

REMARKS, GOVERNOR VICTOR ATIYEH
U.S. CONGRESSIONAL HEARING
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE LEGISLATION
U.S. SENATOR MARK HATFIELD, CHAIRMAN
PORTLAND, OREGON
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PREPARED TEXT

MR. CHAIRMAN...

I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOU TODAY.
IT IS A PARTICULARLY TIMELY MOMENT TO DISCUSS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
IN OUR ONGOING EFFORTS TO PROTECT AND MANAGE THE PRICELESS
RESOURCES OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.

TEN DAYS AGO, GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I SIGNED AN
UNPRECEDENTED AGREEMENT SETTING FORTH PRINCIPLES AND KEY ELEMENTS
THAT WE BELIEVE MUST BE REFLECTED IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOR
MANAGEMENT OF THE GORGE.

THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO SITTING GOVERNORS IS
HISTORIC. IT IS HISTORIC BECAUSE -- FOR THE FIRST TIME -- BOTH
STATES ARE NOW ON RECORD IN SUPPORT OF THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF
PRESERVING AND MANAGING A TREMENDOUS NATURAL AND SCENIC
RESOURCE. AND IT IS HISTORIC BECAUSE OUR SUPPORT HAS BEEN
EMBODIED IN TWENTY-TWO PRINCIPLES AND EIGHT KEY ELEMENTS THAT
PROVIDE THE FIRST EVER BROADLY-BASED, SOLID FRAMEWORK FOR
RESOLUTION OF LONGSTANDING CONCERNS ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF GORGE
RESOURCES.

THE LINCHPIN OF THE AGREEMENT IS OUR ENDORSEMENT OF A NEW CONGRESSIONALLY-CREATED JOINT STATE-FEDERAL MANAGEMENT ENTITY. THAT ENTITY IS CHARGED WITH DEVELOPING A BINDING MANAGEMENT PLAN WHICH WILL CONSIDER THE GORGE AS ONE INDIVISIBLE UNIT COVERING THE TWO STATES. BOTH THE MANAGEMENT ENTITY AND THE MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST INVOLVE A REAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE GORGE. GOALS AND GUIDELINES MUST BE PUBLICLY DEVELOPED AND MUST INCLUDE FULL COMMITMENTS TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE BEAUTY OF THE GORGE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AMID EXISTING AND HISTORICAL USES.

THROUGH OUR JOINT ENDORSEMENT OF THIS APPROACH, GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I BELIEVE THAT THE INTERESTS OF ALL AFFECTED PARTIES HAVE AT LAST BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER -- AND A MEANS HAS FINALLY BEEN FOUND TO GO BEYOND THE DISCUSSION STAGE TO THE DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION THAT CAN TRULY BE SUPPORTED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD ASK THAT THE FULL TEXT OF OUR JOINT STATEMENT BE ADDED TO, AND MADE A PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD. AND I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE FOR THE RECORD SOME OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. ANY MANAGEMENT ENTITY OR PLAN MUST CONSIDER THE GORGE AS ONE INDIVISIBLE UNIT COVERING THE TWO STATES. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE GORGE ARE THOSE CURRENTLY DESIGNATED IN STATUTES OF THE TWO STATES.
2. ANY MANAGEMENT ENTITY FOR THE GORGE MUST INVOLVE A REAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE INTEREST OF THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.
3. THE MANAGEMENT ENTITY WILL DEVELOP GOALS AND GUIDELINES AND IDENTIFY CRITICAL AREAS FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.
4. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST BE ADOPTED BY A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS FROM EACH STATE.
5. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST INCLUDE A FULL COMMITMENT TO THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE UNIQUE NATURAL AND SCENIC BEAUTY OF THE GORGE.
6. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUED VITALITY OF EXISTING MUNICIPALITIES IN THE GORGE.
7. EXISTING HOMES AND BUSINESSES MUST BE RECOGNIZED BY THE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

8. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN MUST SUPPORT THE HISTORICAL USES OF THE GORGE AS A VITAL TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR AND AS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF POWER GENERATION.
9. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN THE GORGE THAT ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE UNIQUE NATURAL SETTING OF THE AREA.
10. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT CURRENT EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY IN THE GORGE.

THESE AND OTHER PRINCIPLES AND KEY ELEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A REJECTION OF ALL OTHER APPROACHES. THEY SHOULD BE HAILED, RATHER, AS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD. WE REACHED AGREEMENT ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE JOINT STATEMENT ONLY AFTER REVIEWING THE SITUATION AND AFTER HEARING AND CONSIDERING CAREFULLY THE VIEWS OF LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS AND INTEREST GROUPS FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE GORGE AREA. AS YOU KNOW, FORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON GORGE PRESERVATION HAVE OCCURRED NOW AND AGAIN FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, BUT AGREEMENT HAS NEVER BEEN REACHED BECAUSE OF MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO STATES.

WITH OUR JOINT STATEMENT, HOWEVER, THE GAP HAS AT LAST BEEN BRIDGED. WE HOLD IN OUR HANDS THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO FIND COMMON GROUND AND ACCOMMODATE OUR DIFFERENCES WITHIN A FRAMEWORK THAT WILL ACHIEVE OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES: PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND SOUND MANAGEMENT OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THESE ARE OBJECTIVES WE SHARE WITH YOU -- AND OBJECTIVES ALSO SOUGHT THROUGH OTHER LEGISLATION PRESENTLY BEFORE THE CONGRESS. WE ALL HAVE THE SAME ENDS IN VIEW -- IT IS ONLY OUR MEANS OF ACHIEVING THEM THAT DIFFER.

I BELIEVE THAT, ON EXAMINATION, YOU WILL AGREE THAT A "FEDERAL LEAD-AGENCY" CONCEPT -- WHATEVER ITS MERITS -- SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS ON THE WASHINGTON SIDE OF THE RIVER. THEY WANT ASSURANCES OF GREATER STATE AND LOCAL CONTROL -- AND FOR THE FIRST TIME ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT BINDING REGIONAL MANAGEMENT, WITH FEDERAL PARTICIPATION, IF THEY FEEL THAT THEIR VOICES CAN BE ADEQUATELY HEARD.

THE MECHANISM WE PROPOSE ACCOMPLISHES THIS. IT IS THE FIRST PROPOSAL EVER PUT FORTH THAT HAS BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THE CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS OF WASHINGTON WITH THE ASSURANCES THEY NEED -- BUT AT THE SAME TIME PRESERVE OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF A FULL AND BINDING COMMITMENT TO PRESERVATION. WE THUS HAVE BEFORE US AN OPPORTUNITY THAT HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN OURS. WE MUST NOW ACT PROMPTLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY TO MAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY A REALITY.

MUCH CAN AND WILL BE SAID ABOUT THE MANAGEMENT ENTITY WE PROPOSE. BUT LET ME HIGHLIGHT FOR YOU THE KEY ISSUES AS WE SEE THEM.

ABOVE ALL, WE BELIEVE THAT A MANAGEMENT ENTITY -- UNDER ANY PROPOSAL -- MUST AT ALL TIMES CONSIDER THE GORGE AS AN INDIVISIBLE UNIT. THIS INDIVISIBILITY APPLIES TO BOTH THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE GOALS AND GUIDELINES THAT WILL BE DEVELOPED. UNITY OF MANAGEMENT WILL REINFORCE UNITY OF PURPOSE THROUGHOUT A GORGE AREA THAT EMBRACES TWO STATES. THE UNITY WE PROPOSE WILL BE ESSENTIAL IF OUR LONG RANGE GOALS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED WITH ENTHUSIASTIC LOCAL PARTICIPATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT, IN FACT, IS THE KEY. IT HAS BEEN THE KEY TO BRINGING WASHINGTON STATE TO THE TABLE AFTER MONTHS AND YEARS OF DISAGREEMENT. AND IT IS A KEY THAT HAS UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND OPENED THE WAY TO A JOINT SOLUTION AFTER COUNTLESS EFFORTS AT UNILATERAL ACTION.

NO PLAN PROPOSED TO DATE HAS INVOLVED THE CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE GORGE TO THE EXTENT THAT OUR PLAN PROPOSES. THE MANGEMENT ENTITY WE RECOMMEND WILL FORGE A REAL AND LASTING PARTNERSHIP OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL INTERESTS. WITH REPRESENTATION FROM EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, WITH MAJOR PARTICIPATION AND REVIEW BY LOCAL CITIZENS TO ASSIST IN DRAFTING A COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN, WE BELIEVE THAT GOALS AND GUIDELINES WILL RAPIDLY BE WRITTEN THAT MEET THE OBJECTIVES OF ALL PARTIES.

THE PRINCIPLES WE BRING BEFORE YOU TODAY ARE A ROADMAP TO MEETING THOSE OBJECTIVES -- A ROADMAP THAT WE INTEND TO SEE PROMPTLY TRANSLATED INTO A BILL FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE CONGRESS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE OBJECTIVES CONTAINED IN OUR STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME OBJECTIVES SOUGHT BY YOU, BY SENATOR PACKWOOD AND BY THE REMAINDER OF OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. BUT THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE IS THIS: THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I AGREE REPRESENT AN APPROACH THAT HAS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, BROUGHT BOTH STATES TO THE BARGAINING TABLE. DESPITE HARD WORK, LONG DISCUSSIONS, AND THE BEST OF INTENTIONS -- THE FACT IS THAT PRIOR TO TEN DAYS AGO THE STATE OF WASHINGTON HAD NEVER BEFORE OFFICIALLY AGREED TO ANYTHING.

GREAT VISIONS MUST ALWAYS ACCOMMODATE PRACTICAL REALITY. AND NONE OF US IS BLIND TO THE PLAIN FACT THAT NO PROPOSAL, NO LEGISLATION BEFORE THE CONGRESS THAT SEEKS TO PROTECT THE COLUMBIA GORGE WILL MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF BOTH STATES.

OBVIOUSLY, NOT ALL QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED IN OUR JOINT STATEMENT. NOR DID WE EVER INTEND THAT THEY SHOULD BE. THE DOCUMENT IS A BEGINNING -- BUT A BEGINNING AT A LEVEL NEVER BEFORE REACHED. WE HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION AND RECONCILE EVERY DIFFERENCE -- BECAUSE THE DOCUMENT WE ENDORSE HAS PROPOSED A MECHANISM DESIGNED TO DO EXACTLY THAT.

THAT IS WHY IT IS VITAL TO MOVE FORWARD BY BUILDING ON THIS DOCUMENT. BY PROPOSING A SINGLE JOINT ENTITY INSTEAD OF A DOMINANT FEDERAL AGENCY, WE HAVE PRESERVED OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES, BROUGHT THE VAST MAJORITY OF AFFECTED PLAYERS TOGETHER, DISSIPATED THE FEARS OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROPERTY OWNERS, PROVIDED THE MEANS TO KEEP WASHINGTON CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS MOTIVATED AND ENCOURAGED, AND AT THE SAME TIME ENSURED THAT THE GORGE WILL ALWAYS BE TREATED AS ONE INDIVISIBLE UNIT.

THESE ARE NO SMALL TASKS.

BUT THEY ARE SOME OF THE MANY TASKS THAT MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE, OVERALL EFFORT.

IN THAT CONNECTION, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO A SMALLER -- BUT NO LESS IMPORTANT -- PROJECT THAT CONCERNS ALL OF US ON THE OREGON SIDE OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.

I REFER TO OUR EFFORT TO FIND FUNDING TO RECONSTRUCT AND IMPROVE PORTIONS OF THE OLD COLUMBIA RIVER SCENIC HIGHWAY.

THAT HIGHWAY WAS DESIGNED SHORTLY AFTER THE TURN OF THE CENTURY TO PROVIDE MOTORISTS WITH A SPECTACULAR VANTAGE OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE. IT WAS WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE ENGINEERING WONDERS OF THE WORLD WHEN IT WAS DEDICATED IN 1916 BY PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON.

TWO YEARS AGO, I ASKED THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE COMMISSION TO DOCUMENT THE HIGHWAY'S SIGNIFICANCE, AND TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ITS FUTURE PRESERVATION AND USE. SINCE THAT TIME COMMISSION MEMBERS, OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STAFF, AND MEMBERS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION LEAGUE HAVE COMPLETED THAT ASSIGNMENT.

SOME \$3 TO \$5 MILLION IN NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN IDENTIFIED. THEY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR, RECREATIONAL USE OF ABANDONED HIGHWAY SECTIONS, INTERPRETIVE CENTERS, AND MAJOR RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION WORK.

I ASK, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT YOU JOIN US IN ACTIVELY SEEKING APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THIS IMPORTANT PROJECT. RESTORATION OF THE HISTORIC COLUMBIA RIVER SCENIC HIGHWAY IS TRULY A WORTHY COMPANION OF OUR OVERALL EFFORT TO PROTECT AND MANAGE THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE AS A WHOLE.

WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE, WE CAN SPEED THAT OVERALL EFFORT ALONG. THE PRINCIPLES AND KEY ELEMENTS ENUNCIATED IN OUR JOINT AGREEMENT WILL BE THE KEY.

TEN DAYS AGO GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND I PLEDGED OUR BEST EFFORTS TO WORK WITH OUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS, OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO DRAFT AND WIN PASSAGE OF A BILL REFLECTING THESE PRINCIPLES AND KEY ELEMENTS. I WOULD LIKE TO RENEW THAT PLEDGE TODAY.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I PARTICULARLY WANT TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION TO YOU PERSONALLY. YOUR WILLINGNESS, FLEXIBILITY, AND SUPPORT HAVE PROVIDED US A TREMENDOUS BOOST IN SEEING THIS PROCESS THROUGH TO THIS MILESTONE. YOU AND YOUR STAFF HAVE BEEN FLEXIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE FROM THE BEGINNING. I KNOW THAT GOVERNOR SPELLMAN AND MANY OTHERS JOIN ME IN THANKING YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER WITH US TO SEE THAT LASTING AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THIS MATTER.

IT HAS TAKEN PERSEVERANCE, VISION AND HARD WORK TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH BOTH GOVERNORS HAVE AGREED. IT IS IN THAT SPIRIT THAT WE BELIEVE OUR VISION -- WITH YOUR HELP -- WILL BECOME A REALITY. THE REALITY WILL BE A PRICELESS COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE THAT IS PROTECTED DURING OUR LIFETIME AND FOR MANY LIFETIMES TO COME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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