

We have here today with us former Commissioner Howard Stewart, who is known as the father of the regional park system in Allegheny County.

We have to date planned nine regional parks, with a total acreage of 5,100 acres. Our estimated projection is that we need 8,300 acres. We are still going to be still about 4,000 acres short from our goal.

Here again, these regional parks could not have come into existence and would not have had the additional assistance of Federal and State funds.

I noticed in the previous testimony concern was expressed here whether or not the counties and States would participate. I think we are, in Pennsylvania.

In 1961, when I was in the Senate of Pennsylvania, I was cosponsor of a project known as project 70. This was to set aside \$70 million for the purpose of acquiring land for local and regional parks throughout the State.

In 1966, I cosponsored another bill, which went to public referendum for half a billion dollars—this total sum committed to conservation. Some of it, \$50 million this year, will go for land acquisition. Other amounts will go for cleaning up our streams and, above all, to rehabilitate the strip-mine lands that we have in Pennsylvania.

We have noticed in Allegheny County that as we develop new parks and new facilities, they become more and more populated. Our rivers are crowded with boats on Saturdays and Sundays.

I was just telling Director Kelly, who is with me here—he is the director of our regional park system—that during the months of June, July, and August we give people and various groups permits for the facilities at our parks. We did that last week, and people lined up at 11 o'clock at night before the night authorized to get their permits at 8 o'clock the next morning. This is the kind of demand we have.

One other comment on the cost of land in Allegheny County, and I am sure this is characteristic across the country.

In 1955 we were able to buy land at about \$725 per acre. In 1965, from our peoples' bond issues money, we paid \$1,365 per acre. Just last week Allegheny County purchased 151 acres for a community college. We paid \$1,700 an acre for this land. This price is accelerating despite the fact we have an additional safeguard in that we are able to condemn land. Theoretically, we should arrive at a fair price.

One reason I think this legislation is so important is that time is running out on our reserving land for our people for the future. I do not think States and counties have sufficient funds authorized to acquire this land rapidly enough before it goes out of existence, at it were, or out of availability for park purposes.

It seems to me there is an impetus now and a growing concern on the part of the public in general for parks and for this kind of facility. I would certainly urge you gentlemen, despite the fact I know you have many priorities, that this certainly has to be one of major concern to you.

Senator ANDERSON (presiding). Does that complete your statement?

Mr. STASEY. Yes, it does.

Senator ANDERSON. Senator Church?

Senator CHURCH. Mr. Staisey, I want to congratulate you for a very fine statement. I suspect that we can anticipate that land values