

Whilst I confidently hope, therefore, that you will not sanction this policy in any aspect in which it can be presented, I feel assured that if adopted at all, it will be only upon the ground that when an imminent public necessity exists, which cannot be otherwise met, property of any description may be seized to provide for it. It is for your Excellency to say whether such an emergency exists at this time, and if it does, whether it exists only in Maryland or is to be relieved only by her resources. We desire, therefore, before our property is impressed in the manner stated, to be advised by your official order or Proclamation, that this urgent public necessity requires its seizure, and in providing for that public necessity, we trust that not only will such proceedings be adopted as may readily enable all who have not forfeited their right to Government protection to be fairly and fully compensated, in accordance with the acknowledged principles of public law, but more especially still, that our State shall not be made the exclusive subject of their operation. Whilst it is true that our own loss might not be actually lightened by applying the same doctrine to every other in our condition, still such an application would relieve the proceeding of one of its most odious features, and rebut the inference to which it might be otherwise obnoxious, that some question of mere local policy had mingled with the motives with which it has been suggested.

There is nothing in the history of this State during the progress of this Rebellion, which warrants the limitation of such a proceeding to her people. Without particularly dwelling upon her course of action, it may be safely affirmed that she has done no act which has ever compromised her loyalty, or impaired her just claims to the confidence of the country. If her property, whether in slaves or anything else, is really needed to put down the Rebellion, there is not a State in the Union that will yield it more cheerfully; but, as your Excellency can well understand, she will not see her property of any kind wrested from her by armed force with no emergent military necessity for it first proclaimed—with no adequate indemnity for it secured—with no similar process elsewhere instituted