

BOB DOLE
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

244 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
CAPITOL 4-3121, EXT. 2715

COMMITTEE:
AGRICULTURE

DISTRICT OFFICE:
210 FEDERAL BUILDING
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS 67501

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

COUNTIES:

BARBER	HODGEMAN	RAWLINS
BARTON	JEWELL	RENO
CHEYENNE	KEARNY	REPUBLIC
CLARK	KINGMAN	RICE
CLOUD	KIOWA	ROOKS
COMANCHE	LANE	RUSH
DECATUR	LINCOLN	RUSSELL
EDWARDS	LOGAN	SALINE
ELLIS	MEADE	SCOTT
ELLSWORTH	MITCHELL	SEWARD
FINNEY	MORTON	SHERIDAN
FORD	NESS	SHERMAN
GOVE	NORTON	SMITH
GRAHAM	OSBORNE	STAFFORD
GRANT	OTTAWA	STANTON
GRAY	PAWNEE	STEVENS
GREELEY	PHILLIPS	THOMAS
HAMILTON	PRATT	TREGO
HARPER		WALLACE
HASKELL		WICHITA

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE (1st Dist.-Kansas)
BEFORE THE AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Tuesday, April 27, 1965 - 1:30 P.M.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Kansas are very much concerned about the future of land and water resource conservation and development. A great number have called my attention to plans now under way to reduce appropriations for conservation cost-sharing and for technical assistance to Soil Conservation Districts, and at the same time to ask farmers and ranchers to make up the deficit.

It has always been my contention that the programs of the Soil Conservation Service -- carried out in cooperation with local Soil Conservation Districts -- are among the most useful and respected of all farm programs. Any savings obtained through a cut in technical assistance to Districts would be offset greatly by serious damage to soil and water resources in Kansas and the nation.

In addition, the proposal to cut the Agricultural Conservation Program, unless done selectively, would strike a severe blow to the planning and application of conservation practices. If the proposed reduction should be made, over \$3 million in cost-sharing would be lost in Kansas alone -- with a consequent slow-down in installation of needed measures. I have certain reservations about the use of Agricultural lime and believe that this aspect of the Agricultural Conservation Program should be carefully reviewed to make certain liming practices are in accord with the specific aims of this outstanding program. My reservation about this one practice is over-shadowed when considering the fact that nearly 70 percent of the cost-share funds are used in Kansas for terracing, waterways, earthen dams, and seeding crop land to pasture. The Agricultural Conservation Program is an important part of a coordinated effort to assist farmers in attaining soil and water conservation objectives in the interest of all society. It is a voluntary program which operates as a farmer-government partnership and again, I state that a general reduction of funds available for this program would be disastrous.

The current proposal to reduce the Soil Conservation Service's Conservation operations fund by \$20 million and charge this sum to farmers is unrealistic and unfair.

Of all segments of our population, the farmer is in the least position to assume an additional financial burden. He is already bearing a substantial share of the cost of conservation work. And the fact remains that the conservation and development of land and water resources on our privately-owned lands, benefits not only the farmer but the entire public as well.

If the proposed revolving fund concept goes through, it means farmers in Kansas would have to raise \$586,000 annually as their share of the costs. Better than 49 percent of this, or \$289,000, would have to be raised in my Congressional District alone. If it isn't raised, the Soil Conservation Districts in my Congressional District will face a loss of more than 43 man-years of technical help from the Soil Conservation Service.

Instead of curtailing this vital program, I strongly urge that we do everything possible to accelerate it.

At the present time, Soil Conservation Districts are short 34 man-years of SCS technical help to meet the current workload in Kansas. Across the nation, over 1,500 additional man-years are needed to overcome the backlog of requests from cooperators.

The National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts has proposed that SCS funds for technical assistance be increased in the 1966 fiscal year by \$10,937,000. I am in full accord with this recommendation. This would permit Districts to service existing requests and would allow the staffing of 25 new Districts expected to be established this year.

The Great Plains Conservation Program is also vital in my part of Kansas. Fifty-one of the 54 designated counties in Kansas are in my Congressional District. Since the program began in 1958, a total of 1,883 contracts have been signed on 1.5 million acres of land. Sixty-one percent of the cost-sharing funds allocated in Kansas are used for the establishment of permanent-type practices such as cropland conversion, range seeding, shelterbelts and windbreaks, terraces, and diversions. More than 61,000 acres will be converted from cropland to more stable agricultural uses.

In Kansas today there are more than 500 unserviced Great Plains program applications. Throughout the Great Plains States there are 4,300. These are applications from landowners who are ready and willing to move forward in making long-term conservation adjustments so sorely needed in this area of climatic extremes. I therefore urge that funds for this program be increased by \$5,136,000 over the recommended budget requests for fiscal 1966.

I also favor increasing watershed planning funds to \$10 million and construction funds to \$85 million for a combined increase of \$22,108,000 over the requested amount. This is a vital program and as a member of the Conservation and Credit Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture I feel the watershed program is an outstanding one. In my State we are proud to have 19 projects authorized for construction, and another 19 are being planned. But an additional 32 projects are awaiting planning right now.

I know of no better way to promote rural economic development than to activate these projects which provide needed flood protection, generate new wealth, and improve water supplies and recreational opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, I am well aware of the task that you and your Subcommittee have before you. It is not an easy one. I do sincerely believe that a retreat in our conservation program is unthinkable at a time when demands on our land and water resources are so intense.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my views.