

TRIBUTE TO JIM SAXTON -- (Extensions of Remarks - December 11, 2007)

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SPEECH OF
HON. DON YOUNG
OF ALASKA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007

- Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, it was with a deep sense of loss that I learned that my dear friend and committee colleague **JIM SAXTON** will retire at the end of the 110th Congress. **JIM** has served the Third Congressional District of New Jersey with the highest distinction for the past 23 years.
- **JIM** and I have not always been on the same side on a number of environmental issues; however, there is no question that he always articulates his views with passion and conviction. When I became chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee on January 3, 1995, I was honored to appoint **JIM SAXTON** as the first chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans. He served as chairman of that subcommittee during the 104th, 105th, and 106th Congresses.
- He was a superb subcommittee chairman and sponsored a number of important conservation measures that became law during the Clinton administration. This included the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997. This landmark law, which has been extended several times, created the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund to assist this highly endangered species whose population had been decimated to less than 40,000 elephants living in the wild. As a result of his law, in the past decade the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved 183 grant proposals to assist Asian elephants. There is no question that these projects halted this species' slide toward extinction.
- A second bill was the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998. This measure, Public Law 105-242, statutorily created the framework for volunteer activities within the National Wildlife Refuge System. In the past 10 years, this Act allowed the number of volunteers to dramatically increase to nearly 40,000 Americans who contributed more than 1.5 million hours of service last year. The value of the volunteer work has been estimated in excess of \$26 million and it represents 20 percent of all staff work done in the National Wildlife Refuge System. At a time when the Fish and Wildlife Service is suffering an operations funding crisis within the refuge system, it is difficult to imagine how this system would function without the valuable contributions of volunteers.

- A third measure was the Rhino and Tiger Product Labeling Act of 1998. The fundamental goal of P.L. 105-312 was to eliminate the U.S. market for illegally obtained rhino and tiger products, and therefore, the incentives to kill these magnificent animals. Under this law, if a label on a product says that it contains rhinoceros and tiger parts, then we accept the manufacturer's claim and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for stopping its sale, confiscating any products, and persecuting the illegal importers.
- A fourth measure sponsored by Chairman **JIM SAXTON** was the Arctic Tundra Habitat Conservation Act of 1999. This legislation allowed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to undertake various conservation and management steps to reduce the exploding population of mid-continent light geese. These geese were systematically destroying the fragile arctic tundra in the Hudson Bay Region which is essential to the survival of millions of migratory birds. By all accounts, the implementation of this measure has been responsible for saving thousands of acres of vital wetland habitat.
- A fifth proposal which was signed into law was the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of 2000. This legislation, P.L. 106-555, established a small grant program to fund the rescue and rehabilitation of marine mammals, it encouraged scientific work associated with live and dead marine mammals and it provided a small amount of financial assistance to marine mammal rescue centers. Federal agencies frequently ask marine mammal rescue centers to provide around-the-clock monitoring and veterinarian care to injured animals without giving them any financial assistance. This measure established a humanitarian partnership between Federal and non-federal entities.

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- A sixth proposal was **JIM SAXTON'S** sponsorship of the Coral Reef Conservation and Partnership Act of 2000. Coral reefs are among the world's most productive ecosystems and they are often referred to as the ``rainforests'' of the oceans. These reefs are critical to the survival of thousands of fish species. Sadly, about 40 percent of all coral reefs are either degraded beyond recovery or in critical condition. This legislation was designed as a lifeline for our coral reef ecosystems by providing a limited amount of Federal funding to finance coral reef grants to assist in their protection and recovery.
- Finally, I am proud that **JIM SAXTON** joined with me as an original co-sponsor of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. On October 9, 2007, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of this act which is Public Law 105-57. This landmark law established for the first time an ``organic'' statute for our 96 million acre national wildlife refuge system. It

defined the term "wildlife-dependent recreation" to include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and environmental education. It also established a "conservation mission" for the system and required the completion of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan for each refuge unit. The act gave wildlife dependent recreation priority consideration in refuge planning, management and funding. Finally, it required the Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate the likelihood of ongoing historic uses on private lands prior to their inclusion within the system. **JIM SAXTON** authored this important provision.

- This is far from an exhaustive list of **JIM SAXTON's** legislative accomplishments in the resources arena. It is representative only of the 6-year period that he served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans. Nevertheless, it clearly demonstrates his dedication and commitment to wildlife conservation which he exemplified throughout his congressional career. His constituents living in Cherry Hill, Mount Holly, and Toms River, New Jersey, will miss **JIM SAXTON** and his lifelong advocacy of Theodore Roosevelt's vision and principles. I look forward to working with **JIM** through the 110th Congress. I wish him calm sailing seas in the days beyond Congress. "May the wind always be on your back and the sun shine upon your face!"

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