

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

WATERSHED ASSOCIATION MEETING  
FLINT HILLS RC&D COUNCIL  
STRONG CITY, KANSAS  
JULY 12, 1974

THIS MEETING OF THE FLINT HILLS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION BRINGS TOGETHER A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE VITAL TO THIS AREA'S DEVELOPMENT. YOU POSSESS THE ENERGY, TALENT AND DETERMINATION WHICH IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN PART OF THE KEY CONTRIBUTION TO OUR COUNTRY'S STRENGTH AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE KEY IN THE FUTURE.

2.

YOUR EFFORTS TO EXPAND WATERSHED PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR RAISING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF OUR BOUNTIFUL KANSAS AGRICULTURE TO ITS HIGHEST LEVEL OF OUTPUT. CONSERVATION IS ALSO ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVING OUR FERTILE LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

FLINT HILLS PROJECT APPROVED

YOUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL. I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE FLINT HILLS RC&D PROJECT IS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR ACCELERATED FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. SENATOR PEARSON AND CONGRESSMEN SKUBITZ AND SHRIVER HAVE JOINED ME IN ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT AND I CAN WHOLEHEARTEDLY SAY THAT NO PROJECT IS MORE WORTHY OF APPROVAL THAN THE FLINT HILLS RC&D.

3.

YOU HAVE DEVELOPED PLANS FOR ABOUT 90 PROPOSED PROJECT MEASURES. THESE MEASURES ARE DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH MANY GOALS, INCLUDING THE REDUCTION OF SOIL EROSION AND FLOODING, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT OF RECREATION AND THE COMMUNITY ECONOMY.

THERE ARE OVER 6,000 FARMS IN THE AREA OF THE FLINT HILLS RC&D AND THEY AVERAGE ABOUT 330 ACRES IN SIZE. THESE FARMS -- YOUR FARMS -- SHOULD BENEFIT GREATLY FROM IMPROVED LAND UTILIZATION, WATER CONSERVATION, AND EROSION AND POLLUTION CONTROL. THE MEASURES PROPOSED SHOULD ALLOW MORE PROFITABLE AND DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF YOUR FARM PRODUCTS.

THE IMPROVEMENTS MADE ON THE 2,104,620 ACRES IN THE FLINT HILLS RC&D SHOULD PERMIT INCREASED RECREATIONAL USE OF THE AREA. THERE WILL BE BETTER CONDITIONS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE. SPORTSMEN SHOULD ENJOY THE LARGER NUMBERS OF GAME AND THE WATER RECREATION FACILITIES TO BE CREATED.

4.

THE 55,000 PEOPLE IN THE FOUR COUNTIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS PROJECT SHOULD BENEFIT GREATLY FROM THESE MEASURES. I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO WATCHING THE GROWTH IN THIS AREA IN COMING YEARS.

YOUR ACTIVITY AND INTEREST ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE RC&D AND THE WATERSHED PROGRAM. THROUGH YOUR ROLE IN AGRICULTURE, YOU ARE ALSO THE BACKBONE OF THE NATION.

AMERICAN FARMERS HAVE NOT LOOKED TO A SOCIALISTIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THE SOLUTIONS FOR THEM. THEY HAVE GONE OUT AND SOLVED THE PROBLEMS THEMSELVES. THE PLANNING ACCOMPLISHED UNDER THE FLINT HILLS RC&D AND THE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION BRINGS YOUR INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS INTO AN ORGANIZED AND CONCERTED EFFORT. THE PRODUCT IS EVEN GREATER EFFECTIVENESS.

THAT'S WHAT MAKES OUR COUNTRY GREAT. AND THAT'S WHY YOU ARE SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF IT.

5.

NEW RESTRICTIONS

IN FACT, WE MAY HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE THE GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME TOO RESTRICTIVE TO YOUR INITIATIVE. WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS AND FOR MEETING THE PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF THE NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL, SOME WATERSHEDS HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN PUT BACK IN THEIR PLANNING EFFORTS.

IT IS IRONIC THAT ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE NOW HOLDING UP THE PROGRESS OF CONSERVATION PROGRAMS WHICH WERE THE ORIGINAL FORM OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. WATERSHED ASSOCIATIONS HAD THE GOAL OF PRESERVING OUR NATURAL RESOURCES FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE THE URBAN ENVIRONMENTALISTS BECAME CONCERNED ABOUT THE LAND.

BUT NOW WE SEE THAT THE GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE OF A MORE RECENT WAVE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN IN THE PUBLIC AND THE CONGRESS, HAS NEARLY STOPPED ALL PROGRESS IN WATERSHED PLANNING. THE QUESTION OF BENEFIT TO BE GAINED FROM THESE NEW PROCEDURES HAS BEEN COMPLETELY LOST UNDER THE SHEER BULK OF REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

I BELIEVE THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT BECOME SO RESTRICTIVE AS TO HALT PROGRESS. THE PLANNING REQUIREMENTS PLACED ON WATERSHED ASSOCIATIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND THE NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL REQUIRE A TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL MAN-HOURS. THESE REQUIREMENTS WERE PLACED ON BY THE CONGRESS AND THE GOVERNMENT. IN ORDER THAT PLANNING CAN GO FORWARD, THE CONGRESS AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SIMPLIFY THE PROCEDURES OR INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL OR BOTH TO COPE WITH THE NEW RULES.

SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE CONCERNED

IN LINE WITH THIS, OVERSIGHT HEARINGS ON CONSERVATION PROGRAMS WERE RECENTLY HELD IN THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, AT MY REQUEST. STATEMENTS PRESENTED THERE INDICATED THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL PERSONNEL. THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TESTIFIED THAT PERSONNEL CEILINGS FOR S.C.S. TECHNICIANS HAD BEEN INCREASED BY 200 NATIONWIDE, WHICH BRINGS THE TOTAL TO 408 IN KANSAS.

THIS NUMBER OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL MAY BE INADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEW PLANNING REQUIREMENTS. IN MY OPINION, THE CONGRESS MAY HAVE TO REALIGN THEIR PRIORITIES. IF NEW REQUIREMENTS ARE PLACED ON WATERSHED PLANNING, ADEQUATE RESOURCES SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO HANDLE THOSE PROCEDURES.

8.

PRIORITIES EVALUATED

WE ARE ALSO IN A PERIOD OF DANGEROUS INFLATION. IT HAS BECOME PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE NATION TODAY. AND ONE OF THE BEST WEAPONS WE HAVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST IT IS THE ELIMINATION OF COSTLY, WASTEFUL FEDERAL PROGRAMS. IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY, WE ARE RE-THINKING AND PLANNING TO REFORM AND REDUCE A GREAT MANY OF THESE PROGRAMS.

THESE EFFORTS HAVE MY SUPPORT, BUT GIVEN THE PRESENT MOOD OF THE COUNTRY, I AM CONCERNED THAT SOME GOOD PROGRAMS MAY BE THROWN OUT WITH THE BAD. CONSERVATION PROGRAMS ARE AMONG THOSE WHICH, IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL, MAY FALL VICTIM TO THE CURRENT COST-CUTTING MOOD UNJUSTIFIABLY. I AM ALL FOR ECONOMY, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE CONSERVATION IS THE PLACE TO DO DISPROPORTIONATE CUTTING.

IN OUR RECENT CONSERVATION HEARINGS IN THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE, I QUESTIONED THE ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES CLOSELY AS TO WHETHER THE LEVEL OF FUNDING REQUESTED IN THE BUDGET THIS YEAR WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO MEET CONSERVATION NEEDS. MY FEELING IS THAT FUNDING FOR WATERSHED AND OTHER PROGRAMS HAS BEEN INADEQUATE. THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PRESENTLY HAS THE AGRICULTURE BUDGET UNDER CONSIDERATION AND I AM WORKING ACTIVELY TO GET THE FUNDING LEVEL INCREASED.

IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 1975, WE WILL HAVE FUNDS CARRIED OVER FROM THE PREVIOUSLY IMPOUNDED MONEY FOR THE 1973 REAP PROGRAM. AS YOU KNOW, THESE FUNDS WERE RELEASED ONLY A FEW MONTHS AGO AND I STRONGLY SUPPORTED THIS RELEASE. KANSAS' SHARE AMOUNTED TO OVER \$7 MILLION AND THESE FUNDS WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR.

THE REAP PROGRAM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CONTAINS CERTAIN ESSENTIAL PERMANENT TYPE CONSERVATION PRACTICES THAT ARE NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE SOIL AND MORE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE MOSITURE THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

AND FOR THESE REASONS, LAST YEAR I INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE A BILL TO EMPHASIZE PERMANENT CONSERVATION MEASURES. MY BILL WAS INCLUDED IN THE AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1973. IT PROVIDED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERMANENT DAMS, TERRACES, PONDS, WATERWAYS, AND OTHER SIMILAR, PERMANENT SOIL CONSERVING FACILITIES ON A COST-SHARING BASIS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTICIPATING FARMERS AND RANCHERS. YOU ARE NOW SEEING THE PERMANENT MEASURES AUTHORIZED BY THIS BILL TAKING SHAPE UNDER RECP THIS YEAR.

STABILITY NEEDED FOR PLANNING

BUT CONSERVATION MEASURES CANNOT BE EMPLOYED WITH THEIR GREATEST EFFECTIVENESS WITHOUT SOUND PLANNING PRACTICES. THAT IS WHAT THIS WATER-SHED ASSOCIATION IS FOR. HOWEVER, YOU CANNOT ACCOMPLISH YOUR PURPOSE WHEN THE RULES KEEP CHANGING. THE INTEREST RATE USED TO CALCULATE THE COST-BENEFIT RATIO FOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS IS AN EXAMPLE. THE FLUCTUATION OF THIS RATE HAS CAUSED NUMEROUS DISRUPTIONS IN PLANNING. THE PERIOD FOR THE RATE ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS HAS NOW EXPIRED AND THOSE OF US ON THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE WILL BE WATCHING CAREFULLY TO INSURE THAT THIS RATE IS KEPT STABLE AND AT A REASONABLE LEVEL TO FACILITATE PLANNING.

I AM CONVINCED THAT THE COST-SHARING PARTNERSHIP CONGRESS ESTABLISHED WITH FARMERS AND RANCHERS FOR CONSERVATION MEASURES IS A BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP. MY EFFORTS IN THE SENATE AND THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE WILL BE TOWARD MAINTAINING THESE PROGRAMS.

BUT THE KEY TO THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THESE PROGRAMS IS YOUR INDIVIDUAL EFFORT AND INITIATIVE. YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED A LARGE MEASURE OF BOTH IN THIS RC&D AND I BELIEVE YOU HAVE EVERY POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU.

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