**For Release Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

**Capitol View**

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**That Green Dream or Whatever Is … Interesting**

Who knew that one of the loudest new voices in Congress – Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. – would come up with an idea that would impact Nebraska: The Beef State?

Her so-called Green New Deal is a resolution aimed at paving the way for what she and her supporters tout as a government overhaul of virtually every aspect of American life guaranteeing a host of taxpayer-covered benefits for all and a phase-out of fossil fuels.

Bear with me here, her office says the plan would aim to make air travel obsolete, upgrade or replace every building in America to ensure energy efficiency and give economic security even to those "unwilling" to work. Lofty goals, enough to make one smile about youthful enthusiasm, question intelligence and be thankful that these folks have to run for re-election every two years.

It’s the “green” part that raises eyebrows. An FAQ accompanying the proposal notes that it has set a goal of net-zero, rather than zero, emissions in 10 years “because we aren’t sure that we’ll be able to get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast.” Take a minute to read that again. Now you’ll understand Governor Pete Ricketts concern that Ocasio-Cortez is advocating abolishing cattle production.

“As the Governor of the Beef State, this announcement is shockingly ignorant,” Ricketts said. “Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez’s plan to end cattle production would kill our state’s number one industry, and destroy countless jobs and family businesses. I urge congressional leaders to kill this resolution

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swiftly and decisively to send a message to anti-agriculture socialists that we will fight for our way of life.”

Resistance is not only coming from Republicans like Ricketts. Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, was asked about the plan to replace planes with high-speed rail, and did not seem impressed. “That would be pretty hard for Hawaii,” she laughed.

The non-binding resolution itself would do very little, but it’s the first time the policy proposal has been formally outlined for Congress. It says “a new national social, industrial and economic mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II and the New Deal” is an opportunity to tackle systemic injustices toward minority groups, create millions of high-wage jobs and “provide unprecedented levels of prosperity and economic security for all people of the United States.”

With promises of: net-zero greenhouse gas emissions; job creation; infrastructure investment; guarantees of clean water, healthy food and sustainable environment; and a curiously undefined “access to nature,” one critic calls it a press release word salad of platitudes, slogans and talking points.

Ocasio-Cortez prefers to call it a comprehensive agenda of economic, social and racial justice in the United States of America. But there is not yet a package of implementable ideas or policy. In fact, some of the FAQ pages have already disappeared from her website and others have been revised. So, who really knows what, when or even if this will all be discussed.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the proposal will “be one of several or maybe many suggestions that we receive. The green dream or whatever they call it, nobody knows what it is, but they’re for it right?”

While admitting that she hadn’t read it yet, she said she knows “it’s enthusiastic and we welcome all the enthusiasm that is out there.”

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The major Democrat presidential contenders are on board. The Republican National Committee has labeled it as a dangerous socialist agenda.

I’m still thinking about the farting cows. My late father was a butcher and was always amused – maybe even a bit befuddled - by the animal rights activists who abhorred the slaughter of cattle. His favorite line was about the one who said we shouldn’t kill cattle anymore because people should just go to the grocery store to get their meat.

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***J.L. Schmidt has been*** *covering Nebraska government and politics since 1979. He has been a registered Independent for 20 years.*