

There is still much to be done to overcome blight, eliminate congestion, help the poor escape from poverty, rid our environment of pollution as we clean up our air and water, wipe out decay and blighting influences and change the course of our cities. The goals are fairly well defined by the statements of national policy adopted by our national organizations; that is, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. But their implementation is dependent on the action of this committee and other committees of the Senate and the House.

In my appearances before the House Banking and Currency Committee I have always been impressed with the interest of the members, the sincerity of the questions, and the excellent legislative results of your deliberations.

Today I appear in support of H.R. 12341, the Demonstration Cities Act of 1966. This is a landmark legislative proposal and I think offers really for the first time a hope to America's cities that their physical and social landscape can be changed.

The vision of President Johnson's message to the Congress on the cities is found in abundance in this bill. A new coordination on the local level is required to rebuild the old with a concerted, sustained effort which will show dramatic results. A new cooperation and coordination is visualized for the Federal agencies now involved in the cities to make their efforts more effective. And I would say now we need not only your searching review of this important problem, but more important your approval.

The concept of the demonstration cities is one with which I am familiar. It came up during the discussions held by the President's Task Force on Urban and Metropolitan Problems on which I was pleased to serve back in 1964. We have used the demonstration technique to good advantage in this country. What we are seeking to demonstrate through this new program is that the cities of America have a future. They still have vitality. They still act as the port of entry for the new urban residents from the farm and from abroad. They still contain much that is good and in President Johnson's words "aggravate the worst."

We can prove that this country not only will be able to walk in outer space but that our cities can be places where we can walk in dignity and live in pride and in happiness.

The broad goals before us, however, must be measured against the vehicle at hand, the Demonstration Cities Act. In the spirit of cooperation, I would like to present to you our observations concerning the legislation and the objectives which we all share. Our comments are offered with a view to improve the legislation by increasing the effectiveness of the proposed programs.

First, I believe it is important not to try to set up a national competition which might only stimulate envy and unhappiness among those cities not designated as "demonstration cities." The allocation of grants should be on a first-come, first-served basis. The President's message spoke of a limited group of 60 to 70 cities who would participate in the program. There should be no fixed limit on how many cities may attempt to qualify, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, administering this program, should only lay down general guidelines assuring that participating communities are representative as to geographical distribution and population sizes.