

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE CALLS FOR OMB REVIEW OF WICHITA'S SMSA STATUS

Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) this week called on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to exempt the Wichita metropolitan area from the new method of determining statistical areas. The current formula promises to have a detrimental impact on the Wichita Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA).

In a letter to Thomas D. Hopkins, Chairman of the Interagency Committee on SMSAs, Dole outlined Butler County's special circumstances which are not included in the new definition of an "SMSA." The criteria developed for use with 1980 census data require that an entire county have a minimum number of people per square mile to be included in an SMSA. Butler County will not meet this new density standard because it is a large county with both urban and rural characteristics.

Dole wrote, "Since 1965, Butler County east of Wichita has been part of this SMSA, but under the new rules it will probably be excluded because it has too few people per square mile. Without Butler County, the Wichita metropolitan area would be 11% smaller, producing the illusion of a contracting community with diminished markets and labor force. This inaccurate image would influence industries and businesses to locate elsewhere should they not read beneath the changing numbers."

"I urge you to address this problem and consider an exemption from the density criteria for Butler County. The county's density figures are exaggerated by its far above average size, accounting for a slow but significant rise in the density rate. The increasing concentration of Butler County's population adjacent to Wichita as well as increasing commuting rates into the Wichita area connote suburban development. Finally, Butler County grew 16% in the past decade, four times the growth rate of the primary county, further assuring that the urban part of Butler County will remain a significant economic and social part of the Wichita metropolitan area. All of these circumstances lead to the certainty that Butler County will meet the density standard and be included in the SMSA in 1990. It is therefore inaccurate and misleading to exclude the populated communities contingent to Wichita from the 1980 SMSA."