

Opening Statement Mark Baird
Congressman McClintock's Public Forum
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My name is Mark Baird. I am the President of Scott Valley Protect Our Water. I am also a rancher, small business owner, Reserve Deputy Sheriff and resident of Siskiyou County.

We are the point of the spear in the environmental agenda. Just about every environmental social engineering project we face was imposed upon Siskiyou first.

It is still going on.

Siskiyou County is classified as a Frontier County, meaning its population is less than two hundred thousand people. Siskiyou has around 44,000 people. Our County is 6,200 square miles. 68 percent of the land in Siskiyou County is Public land held by either the State or Federal Government.

Siskiyou, with its county seat in Yreka, used to be a net producer of tax revenue for both the State of California and the United States Treasury. Now we are a welfare county.

This is due to an agenda which has its roots in the old Green Party agenda. Citizens, taxpayers, property owners in Siskiyou are now the victims of the government which is supposed to serve them. The Coho Salmon, The Cascade Frog, The Spotted Owl, are among the target species which have been used against us; target species which form the tip of the environmental spear.

The vast majority of the land within our county is not on the property tax roles and therefore can not be productive in private hands. Government was responsible to pay certain monies in order that the county have some revenue for those lands which have been taken off the tax roles by government purchases since the County was formed in 1852. California Department of Fish and game owns some 7,000 properties in the state, several of which are in Siskiyou County. They are supposed to make payments in lieu of taxes. They have not made these payments in over ten years. Fish and Game claims they are broke.

The Federal timber harvest plan called for a certain amount of timber taxes to go to the county. These monies were to fund schools and roads among other things. Using the principal of "sue and settle," the U.S. Forest Service has used the spotted owl to effectively stop logging within the County. No logging, no timber taxes. One result of this policy is fuel loads that are far above historical norms. Increased transpiration, sublimation, and catastrophic wild fires destroy resources, lives and

the environment. All of this is in addition to the economic harm caused to the very taxpayers who fund this agency.

Environmental NGOs, which the agencies like to call “stakeholders,” have used “Sue and Settle” to have the Coho Salmon listed as threatened in the Klamath River. The result of this sue-and-settle is the closure of roads, even more restrictions on logging, and the threatened removal of four fully functional, productive hydro electric dams on the Klamath River. These dams provide 70,000 customers with the cleanest, greenest, cheapest electricity on the planet. Of course, the taxpayers and ratepayers will fund this experiment in social and environmental engineering.

California Fish and Game used sue-and-settle with the Karuk Tribe and the Klamath River Keepers to stop suction dredge mining on the Klamath River. The Cascade frog sue-and-settle has effectively stopped recreation in the high country. The short nosed sucker fish, the very fish U.S. Fish and Wildlife tried to exterminate in the 1950s, is now being used to fallow hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland in the Klamath Basin, land which grows food and fiber for this nation.

BIA funds the Klamath tribe with taxpayers money. The tribe uses our own money to destroy the economy with the help of Federal and State agencies.

These are the unintended consequences of the actions of the environmental socialists and their agency friends. The rate of drug manufacturing and drug abuse are soaring. The instances of spousal abuse and child abuse are rising. Elder abuse is on the rise. Our real unemployment is over 20 percent. County services have been cut. Property crimes are on the rise, as is alcohol abuse and drunk driving. Public Health and Safety are at risk.

Siskiyou County is a welfare county now, in some cases, a multi-generational welfare county. I have a friend who used to administer the Child Safe program. This is a program where at-risk young children with substance abuse in the family could stay after school, receive help, have a safe respite from abusive families, and be fed at least once a day. Cliff, my friend, asked an 8 year old girl what she wanted to be, when she grew up. The child answered, with all the beaming pride a child can muster, she replied, “I want to be on welfare like my mama and my grandma.” She thinks Welfare is a job.

My Sheriff has had to cut so many positions, that he asked Law Abiding Citizens to pay to go to the POST Academy at College of the Siskiyous, pay for their own equipment, go through training, undergo background, physical, and psychological

testing in order to work for nothing, helping to patrol a County that he can no longer afford to patrol effectively. I am one of those volunteers.

The town of Happy Camp used to be a vibrant, active community with schools, churches, lumber mills and small businesses. Families lived and worked. Children grew up, got jobs, and had families there. I have heard stories from friends who used to be employed in logging that 180 loads of logs a day went up highway 96.

Fast forward twenty years. The town of Happy Camp is almost a ghost town. There is one store. One gas station, and it is not manned. Drug use is rampant as is marijuana production. There are no mills left, few viable small businesses, even fewer people.

Drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, property crime are all up. Hopelessness is on the rise as well. That goes for all of the other towns on the Klamath and Salmon Rivers. Mexican Drug Cartels are very active in the Mountains of Siskiyou. They are the only ones using the forest now.

Let me remind you that a load of logs or a load of alfalfa or gold dredged up in the river are exactly what we need to move this country out of the mess we are in. Why? Because these raw materials represent the creation of new wealth. Real money created out of something that has value.

Siskiyou County has natural resources in abundance. The type of abundance which could be used to save this country. Abundance which could be used responsibly for generations upon generations.

Grant money from the welfare state is the only source of income which is reliable in Siskiyou today. Who gets the taxpayers money?

In Siskiyou one of the big players is the Karuk Tribe. The same Karuk Tribe that, in conjunction with radical environmental groups, sued to stop logging. The Karuk tribe is fighting to remove dams. Sued to stop mining, and are actively trying—with the help of NOAA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and California Dept of Fish and Game—to gain control of Surface Water Rights on the Scott, Mid Klamath, and the Shasta Rivers.

Sadly, the Karuk people also suffer as a result of the choices made by their leaders. The average guy may get a minimum wage job out of “saving the environment,” but believe me, the money, by and large, does not trickle down.

One of our members asked the Karuk Tribal Chairman if he really believed the Coho would be saved by the destruction of the Klamath Dams. His reply was “NO.

No one really believed that, but there was a pipe filled with Federal Restoration Money pointed straight at the tribe and we want that money.”

People who live on Copco Lake cannot get a real estate agent to list property there. Their property is effectively worthless because of the mere threat of Dam Removal. Property values have plummeted along the Klamath as well, in the face of dam removal. Imagine investing your life savings to build a lake front property to retire to, only to find you cannot give it away because your lake front home will face a mud hole, not to mention the loss of a world-class warm water fishery. With 20 million cubic yards of toxic sediment released from the dam, there probably won't be any fishery for decades to come.

Our electric rates have skyrocketed because we have been mandated to pay, in advance, to remove the Hydro electric Dams. One farmer in Butte Valley has seen their electric rates go up 2,000 percent. The electric rates have almost doubled at my business.

One of my employees buys her gasoline one gallon at a time, because of recent increases in her power bill and her payroll taxes. Katie sat in the middle of the floor and cried when her latest FICA and FUTA increase came.

The green agenda—call it Agenda 21, call it a rehash of the old Green Party platform, call it sustainable development or smart growth, call it what ever you want—I will tell you what it really is. It is the Death of Rural America, and in my opinion, it is the death of the Republic.

The form of government under which we live now is not sustainable. It is not sustainable because it is not profitable.

The people are tired. We have nothing left to give. The bucket is dry. The people of Siskiyou County have had just about all of the sustainable development they can stomach. If the government wanted to start a range war, they could not possibly have done a better job.

In closing I would like to leave you with a thought. The difference between a Constitutional Republic and tyranny is simple.

In a Constitutional Republic, the people wake up in the morning, secure in their Liberty, secure in their Property, secure in the knowledge that a nation of laws will protect their rights and their ability to live and to provide for their families.

Under any tyrannical form of government, the people wake up in the morning and ask themselves, “I wonder what the government is going to do to me today.”

Congressmen, under what form of government will my family wake up tomorrow?

Mark Baird