

This relationship is like a delicate instrument, the product of trial and error over many years, balancing National, State and local interests and management participation in an effective manner.

Similarly, the watershed and flood prevention activities of the Soil Conservation Service are operated by and for local people in time-tested programs of assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts and numerous other sponsoring local organizations. These involve intimate contact with local farmers and such other agencies of the USDA as the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service with its commodity and conservation programs. These, too, are integral parts of our Department's efforts to advance the social, cultural, and economic well-being of Countryside, U.S.A.

PROGRAMS AIM AT CREATING VIABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Today, one of our most pressing needs is to build economically viable rural communities. Consistent and integrated land and water resource management systems are needed to make multiple use of resources effective and to expand the opportunities for rural development. The small watershed program under Public Law 566 from the rest of the land treatment programs of the Department—and, figuratively, to separate the woods a farmer owns from the rest of his farm enterprise—is poor organization.

The ties that weave the research, cooperative forestry, and public land management of the Forest Service, and the soil-conserving and watershed and flood prevention activities of the Soil Conservation Service into the overall programs and responsibilities of the USDA, we are convinced, are much more significant, much more binding, than they would be to a Department of Natural Resources such as that proposed by S. 886.

AGRICULTURE'S PROGRAMS DECENTRALIZED TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS

I most emphatically do not mean to minimize in any way the importance of Interior's programs. But historically, and as a practical matter of day-to-day working, they are not linked as closely to local communities, farms and small towns—or with the local decision-makers—as the programs of the Department of Agriculture.

In the way Interior has traditionally operated, it is organized so as to focus its major attention on regional and national problems more