

shortly after the formation of the Conference. With the election of President Kennedy, aid to distressed areas became a priority and urgent program of the new administration, and Senate Bill Number 1 to establish the area redevelopment administration was introduced by Senator Douglas of Illinois.

The Appalachian Governors Conference is proud to say that it played a considerable part in the creation of the Area Redevelopment Administration. Two of the Conference representatives—Mr. Harry Boswell, Chairman of the Maryland Economic Development Commission, and Md. John Whisman of Kentucky—were active members of the task force which, under the leadership of Senator Douglas, drafted the Area Redevelopment Act.

Moreover, the long-range approach advocated by the Conference of Appalachian Governors was made a part of the legislation. It was this aspect which I stressed in testimony before the Senate Committee, pointing out that as far as the Appalachian Region was concerned what was needed was a “planned, overall attack on the basic economic factors—transportation, water supply, education—to get the region moving on the path to sound economic health, without reliance on periodic emergency handouts which serve to keep the patient alive, but offer no help of eventual cure.”

In that testimony, I also stressed the importance of highways for the region, pointing out that we have only to look at the map to see that for every dollar we have spent to get into this area, we have spent millions of dollars to get around it. Fundamentally the economic problems of the Appalachians will not be solved until the mountains cease to be looked upon as a barrier between the Middle West and the Atlantic Seaboard. Good highways leading into and out of the region can remove this isolation, and the Conference of Appalachian Governors is doing everything it can to keep this fact before the highway planners.

Following up on the stepped-up pace of activities with the new administration, the Conference of Appalachian Governors decided to hold its third conference in Washington in May of 1961. One of the sessions of the conference was held in the White House and included a lengthy and very useful session with President Kennedy.

Following that meeting, the President made this statement: “The Appalachian Governors are to be complimented upon their resourcefulness in the treatment of unusual multistate regional problems. It is the first time an entire section of the nation has been organized