

Governor of the State of Kentucky, whose support of the program by personal and staff attention has been unexcelled.

Today marks a new phase in the development of a regional attack on the problems which beset Appalachia. The creation of a system of federal-state cooperation to accelerate the battles against poverty, disease, illiteracy, isolation and under-utilized natural resources is indeed a momentous and exciting occasion. I will not presume to say in advance just what the exact nature of such federal-state association should be — that is part of the task that lies before you today. I would venture to suggest that if such an organization is to be strong and effective it must retain a full measure of the direct participation and support of the states and the region which gave it life. I would suggest, too, that the organization establish very early its goals and its priorities, its leadership and its plan of action.

I know that the birth of any new venture is not accomplished without much toil and soul-searching. To that task I commend you today. Thank you.

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STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS  
COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON

May 21, 1964

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

This is a day I have looked forward to for four years. Four years ago yesterday, on May 20, 1960, the first conference of Appalachian Governors was held at my invitation in Annapolis, Maryland. In my opening address to that Conference, I made this statement: "Nothing significant can be accomplished for our distressed counties of Western Maryland except as part of a program whose aim would be to rebuild and revitalize the economy of the entire Appalachian region."

Today this Committee has such a program before it. It is a program which has been evolved during the past four years through continuing effort by the Appalachian Governors Conference and the federal government. It is a program which has been developed from the bottom up, not from the top down. It is a program based on the recognition by the governors of ten states that they shared a common problem which could only be solved by common action.

The conditions in the Appalachian area are familiar to all of you,