



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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SENATOR DOLE DISCUSSES OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Kansas communities have expressed a growing interest in improving outdoor recreational facilities for their residents. Through assistance made available by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and administered through the Kansas State Park and Resources Authority, many communities have been able to acquire federal matching funds. This has enabled them to develop public recreational facilities such as golf courses, swimming pools, picnic and camping areas, and athletic fields. The joint financing arrangement has proven effective in stimulating community interest in developing outdoor recreational facilities, and many communities have requested federal matching funds.

Funding for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation programs in Kansas was threatened earlier this year by a proposed reduction in the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation budget. Last year the Bureau received a total of \$181 million for the State programs. For 1974, the Administration requested a reduction in the funding level to \$50 million. The reason for the reduction was a finding that more than \$130 million of funds allocated to states under this program during previous years had not yet been spent. Thus, with an additional \$50 million appropriation to be added to the \$130 million which remains unobligated at the state level, it was felt that BOR would be able to continue its program at the same level as last year.

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In Kansas, however, the BOR program has been operating effectively and all but a few dollars from prior year allocations have been obligated. Thus a 70 percent decrease in 1974 appropriations meant a 70 percent decrease in the program's operations in Kansas during the coming year. In effect, the budget proposal would punish Kansas for the efficient operation of its program.

To solve this problem, Congress, acting on the 1974 appropriations bill, has set up a special fund from which Kansas and other states who have obligated all prior year monies can draw additional funds to sustain their programs. The Senate Interior Appropriations Bill establishes a \$20 million special fund and provides that allocations made from the special fund would not count against future year entitlements. I had requested that at a minimum a \$30 million special fund be established since Department of the Interior figures indicate that a fund of this size will be needed. I will continue to pursue the higher appropriation in the first supplemental appropriations bill if it appears at that time that additional funds are needed to sustain the BOR program in Kansas during the coming year.

The BOR funds are distributed annually to the states from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a special fund earmarked to provide assistance to communities to improve outdoor recreational facilities. There is enough money in the fund to sustain the program at last year's level of operation. The fund does not derive its resources through general taxes but rather consists of revenues from federal leasing of outer shelf oil rights, the sale of surplus federal property, and income from motor boat fuel taxes.

Thus, an appropriations increase in this program need not mean higher taxes, nor does it necessarily contribute to inflation because expenditures from the fund can be obligated over a three year period.

In Kansas fifty-five applications requesting a total of more than \$2,300,000 remain unfunded from last year, and many more applications are expected during the coming year. I will be working to make the necessary federal funds available to assist these communities during the coming months as Congress considers the Supplemental Appropriations Bill.