

Secretary FREEMAN. Yes, Mr. Chairman, it certainly would. By Presidential order, the Secretary of Agriculture is directed to try and coordinate in rural America the various Federal programs and to perform an outreach service so that we can use personnel we have located in local areas to help other departments that have no one there so their programs will reach the countryside. The current machinery is what we call technical action panels. There are at least four programs in every county in the United States administered by the Department of Agriculture. All Department programs meet together in what we describe as technical action panels. Other Federal programs and State and local programs join in coordinating, in planning, and integrating all our programs with local efforts and in stimulating local efforts and providing leadership where it is absent.

The Forest Service and the watershed functions of the Soil Conservation Service that would be moved by this bill are an integral part of this process, and, as such, it would represent a severe setback to the new and vigorous efforts we are making to revitalize rural coordination efforts, and I believe it is bringing very real possibilities of preserving the local relationships and the decentralized administration that the Department of Agriculture, for example, has built up over the years. And at the same time, in the process, giving proper representation to interests that might well be swallowed up in the large and monolithic department, and, by the same token, accomplishing very effective, at least potentially so, integration and forward planning in the whole water field primarily, but in soil and land use as well. This Council has just begun, but I would say that its actions to date are most encouraging and represent a real step forward.

Senator RIBICOFF. And the final question from Senator McClellan: "Mr. Secretary, the Department of Agriculture is engaged jointly with the Departments of the Army and the Interior in comprehensive river basin planning. Don't you think that a more efficient job could be done if the efforts of these three departments were concentrated within one department?"

live and work and to run our vast industrial complex, the way in which we produce and package a multitude of manufactured goods, and, among other things, the ways in which we dispose of our trash and garbage.

The impact of these problems touches every segment of our society. Their adverse effects on human health are felt by people of all ages. The economic burden they impose on society is shared by all of us, whether we realize it or not. Farmers, businessmen, consumers, and tax-