

the citizens of Florida, Connecticut, and Minnesota have a stake in the public domain in Colorado, Montana, and Alaska.

The conclusions reached by this Commission, and your recommendations to Congress, will affect the citizens of Maryland.

More and more people are turning to the out-of-doors in pursuit of leisure. Since World War II, the increase of camping, hunting, and boating enthusiasts has been tremendous. Unfortunately, so minute an amount of wilderness area remains east of the Mississippi River that many residents of the eastern United States must travel west to enjoy a genuine wilderness experience. Private entrepreneurs cannot afford to acquire and maintain the vast stretches of land necessary to provide this quality outdoor experience. The demands can only be met by public lands, and each year many Maryland citizens do enjoy the public lands in the West.

Obviously, the disposal of public lands is a matter of deep concern to me for it could adversely affect the citizens of Maryland. A rancher holding a grazing permit on public land could be harmed if his grazing privileges are cancelled and the public land disposed of and improved. And the Maryland citizen could be harmed if he found himself paying higher taxes to offset the loss of grazing fee revenues which once flowed into the Federal treasury.

I am vitally concerned about the ever-increasing tax burden our citizens are forced to bear. I can foresee no reduction in the public services government is expected to provide, and I cannot predict a reduction in the overall cost of government. The revenue going into the Federal treasury from the public domain would be drastically affected were the public lands disposed of en masse.

On the other hand, Maryland's State government and Maryland's citizens recognize the problems presented by the public domain. We are sensitive to these problems and wish to be fair. Many of our western cities are precluded from expanding because they are locked in by the public domain. It may sometimes be in the best public interest for the Federal government to selectively dispose of certain lands to permit their development for needed commercial and residential services.

Other factors in the disposition and regulation of public lands affect each of us as American citizens today; and the implications of your decisions may well affect unborn generations of Americans in the future.