Remarks of Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr.,
Friday, May 15, 1964, at the Dinner Meeting of the Susquehanna
River Basin Association at Havre de Grace, Maryland

Earlier today I spoke to a group in Washington concerning the development
of the Potomac; two weeks ago in the Pacific Southwest I dodged questions about
the regulation of the Colorado; and one of the biggest stories in my native
Northwest is the covetousness of the parched Southwest to tap into the Snake
and the Columbia. But I must confess that it was not until Secretary Udall's
emergency change in plans called me to the pinch-hitting role tonight that I had
ever given much thought to the Susquehanna.

Whether I can qualify as an expert on the Susquehanna may be doubtful,
but I think I know something about the kind of activity that your association
represents. For an examination of history shows that major development of a
river system is always preceded by the vision, the idea, or the inspiration of
individuals, and that unremitting private and community effort involving
hundreds of thousands of unpaid hours, are necessary to get the wheels turning.

On one of his last trips, President Kennedy dedicated a dam and reservoir
in the West with these words: "The fact of the matter is, as a general rule,
every time we bet on the future of this country, we win".

President Johnson is betting on the future of this country -- the whole
country, and the Susquehanna Basin. He is betting on a renaissance for
Appalachia. The concepts in the Appalachian program have meaning for the
work of your association, of which I'll speak a little later.

Conservation of natural and human resources was called by President
Kennedy the highest form of national thrift. The State which produced Gifford
Pinchot, the veritable father of the modern conservation movement, has a worthy
successor in Maurice K. Goddard, Secretary of Forests and Waters. Maurice
Goddard, Mayor Frank Slattery of Wilkes Barre, and Joe Clark, a great U. S.
Senator, are among the other conservationists who have put their time, talents
and energies in the wager on America's future, by their unremitting efforts
for Appalachia and the Susquehanna Basin. Congressman Flood has been called
the father of the Susquehanna Basin Survey, and his efforts started many years
before he persuaded the Public Works Committee to authorize the Corps of
Engineers study.

Harold Wila of New York, and James Van Cherie in Havre de Grace, and
Senator William James of Harford County, ably represent their states in this
illustrious roll.
Let me begin by discussing the multi-state approach which your association symbolizes. Many of your leaders were also leaders in the long fight to get the Delaware Compact drafted, ratified, and implemented, and it is entirely logical to hope to profit from that experience.

From all I can understand, the Delaware Commission’s performance is matching its promise -- the prophecies of difficulties between the states and the federal government are proving to be unfounded.

The House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs has scheduled hearings on one of its integral components, the Rocks Island National Recreation Area, for June 8th and 9th.

It seems to me that this particular form of interstate and federal-state cooperation holds immense promise for the future. The rivers, the harbors, the drainage areas, and the economic forces pay little attention to state boundaries. But the States are here to stay, and Article I, Section 10, clause 3 of the Constitution, which requires the consent of Congress for compacts between States, certainly also contemplates that such compacts will be made.

Congressman Flood, who sits on the powerful Appropriations Committee, has performed a most useful service with his bill H. R. Res. 296. Such bills do not get action in one Congress, and as I’ve said, sometimes a generation elapses. But a bill pending in Congress is an anchor for discussion, a starting point for identifying differences and beginning the process of ironing them out, a basis for effective study and research.

A different approach to river basin organization -- which would provide joint Federal-State planning in major river basins throughout the country -- is also being considered by the Congress as S. 1111, already passed by the Senate. This proposed Water Resources Planning Act, supported by many States and by the Administration, would meet in part the needs envisaged for the Susquehanna by the proposed compact.

The really exciting development, the one which holds greatest promise for resolving many of the knotty problems of the Susquehanna, is President Johnson’s and Under Secretary Roosevelt’s imaginative plan for the Appalachian Region, drawn in cooperation with the Governors of nine States, including Pennsylvania and Maryland.

What this can mean to the attainment of your objectives, has, I’m sure, occurred to all of you.

The approach of the Presidential Commission to Appalachian problems with reference to the traditional cost-benefit tests for additional investment has particular relevance to the Susquehanna Basin’s development. Much of our orthodox project planning is built around meeting the needs of a growing
population, growing spending power, growing leisure. In Appalachia generally, and in parts of the Susquehanna basin, the projections will be negative in some instances, unless something is done to reverse the present course.

It is the genius of the plan that the federal government, under President Johnson’s personal leadership, is willing to spend money to reverse the downward trend. The infusion of capital for this effort must follow a philosophy clearly delineated by the Appalachian Commission:

The quantity of such investment is essential. But its character is even more important. It must be directed to the stimulation of growth, and not to the problems which result from growth as is the case with most of our present public investment.

"Roads have been constructed in the region, as in the Nation, largely to ease the congestion caused by existing traffic. New schools have been erected to provide for the overflow from existing classrooms. Sewer and water lines have been financed to service the raw acres of new subdivisions. Most dams in the East have been placed to protect the present owners of private and commercial property.

"The Commission proposes an investment program founded on a reverse concept -- an investment from the other side of the coin. We submit a highway program to create traffic -- not a traffic count to create highways. We suggest a water control effort to attract new investments in property -- not a program solely to protect present investments.

"In many underdeveloped countries the conclusion was reached that investments in basic public facilities would have to be undertaken before economic development could occur. That part of our international development program which fosters capital investment should be incorporated into Federal programs that affect the regional development program for Appalachia."

This approach opens doors; it unlocks our thinking from the traditional and orthodox patterns which have led to so much frustration in attempting to justify programs we instinctively know to be right.

A similar freshness marks the very interesting Research Report of the Battelle Institute on using computer-based techniques to estimate the economic impact of systems of works in the basin. I've examined this Report and have found the idea stimulating. I don't know whether the traditional measures of computing cost-benefit ratios would be denominated as "static" by the authors, but it does seem to me that the "dynamic" methods they advocate, which utilize a feed-back into the system of the results which follow from varying investment assumptions, tend to support the basic idea of the Appalachian Commission's ideas on investment programs. Both suggest a water control effort to attract new investments in property, not just to protect present investments.
To amplify on the Appalachian Commission's Report to see its relevance to the Susquehanna Basin, we can note that it proposes a many-sided attack on the problems of Appalachia. One of its four principal categories will involve steps to develop, conserve and protect the region's water resources—a subject of prime interest to your organization.

Appalachia has plenty of water. Whereas Western water development centers on collecting, saving and carefully distributing a scarce commodity, Appalachian water development centers on control of water volume and quality.

The President's Appalachian Regional Commission has recommended an additional $35,000,000 to accelerate flood control and water development work by the Corps of Engineers. Protection of industrial, commercial, and domestic developments in the flood plains of the area, creation of new opportunities for outdoor recreation, furnishing of peaking capacity for electric power systems, and adequate supplies of domestic and industrial water are among the multiple purposes to be served.

Pollution from domestic sewage, industrial wastes, acid and alkaline drainage from both surface and underground mines, and silt from surface mines, have challenged regional and local planners for years.

Acid mine drainage particularly is an inhibiting factor for the diversification of the upper basin, as changing industrial technology has closed plants employing thousands of people. Pennsylvania, the basin state most affected, has had pollution control acts since 1935. In 1937 and 1945 its Sanitary Water Board was given authority over industrial wastes and acid mine drainage control. On the latter problem, it has long had an active program, and has shared the knowledge gained widely.

But the development of economical and practical means of reducing the formation and discharge of acids and alkalies from strip, auger, and underground mines remains one of the major unsolved problems, perhaps the major unsolved resource problem in America today. Here, in the Susquehanna Basin, let us try to find an answer to it.

Only three weeks ago, following President Johnson's meeting with the Appalachian Governors at Huntington, West Virginia, the President was asked for immediate public works effort to control the undesirable effects of coal mining. The President agreed to add $10 million to the Appalachia program for the express purposes of controlling underground mine fires, surface fires in mine refuse banks, surface subsidence, and stream pollution by acid and alkaline mine water drainage.

Secretary Udall, last week discussed the problem with the Special Committee of the Public Works Committee of the House of Representatives, referring to the role of the Bureau of Mines, the Public Health Service, the Soil Conservation Service
Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The latter bureau, for example, has authority to make grants to State Fish and Game Commissions to restore fish and wildlife habitat. Such grants can be used to abate stream pollution which destroys fish life and to restore strip-mined areas to provide wildlife habitat.

The Susquehanna basin sustains many new opportunities for outdoor recreation. The region is highly scenic, but this asset remains locked up by lack of access. This isolation will be overcome by the new roads recommended in the proposed development highway system, including those for central Pennsylvania, and by local access roads to serve specific recreation areas.

The acceleration of water resource development by creation of multiple purpose reservoirs, such as Saystown, Blanchard, Conemaugh and Tioga-Hammond will provide opportunities for water-based recreation.

Rehabilitation and corrective measures to repair the acid and alkaline drainage damage which changed the natural ecology of large areas of the region will also set the stage for development of game habitat and greatly improve the hunting and fishing opportunities.

Income and job-producing recreation complexes and on-farm recreation enterprises can be augmented by basic conservation objectives of the outdoor recreation agencies of the States, such as the program proposed in Pennsylvania's imaginative Project 70, identification and establishment of additional national recreation areas, parkways, recreation ways and scenic roads, and long-term loan financing for the development and management of private outdoor recreation enterprises. Congressional enactment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund would enable the Interior Department through our Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to render major assistance to States and local governments in planning, acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas, including those in Appalachia.

To summarize, things are beginning to move. The Delaware breakthrough presages a far easier time for the aspirations of the leaders of the movement to do something similar for the Susquehanna. The Region of which the Basin is a part, Appalachia, is being recognized for what it is -- a region apart, geographically and statistically. Its needs are being recognized, not in terms of welfare but in terms of an investment philosophy to permit it to reap the benefits of its natural endowments of minerals, forests, recreation opportunities, croplands, and skills. It is recognized that prosperity in the urban centers cannot reach desired levels unless the hinterlands also prosper.

This investment philosophy is typified by a key sentence: "We suggest a water control effort to attract new investments in property -- not a progress solely to protect present investments."
President Johnson has infused a spirit of "can-do" throughout the land. This is the spirit which has marked your own efforts. I wish you continued success in your public-spirited and effective cooperation for the development of this great region by sustained local, State, and regional pressure.