

We, in Connecticut, therefore strongly support the proposal to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund which is contained in S. 1401. The addition of the new sources of income proposed in this measure would make it possible for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to carry out the program of federal land and water acquisition which has been planned and should be carried out. It will also permit a substantial increase in the amount of funds annually allocated to the several states to help in the prosecution of municipal and state-wide plans for acquisition.

We respectfully urge the honorable Committee to give its favorable consideration to S. 1401.

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STATEMENT OF LYLE W. BENTZEN, PRESIDENT OF THE WYOMING RECREATION COMMISSION

The Wyoming Recreation Commission is pleased to have the opportunity to support the amendment to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. Although our State agency is somewhat young in the field of outdoor recreation, we do have the support and justification for seeking such an amendment as proposed.

Basically, existing revenue provided by the fund does not fulfill the financial projections anticipated at the outset of the program. State programs were planned around these projections and political subdivisions of State government were informed that increases in the fund were to be forthcoming. We now find ourselves in the position of discouraging acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities instead of encouraging as the act specifically outlines.

Grass root programs have sprung up at an enormous rate in Wyoming. The program was sold to Wyoming communities as follows: We encouraged towns, cities, and counties to organize recreation planning boards and to begin financial programs to offset the operation and maintenance costs which would be so evident once the development program was concluded. Our State presently has seventy-five percent of the total number of communities participating in the fund program. Our projected needs to fulfill the applications presently existing will deplete the Wyoming apportionment for the next five years.

As a result, our Recreation Commission is continually reevaluating the applications and assigning priorities to only those which qualify to urban and high use. We are, therefore, discouraging those smaller communities who cannot compete with the larger and who primarily need the recreation facilities to a higher degree per capita.

Unfortunately, the take by the Federal Government for acquisition and development is expended east of the 100th meridian. We, therefore, cannot call on those Federal agencies administering lands within Wyoming borders to speed up their programs. The outcome is rather evident. Wyoming's prime recreation areas are just not receiving the attention so desperately needed.

The out-of-state visitor use—made up of other State's urban population—is estimated to be close to 8 million in 1967. The extra burden to provide the needed facilities falls on a resident population of 315,000 people. It is financially impossible and clearly unfair to expect these Wyoming residents to singularly provide for the multitudes who visit our great State each year.

The dilemma could partially be rectified by the increased revenue requested in the amendment of the act. However, the total program as needed in Wyoming will be largely dependent upon the ability of the Wyoming citizens to meet the financial burdens placed upon them. Local communities in most cases are willing to provide for their own citizens. But to provide the necessary facilities that are demanded by the visitors will necessitate outside help from other sources of revenues. We in Wyoming believe that the passage of an amendment to the fund act would be helpful in meeting these demands.

Wyoming communities have often stated that the land and water conservation fund program was the only Federal grant program working. Let's not discourage the grass roots programs but rather let's encourage them to greater heights.

Although other grant programs are available and are being administered in Wyoming, such as the Highway Trust Fund and the Pitman-Robinson-Dingell-Johnson programs, the realization remains that the land and water conservation fund program is the only one in which towns and cities are experiencing help to acquire and develop recreation areas and facilities.