Remarks of Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr. at the Annual Fund Raising Dinner Honoring Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., sponsored by the Cape May County Democratic Executive Committee, at North Wildwood, New Jersey, August 1, 1964

Mr. Chairman, Harry Gibbons, Reverend Clergy, Senator Williams, State Committeeman Carlton Mason, County Chairman Joe Tenenbaum, Candidates Tom McGrath and Joe McLochlen, distinguished guests, Fellow Democrats:

The honor of being asked to speak at a $50 a plate dinner touches me deeply. Most of the time I'm asked only to buy a ticket, and then I'm just plain touched.

I'm glad to be in New Jersey, a Democratic state with a Democratic administration. Being in Dick Hughes' state reminds me of the many occasions we've had in the Interior Department to work with him and his administration. He and his great Democratic predecessor in the Governor's mansion, are in the finest tradition of State Chief Executives in the modern world -- men with vision and courage, able and willing to take on the tough tasks, to lead, to plan, to think in terms of the future, not the past.

Sharing the platform with Senator Pete Williams is a great privilege. New Jersey is going to return him for another six year term in the Senate this fall, to continue his untiring efforts on behalf of his State and the Nation. You've honored him tonight for his special work in assisting the important commercial seafood industry of this part of New Jersey. He is also in the forefront for legislation which will help your neighbors, the people in the great cities north of here, to unsnarl their traffic, to enjoy open space, to renew and redevelop their blighted areas.

In short, he represents his state and its special needs and interest with great skill and effectiveness. At the same time, he remains able to see and respond to the special problems of other areas and regions.

The burdens placed upon their elected representatives by the American people in this complex age are really difficult to describe. They encompass the entire range of governmental activity. To the people in their districts and in their states, they are the solid anchor of personal concern about their individual situation when government is involved. This helps maintain the people's confidence in government itself.
Thus it is a high and responsible calling to which candidate McGrath aspires. From all I've observed and been told, Tom McGrath is ideally fitted to take up this burden. Young, ambitious, diligent, compassionate, and well-trained in the arts of government, he will apply himself to these demanding tasks with enthusiasm.

He will be at the meetings of his committees, where so much of the work of the Congress is done. His vote will count on the side of the people, on the side of concern for their welfare, on the side of action rather than lecturing when the issue is grinding human poverty.

I understand the acceptance of a man in this part of the world turns on whether he has "sand in his shoes"; if this is so, then I'm sure Tom McGrath could empty a plentiful supply this minute.

I come to New Jersey as an official of the Interior Department, and a Westerner. I became acquainted with your Senator when I was on the staff of his colleague in the Senate, Frank Church. I campaigned for President Kennedy as one of his State coordinators in Michigan, in 1960.

The experience of working in the Senate, campaigning in an industrial state like Michigan, and of serving in a Department with such far-flung responsibilities as those in Interior, makes me react with some heat to the east-west sectional divisiveness which seems to be abroad in our land.

This is a disturbing symptom, as hurtful potentially as the North-South wounds which remain unhealed.

For we are one country. We stand or fall together. Prosperity and depression alike no longer can be experienced regionally or sectionally, nor long confined to one segment of the economy.

The rural and raw material economy states must be alert and responsive to the needs of the urban and industrial states -- the needs for mass transportation to relieve the paralysis of traffic, for green acres and open space, for urban renewal, and for parks and recreation for the cities. And conversely, the Eastern areas must know something about what irrigation and reclamation means in the arid West, and what the forests and rangelands need by way of protection and management and development.

For if we divide ourselves, if we emphasize our differences rather than our common interests, if we are jealous and protective and possessive by state, section or region, we jeopardize the unity of our nation.
This is one of the special reasons why I appreciate Pete Williams. He has patience with Westerners; he undertakes to educate them about things beyond their experience, problems like urbanization. And he knows the rest of the country, too. His humanitarian work in connection with the Mexican braceros has been heroic, and too much unappreciated.

I spoke of the divisiveness evidenced at San Francisco. At Atlantic City, the unity of our country is going to have the emphasis. Venom and raucous intolerance will be replaced on America's TV screens by a call to America to be true to her tradition of greatness.

Instead of intolerance or dissent, we will see the leadership of reasoning together, of calm discussion of the issue of what is best for America. We will see the leadership of deep concern for the right of every citizen to have the full equality which God enjoins and the law requires, whatever his belief, or race, or the color of his skin.

Our President is determined to make the United States a fit and worthy place to live in the twenty-first century.

That is what I want to emphasize tonight, for a concern with what kind of country we will leave to our children is common to all of us. If conservation is leaving that which we have -- our land, our resources, our cities -- in as good or better condition than when they came to us, then conservation is deeply ingrained in all of us, and particularly in this thrifty and hardy region.

New Jersey celebrates its three hundredth birthday this year, as you all know. Roughly half of that time had passed when the Constitution was ratified, and half since. Yet change here in Cape May, I'm sure most of you would agree, was spread rather evenly over all those years until this century. And in this century, the most violent changes have come within the past very few years.

I arrived at the Cape by Ferry from Delaware. This was a dream for many, many decades. Tried and failed, tried and failed -- from the sideraw of 1900 to Col. Rosenfeld's derelict, the sunken ship to anchor the ferry terminal which was a landmark so many years after 1926.

The failures now take their place with all the other nostalgic reminders of the past, including the visit of Henry Ford to race his car here, and how he had to sell one of them to get out of town. The lore is happy lore, now, because things turned out well in the end.

For everything to continue to turn out well in the end is going to require a modern, not an ancient view of how men must organize and manage themselves to keep the world a fit place to live.
Joining New Jersey with Delaware by ferry, symbolically its very ves­sels the ones displaced by the bridge and tunnel which now join Cape Charles with Norfolk, opens the flood gates on a great new prosperity for many counties and communities. Many of these are joining this march of progress very late. Some there are who decry the change; some who feel or hope that time can be made to stand still.

The answer is not to stay the hands of the clock of time; the answer is to act to preserve the values associated with the past, so that these values, as well as the material benefits of our civilization, will be available to our children.

New Jersey sees this, perhaps because the people of this State are steeped in the heritage of our nation, as well as being one of the great industrial and farm states of the country. Diversity is the watchword for New Jersey; diversity is the watchword of our country.

President Johnson told us what he expected of America, how he ex­pected things to come out in the end, in that magnificent speech he gave to the students of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, last May.

He spoke to them about the Great Society. In our national history, he said, for a century we labored to settle and subdue a continent; for half a century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people. The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization.

We're proud in the Department of the Interior of the fact that under Stewart Udall's incisive leadership, a national consciousness of conserva­tion has grown in our country. It has unified the country in a palpable, measurable way, and the country is better for it.

For all Americans can unite in a concern for conservation -- of our land, of our land resources and the resources of the sea. Regard and respect for natural things is a universal heritage of Americans now; we must see that it remains so.

We must learn from the past, not try to return to it. Our country fifty years ago had a hundred million people. Fifty years from now, it will have four hundred million, over four-fifths living in urban areas.

The history of the world is the history of men's ability to develop the structures and techniques of government to serve their ever more com­plex needs. In our world, this means a free government, a responsive government, a democratic government -- it doesn't mean no government.
It means an efficient, thrifty and effective federal government, a creative federalism of cooperation with state and local governments and private interests.

Those of us in government are inspired by this kind of leadership. It isn't negative or sterile, but live and alert. We are being shaken up, infused with enthusiasm, and prodded to new efforts -- challenged to help to produce a society which rests on abundance and liberty for all; which demands an end to poverty and racial injustice; a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents; a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness; a place where the city serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce, but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.

These are the President's words. The solution to our problems, he also said, does not rest on a massive program in Washington, nor can it rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism, between the national capital and the leaders of local communities.

By way of conclusion, let me express to you the thought that next to the preservation of our liberty and security, no responsibility which the people can entrust to their government is more solemn than the stewardship of natural resources. A generous Deity has richly endowed our land; the endowment must be preserved and kept intact. It must serve the needs of the more than four hundred million Americans who must live within it, in fifty years or less, just as we must live within it, right now. The Americans of 2015 must have pure air and clean water, parklands and seashores, and enough food, fiber and fuel for the good life.

This is a responsibility which cannot be abdicated or delegated, postponed or neglected. It calls for the best within us, for a thrifty people and a thrifty government. With the help of science, and a commitment to a beautiful America as well as a rich America by the people and their government -- state and local as well as federal -- we shall be discharging our trust well. We shall help to achieve The Great Society and measure up to the standard given us by our great President.