

Equally important is the fact that over the next decade the housing industry must increase its annual production by one-third—from 1.5 million to 2 million units—if it is to accommodate the expanding housing needs of American families.

In addition, between 1960 and 1975, our urban population is expected to rise from 125 million to 171 million, placing added strains on our already burdened urban facilities, such as water, sewer, and transportation.

Considerable technological advances are being made by private industry and State and local governments both with respect to the cost and quality of home construction and with respect to meeting the complex problems of urban development. Constant experimentation is being carried on in such areas as housing design, materials, and construction techniques, and in making our urban centers safer, healthier, and more attractive places in which to live.

The problem is sometimes misunderstood as being entirely a lack of technological progress. Rather, it is important to note that these continuing advances in technique are often slow to be applied. Builders are reluctant to risk making major changes in designs or materials for fear of adverse market reaction. The home buyer does not readily accept deviations from traditional housing design or materials. Labor is often unreceptive to cost- or time-saving innovations for fear of economic loss. And communities that could benefit enormously from the application of such new urban techniques as large-scale centralized treatment of wastes or new methods of intracity transportation are often slow to move along these lines.

These are some of the practical problems that have held back progress. It is here that the Federal Government can and should assert leadership, so that the great technological strides that have been made in recent years, and that continue to be made, can be harnessed to the benefit of all Americans. This is what the bill seeks to accomplish.

The bill would direct the Secretary to encourage and assist the housing industry to reduce the cost and improve the quality of housing through the application to home construction and rehabilitation of advances in technology, and to encourage and assist the application of advances in technology to urban development activities.

The Secretary would be further directed to conduct research and studies to test and demonstrate new and improved techniques and methods of applying advances in technology to housing construction, rehabilitation and maintenance, and urban development activities. He would also be directed to encourage and promote the acceptance and application of new and improved techniques and methods of constructing, rehabilitating, and maintaining housing, as well as the application of technology advances to urban development activities, by all segments of the housing industry, communities, industries engaged in urban development activities, and the general public.

When this program is funded its administration would be handled as part of the Institute of Urban Development recommended by the President in his 1965 message on the cities.

The research and studies would be designed to test and demonstrate the applicability to housing construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance, and urban development activities, of advances in technology relating to (1) design concepts, (2) construction and rehabilitation methods, (3) manufacturing processes, (4) materials and products, and (5) building components.

Research and study projects could be undertaken either directly by the Secretary or by contract with public or private bodies or agencies, or by working agreements with other Federal Departments or agencies. Each project would be required to be completed within 2 years.

Provisions of title III of the Housing Act of 1948 and section 602 of the Housing Act of 1956 presently authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to undertake and conduct studies relating to the reduction of housing construction costs through the use of new and improved techniques, materials, and methods. However, these existing provisions authorize such studies to be undertaken as part of broader research functions such as the collection and dissemination of data relating to market analyses, housing inventories, mortgage market problems, and the housing needs of special groups such as the elderly.

This bill recognizes the importance of a program designed specifically (1) to reduce housing costs through application to home construction of technological advances, and (2) to assist and encourage the application of advances in technology to urban development activities, by directing the Secretary to undertake such a program and authorizing specific appropriations for that purpose.