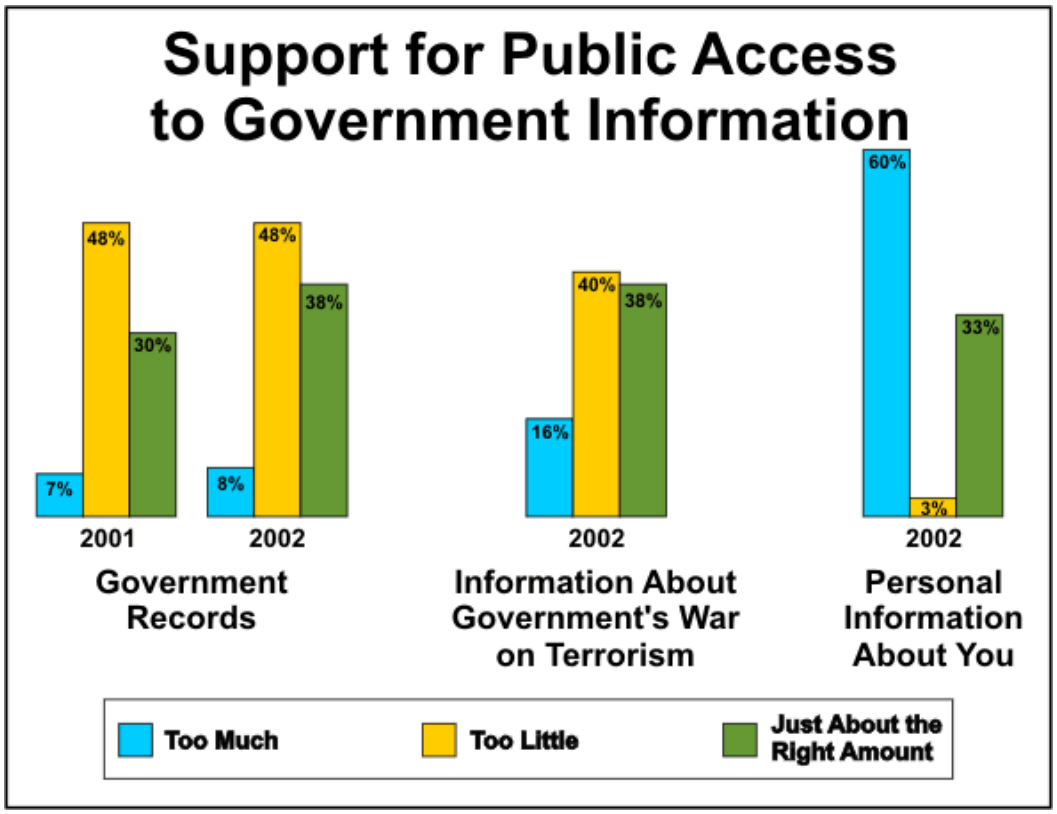
2) **Rulemaking and other procedures**. OMB agreed with various agencies that made the point that a separate data quality process would be unnecessary and duplicative when rulemaking, adjudications, and other administrative procedures already allow for comments and complaints. OMB recommended that any data quality complaints be considered during these processes. OMB also makes an important point in its recommended language noting that the data quality requests cannot unduly delay rulemaking. This was a major concern among many public interest groups.

3) **Deadlines on decisions for requests and appeals**. OMB recommends that agencies provide a written response within 60 calendar days of receiving a data quality request. The recommended language allows agencies more time should they need it, so long as they send the request or written explanation and an estimated completion date.

The memo from OIRA administrator John Graham reads as if it may be the last piece of written guidance from OMB to the agencies on Data Quality Guidelines. It restates that the agency "guidelines must be issued by October 1, 2002." But the memo notes that OMB still intends to weigh in on agency guidelines. "My staff also will be working with your staff in the next few days concerning other innovative highlights from agency guidelines that may deserve your consideration."

Troubling Information Polls Tell of a Troubled Public

Two recent polls present a mixed picture about public access to government information in the post-9/11 environment. When asked about whether specific information should be removed from the web, most people say no. But their views change dramatically if the government argues that the information could help terrorists.



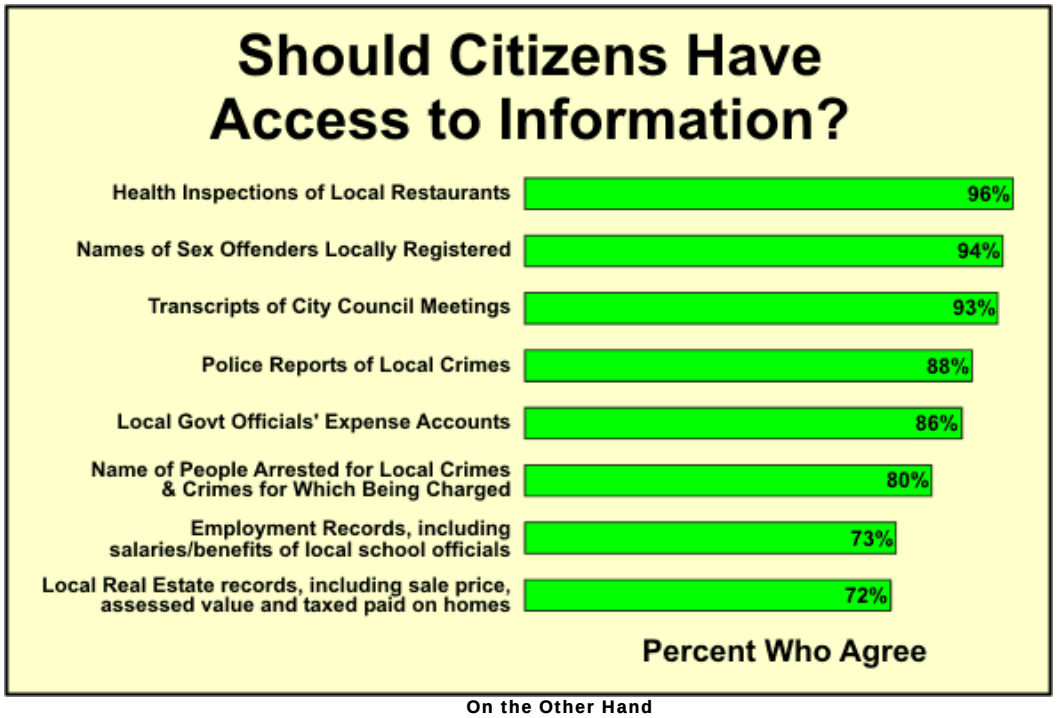
On One Hand

One poll, conducted by the First Amendment Center and the American Journalism Review, found that 9/11 had very little impact on the public's view that they had too much or too little access to government records. In fact, 48% thought they had too little access in 2001 and felt the same way in the summer of 2002. Interestingly, many who were undecided in 2001 felt that there was just about the right amount of access in 2002, going from 30% in 2001 to 38% in 2002. Only 7% in 2001 thought there was too much access, and that number stayed virtually the same at 8% in 2002.

Even when it comes to the war on terrorism, most people do not feel that they are getting too much information. About 40% of those polled felt they were getting too little information and 38% said it was just about the right amount. Only 16% felt there was too much information about the war on terrorism available.

Yet when it comes to access to personal information, a clear majority, 60%, feel there is too much information being made available. Only 3% feel there is too little information, while 33% feel it is just about the right amount.

The sense that there is too little access to government information was reinforced when they asked whether citizens should have access to a series of local information sources. But the strength of support weakened when the examples dealt with personal information about them. For example, well over 90% felt they should have access to records of health inspections conducted at local restaurants and even names of registered sex offenders. But only 73% agreed they should have access to employment records, including salary and benefits, of local school officials, and they are closely split between those who strongly agree and those who mildly agree. That same pattern exists when it comes to access to local real estate records, which includes the sale price, assessed value and taxes paid on residential homes, where 72% agreed.



On the Other Hand

The second poll, conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life Project at virtually the same time as the poll described above, finds a different trend when it comes to public access to "sensitive" information that might be used by terrorists. Nearly 7 of 10 people (69%) say that government should be given broad discretion to keep information out of the hands of terrorists, even if means limiting public access to the information. Roughly two-thirds of survey respondents feel government (67%) and businesses/utilities (66%) should remove information from web sites that "might potentially" help terrorists, even if the public has a right to such information.

Yet a plurality of respondents (47%) say that they do not believe that withholding or removing information from web sites will make a difference in deterring terrorist; 41% believe it will make a difference; and 12% are uncertain.

Like the First Amendment Center/AJR poll, this poll finds broad support for access to specific information. For example, 80% believe that information about pollution caused by individual factories should be posted to the Internet. 76%, slightly lower than the above poll, believe names of convicted sex offenders who have finished their prison time should be posted on the Internet. And 57% believe that information should be posted to the Internet about how and when hazardous materials are transported through their communities.

The poll found less than a majority support posting the information on the Internet when more specific details are revealed, such as lists of chemical plants and the chemicals they produce (43%). Although the numbers in this poll are far less supportive of posting personal information, the trend is the same as in the first poll – it is the least popular of items for public access. In this poll, only 27% support posting information about property tax records, such as what people paid for their houses.

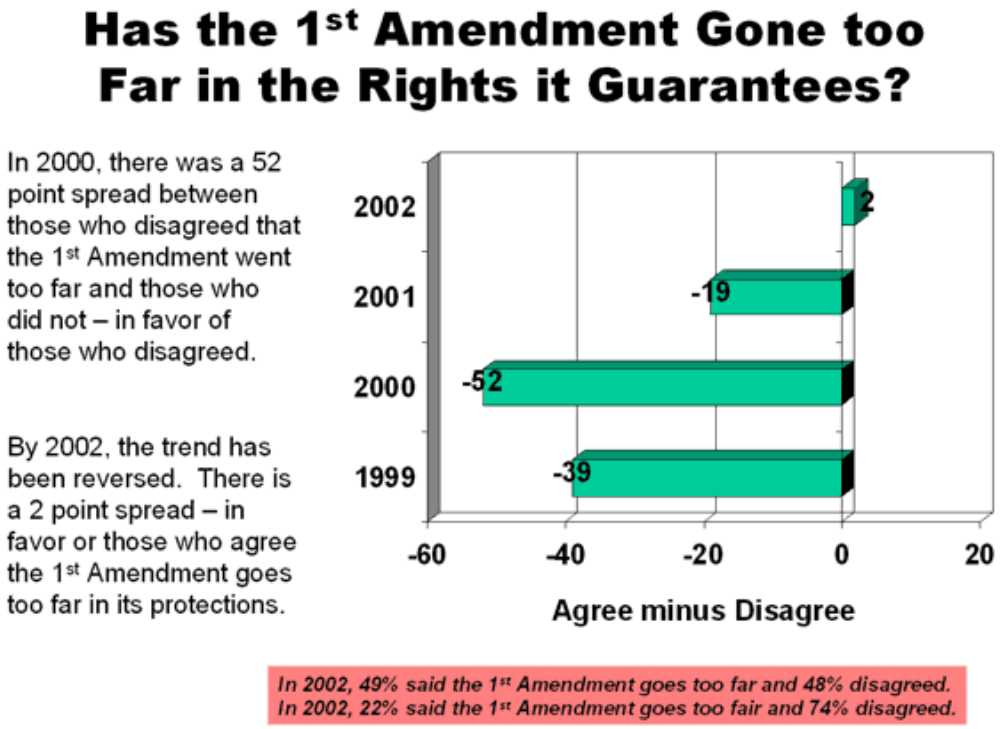
But all of this is turned on its head if the government says that the information could help terrorists. For example, 60% of

those who believed the government should post information about chemical plants and the chemicals they produce agreed that the information should be removed from the Internet if the government said it could help terrorist. Similarly, more than half (54%) of those who supported posting information about pollution from factories and 58% of those who supported knowing about the transportation of hazardous chemicals through their communities felt the same way.

Both Hands?

The Pew Internet & American Life Project reinforces other findings that highlight the tension that exists since 9/11 between information as a breach of security and its use to promote community health and safety. When information is framed as promoting community safety – the chemical plant information can help reduce accidents and save lives – public access is strongly supported. When information is framed as aiding terrorists – that chemical plant information is a blueprint for terrorists – public access is not supported. That may be a lasting result of 9/11, the public can have two competing viewpoints at the same time.

In some ways, the First Amendment Center/AJR poll raises this tension when it asked whether the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution goes too far in the rights it guarantees. There has been a large jump in those who strongly agree, going from 16% in 1999 to 41% in 2002. Yet when asked about specific rights guaranteed under the First Amendment, those who believe the right is essential has jumped in every case since 1997, and, in no case, is lower than two-thirds of the public.



FERC Rulemaking to Restrict Information Access

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on September 5, 2002 announced plans to aggressively restrict public access to government information it deems sensitive. Shortly after the September 11 attacks FERC limited access to huge amounts of information that it controls and released an initial policy statement addressing this issue in October 2001. Then on January 16, 2002, FERC announced a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) (published in the *Federal Register* on January 23, 2002) seeking public input on possible regulatory changes that would allow the agency to restrict unfettered general public access to what it termed Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (CEII).

While FERC is not the only agency to take steps to remove or restrict information in the wake of last year's terrorist attacks, this rule would be the first permanent action by a government agency. Under this rulemaking proposal any information deemed potentially useful to a person planning an attack on "production, generation, transportation, transmission or distribution of energy" would be made exempt from the Freedom of Information Act's (FOIA) mandatory disclosure requirement and overseen by a "critical energy infrastructure coordinator" who would process non-FOIA requests.

FERC utilizes several justifications to make its case that the agency is not altering or ignoring its responsibilities under FOIA. For example:

- FERC asserts that it is possible to exempt CEII under a competitive harm exemption. The commission asserts that since a terrorist attack on a facility would result in financial harm to that facility any information that could be

used by terrorists could be exempt from disclosure.

- The Commission states that CEII could have a mandatory exemption, as its disclosure would undermine its program effectiveness. FERC explained that while companies are legally required to cooperate with and submit information to FERC, if CEII were disclosed by the Commission companies would not be as trusting of the Commission and less forthcoming in the more subjective portions of their submissions. According to FERC this would impair its ability to effectively function.
- FERC also re-interprets a FOIA exemption for law enforcement activities, which has typically been used to protect information about ongoing criminal investigations or procedures being conducted by the FBI, CIA or police. In its rulemaking proposal FERC indicates that since it is a regulatory agency required to implement several federal laws, including the Federal Power Act and Natural Gas Act, then it may utilize this exemption.

However, one can't help but realize that thousands of documents that were publicly available last year will suddenly be exempt from FOIA under the FERC proposal. This inevitably requires a major reinterpretation of FOIA.

This FERC regulatory process, which likely will be challenged on grounds that it exceeds the statutory intent of FOIA, occurs as Congress is wrestling with a similar issue on the bill to create a new Homeland Security Department.

Interested parties have 30 days to comment on the proposed rulemaking before a final decision is due in mid-October.

EPA's Next Step in Data Quality

As part of its efforts to develop and implement Data Quality Guidelines, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced plans to develop “Assessment Factors” to assist the agency in evaluating the quality of information and data that it receives from external sources.

EPA has posted a draft of Assessment Factors for Evaluating the Quality of Information from External Sources which explains the new indicators. The agency is accepting public comments on the document from September 6 through September 30, 2002. EPA also scheduled a public meeting to hear input on the draft document. The meeting is being held on September 20, 2002 in Washington, DC. Those interested can submit comments and even get more information on the meeting and register online.

OMB Watch is currently reviewing the document and plans to submit both written comments as well as speak at the public meeting.

GAO Report on Charity Response to Sept. 11 Released

On September 3, 2002, the General Accounting Office released an interim report on the response of charities to 9/11. The report describes the roles that charities played during the aftermath of 9/11 and identifies some ways to improve the charitable aid process in future disasters. The report concludes that improvement “may prove challenging to implement.”

Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), the ranking minority of the Finance Committee, asked GAO to determine: (a) how much money was donated to charities as a result of 9/11; (b) what accountability measures were in place to insure that the money went for purposes it was supposed to; (c) what coordination efforts resulted after 9/11; and (d) any lessons to be learned.

GAO noted that it is difficult to “precisely tally” the amount of money raised, but said that 34 of the larger charities raised $2.4 billion, with the American Red Cross raising the most, $988 million, and the next largest, the September 11th Fund, raising $503 million. GAO indicated that more money has been raised, but that it could not provide a reliable figure because there were more than 300 charities involved in collecting funds for 9/11 survivors. GAO’s study focused ont 34 groups. GAO also noted that it did not audit the amount collected by the 34 groups, so could not attest to the $2.4 billion figure. Of the estimated $2.4 billion, roughly two-thirds has been distributed for aid. The American Red Cross, for example, has distributed $590 million or roughly 60%, and the September 11th Fund $333 million or 66%.

There was a broad range of assistance provided by the groups. Some of the money was distributed through cash grants or scholarships, and some was given through services. Some went to the families of those killed or injured, and some went to those indirectly affected, such as those who lost jobs or homes. This diversity is one reason GAO found uneven distribution rates of the funds raised. For example, the Citizens’ Scholarship Foundation raised $97 million, but has distributed only $400,000, less than one percent, since the money was raised for scholarships.

GAO was told by charities and oversight agencies that there were “relatively few cases of fraud.” GAO described accountability measures in place to address fraud by individuals, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. The interim report, however, focused mainly on individual fraud.

GAO notes that initially there was little coordination among the charities, but that it improved. For example, the 9/11 United Services Group that formed in December, 2001 has a shared database that charities can use. But this coordination poses many challenges, not the least is the privacy of people and families receiving aid.

IRS Considers Modifications to Form 990

The IRS is considering revising Form 990 to increase public accountability through better disclosure. IRS Announcement 2002-87, released September 4th, seeks public comment on a variety of proposed changes to reporting on fundraising, transactions between PACs and their nonprofit affiliates, corporate ties and conflicts of interest and grants to foreign organizations. The announcement also lists recent changes made to Form 990 in the areas of fundraising and the inclusion of section 527 organizations as 990 filers.

For a more detailed breakdown of the proposed changes, click here. Comments are due on January 28, 2003.

FEC Proposes New Definition of "Coordination" With Candidates

Last week the FEC proposed new rules to define when communications with a federal candidate, a campaign, party or their agent, may turn an otherwise independent expenditure into an in-kind campaign contribution. Since corporations, including nonprofits, are prohibited from making contributions to federal candidates, the regulatory definition of "coordination" could impact any group that interacts with public officials or community leaders that are also federal candidates and communicates with the public about issues that involve them.

The proposed rule implements the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, which requires the FEC to write tougher rules in this area. A three-part test would consider an expense to be coordinated if it is paid for by someone other than a candidate or campaign and meets standards relating to content and the interactions between the candidate and group or person paying for it. The Commission asks for comment on alternative content and interaction standards.

The 130-page proposed rule also addresses disclosure requirements for political committees and groups that qualify to make independent campaign expenditures, so that coordinated communications are reported to the FEC. Transactions between candidates and parties are also covered.

Comments are due October 11, 2002. The FEC is encouraging electronic submission of comments at BCRAcoord@fec.gov. Email commentors must include their full name, email address and post office address. A public hearing on the proposed rules will be held on October 23-24.

Faith-Based Initiative Goes Political

The administration, along with the Republican Party, are increasingly looking at faith-based activities in political terms.

A September 15 Washington Post story reported that White House Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives officials have appeared with Republican candidates in close races in six states and at a GOP sponsored meeting of religious groups in South Carolina that encouraged them to apply for federal funds.

At the same time, House leaders are pushing for a vote in the next few weeks on a bill that would allow religious congregations to endorse candidates and spend funds on campaigns. Supporters of the Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act (H.R. 2357), have misrepresented the need for the bill and its impact by claiming current law prevents religious leaders from speaking out on issues of public concern.

But, as Steve Miller, Exempt Organizations Director at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), told the House Oversight Committee at a hearing last spring, current law does not prevent religious organizations from speaking on issues. In July the IRS published a guide for religious organizations that states the ban on partisan electioneering "is not intended to restrict free expression on political matters by leaders of churches or religious organizations speaking for themselves, as individuals. Nor are leaders prohibited from speaking about important issues of public policy." Supporters of H.R. 2357 fail to make the distinction between issues and candidates.

H.R. 2357, sponsored by Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), would exempt religious organizations from the prohibition on partisan intervention in candidate campaigns, if it is not a "substantial part" of their overall activities. There is no definition of what is "substantial". Sen. Bob Smith (R-NH) introduced the companion Senate bill, S. 2886, in August. Another House bill, H.R. 2931, sponsored by Rep. Phillip Crane (R-IL), proposes a "bright-line" definition that would allow religious organizations to spend up to 5% of their budget on electioneering, but no more than 20% on both lobbying and electioneering. Non-cost items, including volunteer efforts, would not count toward the total, and could be unlimited. See our summary of the bills.

Jones, the Christian Coalition and other supporters of these bills claim they will not open the door to campaign expenditures by religious organizations because of this year's new campaign finance reform legislation. But while any corporate body, including religious congregations, is prohibited from contributing directly to federal elections, there are many ways, including creation of a PAC, that funds could be spent on campaign activity or donated directly to federal candidates. In addition, federal campaign finance reform only applies to federal elections, leaving open the possibility of donations to state and local candidates. See our Fact Sheet on Church Electioneering.

The religious community is clearly divided on the need for this legislation. The National Council of Churches has opposed it, as have most major denominations. The Christian Coalition is pushing hard for it, and is expected to highlight votes on the bill in their voter guides this fall. A Gallup poll conducted in August showed that 68% of the respondents, people of faith and clergy, do not believe congregations should be endorsing political candidates.

See OMB Watch comments to the House Subcommittee on Oversight.

Why CARE?

Supporters of the Charity Aid and Recovery Act (CARE), which passed the Senate Finance Committee in June, are hoping Senate leaders can work out an agreement to bring the bill to the floor soon. Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) was quoted as saying an agreement limiting the number of amendments that can be offered in a floor debate is crucial, or "probably time was going to pass it by." Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) has been working on a "unanimous consent agreement," which may limit amendments to one or two for each party, thereby limiting the amount of floor time needed to consider the bill.

On the Republican side, Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX) is pushing an amendment that would expand a 25 percent capital gains exclusion for sales of land to conservation groups to apply to all types of charitable organizations. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX) has expressed interest in an amendment exempting state and local political committees from reporting under the Stealth PAC law that passed in 2000. Several Democrats have expressed interest in offering amendments, although the issues were not clear. These include Sens. Jack Reed (D-RI), Paul Wellstone (D-MN) and Blanche Lincoln (D-AR).

The issue of discrimination in hiring by faith-based entities that receive federal funds remains a key area of concern. Currently, the CARE Act is silent on this point. Yet the administration appears to be pursuing implementation through administrative actions, prompting several Senators to see a need to address this issue through the CARE Act.

Even if the bill passes the Senate, it must still be reconciled with the House bill or accepted by the House. The House bill, H.R. 7, is much broader, with an extreme faith-based component and a minimal nonitemizer deduction. See our letter to Congress opposing H.R. 7.

House to Vote on Bill Directing Privacy Assessments for New Rules

Within the next month, the House is expected to vote on a bill (H.R. 4561) -- sponsored by Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA) and cleared by the Judiciary Committee on Sept. 10 -- that directs federal agencies to conduct a “privacy impact analysis” for new regulations.

This analysis is to describe:

- the extent personally identifiable information is collected under a proposed or final rule, assuring participation by affected individuals in the rulemaking where the agency finds a “significant privacy impact”;
- whether affected individuals can access this information;
- the extent this information is protected from being used for something other than the stated purpose of the rule; and
- how such information is secured.

For each proposed rule (those in development published for public comment), agencies are also to list any alternative possibilities that could minimize privacy impacts while still accomplishing the stated objectives of the rule. For final rules, agencies are to summarize public comments on the initial privacy impact analysis, and describe any steps taken to minimize significant privacy impacts.

An aggrieved individual is entitled to sue over an agency’s final privacy impact analysis, as well as an agency’s decision to waive or delay completion of the analysis for emergency reasons, as allowed by the bill. In granting relief, a court could remand the rule or defer its enforcement against individuals.

Agencies are also to conduct a “periodic review” of each existing rule that has a “significant privacy impact” on individuals to determine any possible changes that could minimize such impacts. Such a review is to occur no later than 10 years after a rule’s adoption, and each year, agencies are to indicate in the Federal Register rules they plan to review.

EPA Issues Weak Rule on Snowmobile Emissions After Earful from Graham

A final EPA rule to cut emissions from snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles is weaker than the agency’s original proposal, which met resistance from the vice president’s office and John Graham, administrator of OMB’s Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), who sided with the snowmobile industry.

Despite their harmful effects, snowmobile emissions have never been regulated under the Clean Air Act. A typical 2-stroke snowmobile engine emits as much harmful pollution in seven hours as a car driven for 100,000 miles, according to Environmental Defense; snowmobiles annually discharge about 530,000 tons of carbon monoxide and 200,000 tons of

hydrocarbons. This pollution is especially concentrated in national parks, where tens of thousands snowmobile every year, endangering park employees, impairing visibility, and harming the natural habitat.

The new rule -- signed by EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman on Sept. 13, as required under a court order -- mandates at least a 50 percent reduction in hydrocarbon emissions by 2010 and a 30 percent reduction in carbon monoxide, as opposed to the 50 percent reduction called for in the agency's original proposed rule, which Graham questioned in a "post-review letter."

Environmental Defense contends that even EPA's original proposal would have been too weak, pointing out that the four major snowmobile manufacturers already produce 4-stroke engines that can achieve much higher emissions reductions, and a new 2-stroke engine developed by Colorado State University can reduce hydrocarbon emissions by 88 percent and carbon monoxide by 99 percent.

Nonetheless, the manufacturers staunchly opposed even a 50 percent reduction in carbon monoxide emissions, pressing their case in a meeting on Sept. 6, 2001, with Graham that was attended by a representative of Vice President Cheney -- a snowmobile enthusiast who owns a home in Jackson, Wyo., just south of Yellowstone National Park, where controversy over the rule has swirled. According to a feature story in the Washington Post's Weekend section on Aug. 18, briefing notes from an unnamed official indicated, "VP's office has an interest in [the snowmobile] portion of the rule, and a few concerns."

Days later, Graham issued his post review letter, asking EPA to perform a more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis to show "net benefits" through greater quantification and monetization of benefits. Mirroring concerns expressed by the manufacturers, Graham also faulted EPA's cost estimates, arguing, among other things, that the agency should evaluate whether the potential higher costs of cleaner snowmobiles would drive down consumer demand.

The Clean Air Act directs that standards be based on the best available technology; human health and the environment are the overriding concerns, not costs. Yet under Graham's leadership, such statutory considerations have been largely thrown out the window in favor of decision-making based on monetized cost-benefit analysis, which turns the logic underlying the Clean Air Act on its head. Costs are not merely given the same level of concern as benefits; they are given more concern, because of the biases and limitations built into such analysis (i.e., many benefits are difficult to put in dollars and cents). Not surprisingly, EPA's original weak proposed rule became even weaker after input from Graham.

FCC Calls for Major Review of Media Ownership Rules

On September 12, the Federal Communications Commission adopted a notice of proposed rulemaking as part of its biennial review of media ownership rules mandated under the 1996 Telecommunications Act to determine whether the marketplace is sufficiently ensuring the goals of local responsiveness, diversity, and competition with respect to local media, or if existing rules need to be maintained or modified, in order to promote these goals.

The NPRM is significant because it involves the wholesale review of all major applicable rules involving broadcast media ownership, coinciding with the study of those rules by a special FCC Media Ownership Working Group. A discussion of the media ownership rules at issue are available on NPTalk.

Different Opinion on Chemical Security

OMB Watch responded to a recent Washington Times Op-ed, entitled "Toxic road map for terrorists" with this letter to the editor.

Angela Logomasini ("Toxic road map for terrorists," Op-Ed, 9/4/2002) advocates eliminating public access to risk management plans (RMPs) because it is possible the information could be misused. Perhaps she would agree with some in industry that propose government no longer collect RMPs since the information may fall into the wrong hands.

Many would consider these proposals as too extreme and likely to result in increased risk to the public's health and well-being. After all RMPs provide information about chemical dangers in the community as a means to increase security and safety for citizens.

The principles of open government and the people's right-to-know are cornerstones upon which our country has been built. We should not hastily sacrifice these freedoms in the name of protecting them. The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court agreed with this point, recently ruling secret deportation hearings for those supposedly linked to terrorism unlawful. The court asserted that excessive secrecy compromised the very principles of free and open government that the fight against terror is meant to protect. The court declared that a blanket policy of secrecy is unconstitutional and that the government must be more targeted and precise in its approach.

We already have laws to restrict disclosure of information on national security, law enforcement investigations, or trade secrets. But the RMPs don't fit into any of those categories. So Ms. Logomasini would prefer a blanket secrecy approach, simply trusting companies to "do the right thing" in protecting the workers and communities. This approach gave us Love Canal, Bhopal, acid rain, and thousands of hazardous waste sites across the country. And with recent corporate scandals like Enron, WorldCom, and Arthur Anderson, it seems incredibly naive to remove an important check to ensuring that companies adequately inform and protect communities.

The true solution is to remove or reduce threats to manageable levels. After the September 11th attacks the solution wasn't to stop posting airline schedules or shut down air travel. New security measures were immediately implemented to reduce the risk of airplanes being used in another terrorist attack. While more is still needed to reduce risks during air

travel, the same intelligent approach should be used to handle the risks we face from chemical plants.

Senator Corzine (D-NJ) has a bill, The Chemical Security Act (S.1602), which spurs chemical companies to reduce the risks they pose to workers and communities by requiring them to assess their vulnerabilities and evaluate methods to reduce their risks, such as use of inherently safer technologies and storing smaller quantities of toxic substances. This approach also benefits communities and workers by reducing the consequences from the common industrial accidents that continue to occur everyday and represent an equally deadly threat. The responsible approach is not burying our heads in the sand and hoping that nothing goes wrong but using information to identify and minimize the vulnerabilities.

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