

This means that we on the State level must do our utmost at all times to see that Maryland provides the kind of business climate that will attract and keep industry. We must continually re-examine our tax structure to make sure that it is equitable and competitive. At the same time, we must keep our State fiscally sound, for business likes to do business in a state that operates on a business-like basis. We must provide the kind of facilities and services that modern industry requires—the highways, bypasses and cloverleaves; the water and sewer systems; the parks and recreation areas; the airports; and, perhaps most importantly, the schools, colleges and universities.

But above all, we must provide good government—responsible, alert and progressive government; government which anticipates the needs and responds to the just demands of business, labor and industry. This we will do. Translated into the terms of the responsibilities and opportunities that will be discussed here today, we on the State level must assist and cooperate with our communities to make sure that none of them is deprived of benefits which it wants, needs, and is entitled to under the new federal programs. This we will also do. There is a limit to what we can do, however. As I said earlier, and as will be explained in detail later today, the initiative must come from the local level.

Primary responsibility for determining needs and qualifying for and obtaining assistance under these programs is placed squarely on the shoulders of local leadership—these programs are aimed at the community level, where economic problems have the strongest impact, are better understood, and can be more practically dealt with. There are few, if any, state-wide benefits available under these programs, so any gains Maryland makes under them will have to be on the basis of cities, counties, or small areas. But there are certain things that we can do.

The Area Redevelopment Act requires that the State approve all applications for assistance under its provisions. I have instructed the Department of Economic Development to assume this responsibility in Maryland. As a matter of fact, as I mentioned earlier, they have already approved two applications. In addition, the Department of Economic Development will serve—as they have up to now—as an information center and coordinating agency for all federal programs providing assistance for labor surplus areas. They will know all the answers about the procedures required and the forms of assistance available—or if they don't they will quickly find out. They will be available to guide and assist any community or area in formulating its overall economic development program, on preparing an application, or on any other problem involving one of these programs.