

We fully endorse the amendment by Representative Henry S. Reuss, of Wisconsin, to expand a program for research, development, and demonstrations of new systems of urban transportation. We are convinced that a significantly expanded research effort is a crucial need. We also support the Urban Mass Transportation Act amendment offered by Representative Brock Adams, of Washington, which authorizes the use of grant funds to carry out feasibility, planning, and engineering studies for mass transit programs.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENTS

Displaced families.—We support the provision in title I of the Housing and Urban Development Amendments of 1966 for low-rent housing for displaced families. It would permit local housing authorities to lease dwellings without regard to the 1- to 3-year limitation in the present law. This program is most important to the successful relocation of large families. The present maximum term is far too short and can result in working unnecessary hardships on relocated families.

New private housing.—We support the proposed amendment. It is important for public housing authorities to work with private builders in augmenting the supply of available housing for low- and middle-income groups. The amendment should prove most helpful in efforts to spur work by private enterprise in this area of urban need.

New technology.—The Federal Government has an extremely important role to play in assisting the housing industry in efforts to reduce costs and improve the quality of housing. The Federal Government should be engaged in extensive research to test and demonstrate new and improved techniques of housing construction, rehabilitation, maintenance, etc. We support any efforts to cast the Federal Government in a leadership role in this general area.

Rehabilitation and code enforcement.—We strongly support proposed repeal of the proviso in the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1965 which limits the amount of urban renewal grant authority to be used for rehabilitation and code enforcement. This limiting proviso is inconsistent with the intent of the rehabilitation and code enforcement program. Every effort should be made to increase such activities—not curtail them.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES,
Washington, D.C., April 6, 1966.

Hon. WILLIAM A. BARRETT,
Chairman, Housing Subcommittee, House Banking and Currency Committee,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. BARRETT: It is my pleasure to transmit for your consideration a statement by Mayor Henry W. Maier, of Milwaukee, past president of the National League of Cities, concerning title IV of the Urban Development Act of 1966, H.R. 12946. Mayor Maier's views are tendered on behalf of the National League of Cities and its 13,500 member municipal governments as our official position on this section of the legislation currently before your subcommittee.

We offer these views in the belief that their adoption by the subcommittee would strengthen and improve the legislation before you. I would specifically draw to your attention the following suggestions contained in the statement: "We specifically recommend that the definition of 'metropolitan-area agency' in section 407(3) be amended by adding before the semicolon at the end of line 11 after the words 'metropolitan-area' the words 'or an entire State'." This would definitely enable a statewide organization composed of public officials representative of cities or counties, for example, to qualify for aid in establishing urban information centers either for a specific metropolitan area or for general statewide utility or both.

"I believe that the language in part (b) of section 407(3) would qualify, in restricted circumstances, an urban observatory jointly established by a city and a university, but we recommend that the language of title IV be made clear that such a jointly established agency would be eligible to receive assistance as an urban information center in any event.

"We recommend that the 50 percent grant limitation in section 404(a) be changed to 75 percent, at least for the first 2 years, which would then conform to the grant arrangements available under title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.