

**STATEMENT OF RAY AGNEW, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
NATIONAL CAMP GROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr. AGNEW. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I thank you for the privilege of being able to appear before this committee. I have statements on S. 1401 and on S. 2828.

My name is Ray Agnew. I am the executive vice president of the National Camp Ground Owners Association—U.S.A. This association is newly formed and its members are private entrepreneurs who are owners of family campgrounds or camping resorts in various sections of the country.

S. 1401

We are firmly opposed to diverting additional funds to the land and water conservation fund. Our remarks which follow are made on the basis of information which we have on the campground situation. These reasons are:

1. The Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation are not faithfully carrying out provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. We believe that a congressional investigation is needed. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act provides that when a State in seeking a grant of funds for a recreation project it should justify the needs for such a project. Campground projects are being planned and constructed, are receiving grants of funds from the land and water conservation fund and no surveys have been made as to the need for these facilities, and no assessment has been made as to the availability of private sites and the ability of the private sector to meet the demand.

We cite the case of the Prince Gallitzen State Park, Pa. In 1967 \$800,000 was granted to Pennsylvania for a 750-site campground. No survey of Pennsylvania campsites was made. There is an ample supply of private campsites.

We urge an investigation into the practices of the Secretary of the Interior and of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

2. The Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation now have authority to collect user fees and bring millions of dollars into the land and water conservation fund.

The Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation now have the authority to charge reasonable campsite user fees in national parks and at other Federal areas. Instead, at substantially all national parks, camping is free within the parks and at other Federal campgrounds fees are low.

State parks are charging campsite fees which may go as high as \$3 or \$3.50 a day. The Federal Government is foregoing a chance to receive millions of dollars in revenue in the form of reasonable fees.

3. Free campsites produce abnormally high and fictitious demand. Whenever any commodity is offered freely, or the price is substantially below a high market price, an abnormally high demand is bound to result. This has happened in the campground sector. The existing demand for campsites is not a true market demand. There is a large supply of unused private sites in many areas of the country.

Many other private campgrounds would spring up to meet the demand if it were not for the unfair competition in free and low-priced campsites of the Government.