



News Release

From U.S. Rep. Tom Petri

Contact:

Niel Wright, 202/225-2476, niel.wright@mail.house.gov

July 22, 2010

Statement of Congressman Petri Green Scissors Press Conference

I want to start by thanking my colleagues for being here today, as well as the groups involved in the production of this timely and much needed report. I have been part of the Green Scissors initiative in the past and am participating yet again because the report brings together two issues that are of great importance to me and, I believe, to our nation. The Green Scissors 2010 report demonstrates there are important areas where budget cutters and environmentalists share common interests and are, in fact, the same people.

The fiscal health of our nation is in crisis. We are currently facing deficit levels not seen since World War II. We must begin to find ways to close the gap between our revenues and expenditures so we are not undermining the economic vitality of our nation. Even more importantly from a moral perspective, we must not leave an unsustainable debt burden on the backs of our children and grandchildren. And as we strive to be good stewards of the taxpayer's dollar, we must also strive to be good stewards of our environment so that future generations can also enjoy the precious natural resources we have available to us.

Fortunately, the Green Scissors report highlights reforms that would tackle both issues at once. From logging in the Tongass National Forest and subsidies to the oil and gas industry to royalty-free mineral extraction on public lands, the report helpfully highlights policies, many of which have been around for decades, that waste billions of taxpayer dollars and, simultaneously, contribute to significant environmental damage.

As the product of Taxpayers for Common Sense, Friends of the Earth, Environment America, Public Citizen and members of Congress from both sides of the aisle, Green Scissors 2010 shows us the way forward by enlisting allies for an important common cause. We need to make this alliance succeed for the sake of our environment and our economy.

I also believe that the diverse groups and individuals banding together here should serve as a model for others. Considering the current atmosphere in Washington, you might not realize it, but I suspect there are many issues on which various groups here could unite to benefit the national interest, and I endorse the idea that people involved in public policy should throw a wide net when looking for allies and should seek broad consensus rather than simply relying on disciplined factions.

Thanks again to my colleagues and the groups involved for moving this valuable initiative forward.

#####