

STATEMENT BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE

CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT

ROOM 412, OLD SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

JULY 7, 1971

201 - 1409

THE TITLE OF THE BILL WE ARE INTRODUCING TODAY IS
THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT. BUT
IT IS MORE THAN A BILL FOR RURAL AMERICA.

IT IS A BILL FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. IT IS A BILL
NOT ONLY FOR AMERICA'S FARMERS, BUT AMERICA'S SMALL TOWNS,
VILLAGES AND GROWING COMMUNITIES.

IT RECOGNIZES THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AMERICA'S
FARMS AND THE COMMUNITY TRADE AND CULTURAL CENTERS SO
VITAL TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF OUR NATION.

IT IS A BILL TO PROMOTE BALANCED RURAL-URBAN GROWTH
IN OUR NATION AT A TIME WHEN WE ARE EXPERIENCING ONE OF
THE GREATEST CONTINUING MASS MIGRATIONS TO OUR CITIES
SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

IT IS A BILL FOR FREEDOM OF RESIDENCE.

THE RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION HAS PRODUCED THESE ALARMING
STATISTICS: SEVENTY-THREE PER CENT OF OUR POPULATION NOW
LIVE ON JUST TWO PER CENT OF OUR LAND.

WITHIN 30 YEARS, IF THE TREND SHOULD CONTINUE, MORE
THAN HALF OF OUR PEOPLE WILL BE LIVING IN THREE HUGE
METROPOLITAN REGIONS -- ONE ALONG THE UPPER ATLANTIC
SEACOAST, ONE AROUND THE GREAT LAKES, AND THE THIRD
ALONG OUR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTLINE.

THIS MIGRATION HAS COMPOUNDED THE PROBLEMS OF BOTH
OUR URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.

IT HAS PUT ENORMOUS PRESSURES ON OUR CITIES. LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR QUALITY
SERVICES FOR THEIR RAPIDLY GROWING POPULATIONS.

WE HAVE NOT MET THE NEED FOR METROPOLITAN HOUSING;
WE HAVE FALLEN BEHIND. WE HAVE NOT MADE PROGRESS ON AIR
AND WATER POLLUTION; WE HAVE FALLEN BEHIND. URBAN SLUM
CONDITIONS FESTER. CRIME INCREASES. QUALITY EDUCATION
SUFFERS. METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION IN MOST URBAN
AREAS IS A SNARLED SHAMBLES. GREENBELTS AND OPEN SPACES
HAVE BEEN GOBBLED UP IN THE RUSH TO BUILD FOR MORE AND
MORE PEOPLE. WE EXPERIENCE POWER SHORTAGES.

AND URBAN GOVERNMENTS ARE NEAR FISCAL COLLAPSE AS
THEY TRY VAINLY TO COPE WITH THE RELENTLESS PRESSURES OF
POPULATION.

MEANWHILE OUR RURAL AREAS ARE IN DECAY.

AS WE FOCUS ON THE MASSIVE PROBLEMS OF URBAN AMERICA,
WE SOMETIMES FORGET THAT RURAL POVERTY REMAINS
DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGH. ONLY PART OF THE REASON IS THE
DEPRESSED FARM ECONOMY. THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF RURAL
POVERTY ARE AMONG THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN FARMING.

TWO THIRDS OF OUR SUBSTANDARD HOUSING IS IN RURAL
AMERICA. NEARLY 20 MILLION RURAL HOUSES LACK PLUMBING.

INFANT MORTALITY IN RURAL AREAS IS HIGHER THAN
THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. EDUCATION IS OF A LOWER QUALITY.
HEALTH CARE IS TRAGICALLY INADEQUATE. IN RURAL SOUTH
DAKOTA, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE 16 COUNTIES WITH NO DOCTORS --
NONE AT ALL.

MOST TRAGIC OF ALL, THE MIGRATION TO THE CITIES IS
ROBBING SMALL COMMUNITIES OF THEIR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE --
PEOPLE -- TO REBUILD AND REVITALIZE THEIR COMMUNITIES.
THE MOST ENERGETIC AND AMBITIOUS, THE FINEST MINDS ARE
LEAVING FOR THE CITY BECAUSE OF DEPRESSED WAGES, LACK OF
DEVELOPMENT, AND LACK OF OPPORTUNITY.

OUR BILL IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY
FINANCING TO REVITALIZE OUR RURAL AREAS -- FINANCING FOR
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW PAYROLLS
AND NEW JOBS . . . FOR BETTER SCHOOLS . . . FOR MEDICAL
CENTERS AND HOSPITALS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE . . . FOR PARKS
AND RECREATION AREAS . . . FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEMS . . . FOR DAY CARE FACILITIES . . . MUSEUMS
AND CULTURAL CENTERS . . . FOR DESPERATELY NEEDED HOUSING.

AND MUCH MORE: INDUSTRIAL PARKS . . . WATER AND
SEWER SYSTEMS . . . WASTE DISPOSAL PLANTS . . . COMMUNITY
COLLEGES . . . RURAL SLUM CLEARANCE . . . STREETS AND
HIGHWAYS . . . POLICE AND FIRE STATIONS . . . LIBRARIES.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN FEATURES OF THE BILL:

FIRST, IT REORGANIZES THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
TO ENSURE A MAJOR EMPHASIS ON FINANCING FARM CREDIT AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS.

SECOND, IT EXPANDS RURAL CREDIT BY MAKING IT AVAILABLE
TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BORROWERS, UNABLE TO GET CREDIT FROM
COMMERCIAL SOURCES, FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.

THE INITIAL SUBSCRIPTION BY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE
\$2 BILLION, IN TEN ANNUAL PAYMENTS AVERAGING \$200 MILLION.

THIS WOULD ENABLE THE SYSTEM TO ISSUE ABOUT \$2-\$3 BILLION
A YEAR IN DEBENTURES AND BONDS IN ITS EARLY YEARS,
INCREASING TO A POTENTIAL OF \$10-20 BILLION A YEAR AFTER
FULL OPERATION WHEN FULL OR PARTIAL BORROWER-OWNED STATUS
IS ACHIEVED.

THE CONSOLIDATED FARM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACT HAS
THE POTENTIAL TO REVITALIZE RURAL AMERICA AND TO REBUILD
RURAL OPPORTUNITY.

THUS WE CAN MAKE OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES THE VITAL,
ATTRACTIVE, PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES THEY CAN AND SHOULD
BE.

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WE CAN MAKE A REALITY OF A NEW FREEDOM -- FREEDOM
OF RESIDENCE -- BY PROVIDING THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ALL
OUR PEOPLE CAN MAKE A REALISTIC CHOICE ABOUT WHERE THEY
WILL LIVE AND WORK.

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