

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 13, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

MEMBERS OF THE URBAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL
MEMBERS OF THE RURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

In a meeting of the Rural Affairs Council recently, an interesting and fruitful discussion took place which underscored the confusion and complexity in the way that Federal programs impact on communities throughout the country.

As you know, there are now a multitude of planning assistance and action programs which are financed by the Federal government and which run to states, to cities, to metropolitan areas, and even to Regional Commissions made up of more than one State. Often in a community, these grants will be made to bodies which do not formally relate to each other, although their purposes are complimentary. For example, metropolitan transportation planning in many areas will be conducted independently of "comprehensive" planning for the same metropolitan area. Furthermore, often the rules under which the programs operate demand duplication of staffs, and of effort, with a consequent drain on leadership resources at the state and local level.

It is my desire, as I have said before, that we not simply manage the chaos. To that end I am creating a Subcommittee of the whole of the Rural Affairs Council and the Council for Urban Affairs. I am asking Donald Rumsfeld to chair this Subcommittee whose purpose will be to do a thorough analysis of the overlap and effectiveness of planning assistance programs, of the organizational arrangements for other Federal programs, and of the Regional Commissions to the end that they be organized in accordance with a few simple principles.

The first step should be to develop a concise but detailed statement of facts -- a description of the problem. This should be done soon and will be reviewed at a Council meeting so that the facts are agreed upon. From the facts, and from principles to be agreed upon,

Subcommittee on Federal Assistance Programs

I hope the Subcommittee can then prepare recommendations for me to restructure the organization of Federal assistance programs. I am asking each of you to designate a staff person to work with Dr. Edwin Harper of the White House on this project.

Richard Nixon