

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL SVEDARSKY, TEACHER, ON BEHALF OF  
THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY AND THE MINNESOTA  
CHAPTER, WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

Mr. SVEDARSKY. Chairman de la Garza, Congressman Stenholm, Congressman Stangeland, agency personnel, and others concerned with agriculture and land use. My name is Dan Svedarsky. I am a wildlife biologist, teacher, and part-time livestock farmer, and I thank you for this opportunity to present some concerns of the National Audubon Society, and also the Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, relative to land use and the implications of the swampbuster and sodbuster provisions of the 1985 farm bill.

The National Audubon Society is composed of over 500,000 members representing a broad cross-section of society interested not only in birds, but the maintenance of a diverse landscape, clean air, clean water—above and below ground—pure air, and a healthy economy. The Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society is made up of 200 professional wildlife biologists, managers, educators, and administrators.

The National Audubon Society, along with the Wildlife Society, and many other professional and layman conservation organizations enthusiastically endorsed the 1985 farm bill; specifically, the conservation reserve program, and the swampbuster and sodbuster provisions. CRP signaled the substantial removal of erodible croplands from annual production thereby reducing crop surpluses, but more importantly, reducing soil erosion and the associated degraded water and air quality. The swampbuster and sodbuster provisions seem to provide a guarantee that the further conversion of wetlands and grasslands to cropland would be greatly reduced. It seemed to be a deterrent to developments such as an area in central Polk County here in Northwest Minnesota where in the last 15 years over 10,000 acres of grasslands and wetlands have been converted to annual croplands. Windblown topsoil is an annual spring occurrence in this area, and the increased water runoff helped to justify a \$1 million flood control structure which will, in effect, hold back water which had been largely held in natural wetland basins just a few years ago.

The National Audubon Society and the Wildlife Society continue to support the 1985 farm bill, and wish to express the following concerns: one, wetland values have been firmly established, and protection guidelines formulated into law, yet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports "drainage was at an all time high last year in Minnesota and other States with remaining wetlands." The Soil Conservation Service estimated some 30,000 drainage cases occurred in Minnesota in 1987 with a number being swampbuster violations. Is it not reasonable for a landowner to restrict private development activities, such as wetland drainage, in exchange for public subsidies? Enforcement is a sensitive issue, but it is critical to the success of the program if the intent of the law is to be met.

Concern two. Wetland basins regardless of their size and depth have distinct values. One of the key factors contributing to the unique waterfowl producing capacity of the prairie pothole region of western Minnesota and the Dakotas is the variety of wetland types in close proximity to each other. Shallow, temporary wet-

lands, whether cultivated or in native vegetation, are important breeding prairie habitat for waterfowl, and provide critical feeding areas for hens during the egg-laying stage. Also, the shallow wetlands collectively add to the water-storing capacity of the landscape, and should be valued as much as permanent wetlands. These values of temporary wetlands must be considered in discussions of so-called "minimal effects."

The National Audubon Society and the Wildlife Society believe that the swampbuster and sodbuster provisions of the farm bill are sound in principle, and are designed to enhance the long-term integrity of the environment for people and wildlife. We applaud the foresight of the designers of this legislation, support the agency staff who work toward the implementation of the various provisions, and recommend that a good thing not be weakened in any way.

A few comments as far as drought implications. I think the drought emphasizes the importance of keeping fragile soils in grass so they do not blow away. I think the drought also emphasizes the importance of lowlands. That is where my cows are finding more pasture this summer, and that is where I will be putting up hay next week.

In short, while the drought has created desperate conditions for thousands of people who depend upon the land, it reminds us of the importance of a diverse landscape with grassland and wetlands, as well as cropland. It also reminds us of the need to pull together as people and agency personnel to get through a tough spot because we are all riding through space together.

Thank you for this opportunity to present these concerns.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Svedarsky appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Doctor.

Mr. Rose.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN F. ROSE, PRESIDENT, FERGUS FALLS FISH AND GAME CLUB; AND BOARD MEMBER, MINNESOTA CONSERVATION FEDERATION, NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION**

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Chairman, my name is John Rose, and I represent the National Wildlife Federation, the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club, as well as the Minnesota Conservation Federation, which is the State affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

Collectively these groups represent over 33,000 member supporters in Minnesota who are concerned with wetland destruction. We appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and we have prepared written statements which we ask to be included in the record.

I will briefly highlight some points from this testimony. In 1985 with the passage of the Food Security Act we as conservationists have applauded the far-reaching legislation addressed to our dwindling natural resources. We were especially pleased with the swampbuster provisions of the Act, and since Minnesota lies in the heart of the prairie wetland region of the United States.

What happens in Minnesota wetlands directly affects most of American waterfowlers, bird watchers, and other conservationists.