

**STATEMENT OF GLENN E. BENNETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ATLANTA REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mr. BENNETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

I appreciate Congressman Weltner's introduction, and I am very happy to be here before this committee. My name is Glenn Bennett, and I am the executive director of the Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission, Atlanta, Ga. I also act as secretary to the newly created Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority and secretary of the Metropolitan Atlanta Council of Local Governments, which was organized in 1964.

I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you in support of H.R. 12946, which provides incentives in the form of grants for properly planned development projects in metropolitan areas. This I am certain is in the public interest. The emphasis is on metropolitanwide comprehensive planning and coordinated programing of public improvements in metropolitan areas. In effect it provides a bonus for coordinated capital improvement programing throughout an area, and it elevates metropolitan planning to a point closer than it has been in most areas, to actual decisionmaking by local governments. It provides encouragement for the translation of metropolitan plans into action, and the grants proposed under this bill could also make it possible for certain projects stalled for lack of funds to go forward. We are all hard pressed for money for open land, sewer facilities, mass transit, and airport facilities. Every Federal aid bonus helps and in this case funds are contingent on sensible planning.

I would like to comment briefly on the progress we have made in metropolitan planning in the Atlanta area where we have had a metropolitan planning commission for many years. It was formed by local initiative long before most of the current Federal aid programs were created. Good use of the so-called 701 Federal planning assistance has been made; since 1955 we have received grants totaling approximately \$372,669, including those projects now in progress. Other applications are pending which amount to \$110,372. We have successfully employed the funds in studies related to rapid transit, open spaces, housing and building codes, economic and social research, comprehensive land use planning generally, and airport planning. I would like to point out that our commission has always had elected officials and heads of governments as a part of its membership. This, I think, is important. We have considered our functions to be (1) regional research; (2) long-range planning; (3) planning assistance for communities; and (4) coordination of local government activity.

Our efforts have successfully brought into being a council of local governments, a metropole, which is an areawide organization of law-enforcement officials, and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority to implement rapid transit plans. These are action agencies; they are metropolitanwide and capable of assisting implementation. They can deal with regional problems that flow across jurisdictional boundaries—traffic, urban transportation, pollution, and law enforcement, for example. The degree to which we have been able to influence land use, highway location, and other regional development has varied from time to time but it is safe to say, I believe, that we have been moderately successful over the years.