

Our soil has been, and I think will continue to be, the wellspring of our prosperity—the very foundation of our economy. We are in a very large measure dependent upon our natural resources, and especially on our soil and water, for the high standard of living we have been able to maintain in this country. The great nations and the great civilizations of our history all have grown up and flourished on land that was productive.

Here in Maryland, we are fortunate to have natural resources in great abundance—soil suitable for agriculture, water, forest and wildlife resources. It is most important to us and to our progeny that we conserve and perpetuate these blessings of God and gifts of nature.

As our population increases, we shall become more and more dependent upon the fertility of our lands to feed our people. Our strength as a nation in the future will be based on the health of our economy, and the health of our economy will be determined to a great extent by the way we develop and make use of our vital natural resources.

With all the wealth we have here in Maryland, it is unthinkable that we should continue shore erosion, with the consequent depletion of our soil, loss of beaches with the recreational potentials and damage to the commerce and fisheries of our inland waters. In short, it is time that we here in this State, as well as the people of other areas of the country, come to grips with the problem of shore erosion.

I believe we will all agree that this undertaking is much too big to be tackled by any one agency or any one small group of individuals. If it is to be handled properly, it seems to me, it must be a cooperative endeavor of the federal government, the State and community organizations such as we have represented at this meeting here today.

I am aware that the problems of shore erosion are likely to increase with the passing of the years, and thus we may expect them to become harder to solve as time goes on. But I have every confidence in the determination of the people not to allow such problems to go unsolved and in the capacity of such leaders as we have here today to initiate programs which will halt this depletion of our vital natural resources.