

## Groundswell of opposition to biodiversity treaty

In a mobilization that had U.S. Senate staffers flabbergasted, State Department officials screaming, and greenies weeping, Senate offices were flooded with hundreds of thousands of phone calls and faxes over Aug. 3-5 in a full-scale mobilization to defeat the Biodiversity Treaty. It was this steamroller that succeeded in waking up the Senate, moving 35 Republican senators to sign a letter requesting postponement of the vote on the treaty until September.

The shift effected by the mobilization was dramatic. On the morning of Aug. 3, Senate staffers still considered that there was absolutely no hope of preventing the ratification of this treaty. Most senators had no idea of its contents, and were thought to be too busy with health care to pay any attention. There was absolutely no media coverage. Environmentalists had controlled the entire passage of the treaty through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In addition to the greenies, major corporations, led by the pharmaceutical giants Eli Lilly and Merck, were strenuously lobbying the Senate for passage. It seemed to be a hopeless situation.

But meanwhile, the "wise use" and "property rights" movement had been cranking up a massive grassroots campaign. The Alliance for America went onto red alert. Using their extensive national network of facsimile machines, the alliance—an umbrella group of nearly 600 property rights and wise use organizations—alerted all of their member organizations of breaking developments. Fax alerts went out to more than 4,000 organizations and individuals, and many fax recipients re-transmitted them so that within 24-48 hours, between 1 and 5 million citizens were alerted.

The same was done by the Environmental Conserva-

tion Organization, an umbrella group for over 500 organizations. They cranked-up their fax network, and also mobilized a network of city councils across the country which is fighting unfunded federal mandates. On top of this, many other leading wise use and private property rights organizations deployed their and grassroots networks. These included Putting People First, People for the West, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, the National Federal Lands Conference, the American Land Rights Association, the National Wilderness Institute, the Maine Conservation Rights Institute, and the National Fishermen's Coalition.

Trade associations were also involved. The American Farm Bureau and the National Cattlemen's Association lobbied in Washington to ensure that the American livestock and farm industries would not be destroyed by the ratification of the treaty. They also mobilized their membership to put pressure on the Senate. An important factor was the distribution of a series of reports by the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI), detailing the true nature of the Biodiversity Treaty. For the first time, a highly respected trade association had the courage to put forward the actual dangers represented by a piece of radical environmental legislation.

Shortly after the faxes were sent, the flood of calls and messages began. By Aug. 5, it was simply impossible to get through to the Capitol Hill switchboard.

The mobilization ended up turning an otherwise certain ratification of the Biodiversity Treaty into a potential rout for the environmentalists and the population control advocates. Leading greens had even warned that if the treaty was not quickly ratified, it would endanger the U.N.'s Conference on Population and Development, scheduled for Sept. 5-13. The entire Ecosystem Management Task Force set up by Vice President Albert Gore depended on the ratification of the treaty to legally justify the actions that it is taking.

Leaders of the wise use movement have stated that they intend to continue their mobilization, targeting governors and state legislatures, and broadening their coalition to include churches, the anti-abortion movement, and the civil rights movement.—*Rogelio A. Maduro*

depletion. Despite this knowledge, Watson backed the ban on CFCs. What kind of regard for human life does this individual have? Is that who should be making international policy through the Biodiversity Treaty?

### And of course, the whales

During the month of July, activists from Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd launched a series of naval assaults against Norway's whaling fleet. These assaults led to a series of confrontations with Norway's whaling boats, its Coast

Guard, and Navy. Most confrontations occurred in the territorial waters of that nation, and in several instances, they nearly cost the lives of several Norwegian whalers.

In a press release widely distributed at the start of their cruise, Sea Shepherd announced that the destination of their ship was "the northern coast of Norway," and that they would have "a showdown with any whaling ship found to be in violation of the worldwide ban on commercial whaling." At a press conference before their departure from a Dutch port, Lisa Distefano, the strategist of the terror campaign, told