

One other amendment, in our opinion, would further strengthen the Act, but it is not included in S. 1401. This would be an authorization for Federal agencies to use land and water fund appropriations for recreational development as well as for acquisition. State and local governments have this advantage in use of their portions of the fund.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to appear.

The CHAIRMAN. That was a fine statement, Mr. Towell. We appreciate it. The question of using the Federal portion of the fund for development is a difficult one. It would not be such a hard decision if you had the overall funds available to meet the minimal land acquisition requirements.

I felt very strongly at the beginning, when we took up the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill in 1965, that we should have provision, the same as the States, for authority to the Federal agencies for development purposes.

However, the way things have turned out, with land price escalation, and so on, it seems to me that we have a serious problem on priorities.

Mr. TOWELL. Certainly I agree with you that acquisition seems to be a higher priority, but I feel that the Federal Government needs the flexibility either for acquisition or development, too.

The CHAIRMAN. That is right. Thank you for your fine statement.

The next witness is Mr. FitzGerald Bemiss, chairman of the commission of outdoor recreation of Virginia. Mr. Bemiss, we are delighted to have your testimony, and you may proceed now. You can hit the high points, the matters that have not already been covered, and we will include the statement in full, if you wish.

STATEMENT OF FITZGERALD BEMISS, CHAIRMAN, VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Mr. BEMISS. Thank you, sir. I think the points that I would like to cover have been pretty well emphasized. I knew they would be, so I kept my statement to about two pages here, and I will even try to summarize those.

I would like to leave with you, if I could, the Virginia plan, which came out of the planning based on the original Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission concept, and I would like to leave with you also a little booklet on 18 months progress which we have been able to make in this land and water conservation partnership in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

We feel we have accomplished a great deal. We have begun on the acquisition of seven new State parks. Perhaps the most dramatic one in this area is the Mason Neck Park, which you have heard something about.

We have made substantial grants to regional and local governments to enable them to carry out their part of the plan. We have been able to expand the multiple use concept by supplementing land originally acquired solely for hunting and fishing, and we have initiated a great many plans and studies for better conservation and wise use of our resources.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this, or byproduct, has been the citizen response. One of our parks was given to us as a result of this partnership I refer to.