Remarks by Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr.,
October 1, 1964, in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the dinner session of
the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Natural Resources Committee

The Natural Resources Committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce
invited me to a luncheon very early in this Administration. I looked over my
notes from that session while getting ready for tonight's appearance, and recalled
the meeting with great pleasure.

Even then, I sensed something I've come to know a great deal better in the
intervening three years -- that success in the administration of a natural
resources conservation program requires a high degree of cooperation between
the managers and the users of the public lands, including the commercial users.

President Walter Carey, of your own organization, told the Platform
Committee of the Democratic National Committee that he thoroughly disagreed "with
those who would characterize business and Government as natural adversaries
arrayed against each other on all issues."

President Lyndon B. Johnson emphasized in that same month of August of
this year that he wanted all American businessmen to understand that the Government
is devoted to your success."

As the Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management in the Department,
I am concerned with programs which are vital to the success of the private sector
of the economy in the public land states.

For example, consider the Government's role as a supplier of timber. This
is a direct, supplier function. Within the framework of wise policies of sustained
yield and multiple use, the Federal Government computes the amount of timber it
can sell in any given year; under pricing policies supervised by the Congress,
it markets this timber -- and a major industry looks to the Federal supply for
its continued participation in a great natural resource use.

Or consider the forage for the Western range livestock industry. Here,
I think I can accurately say, we've experienced a peaceful revolution, comparable
to the restoration of peace to the public range at the time of the enactment of
the Taylor Grazing Act. The Government as supplier of forage, and the livestock
industry as user of the forage, were at war when this Administration took over --
I know, because I was working for the legislative branch from 1957 to 1961, and
we on Capitol Hill took up the cudgels against the bureaucrats on behalf of the
beleaguered range users.

That is not the situation at the present time. We went through a period
of intensive examination of each other's problems through the Congressionally-
created mechanism of advisory boards; we agreed upon an increase in fees; and
we came to terms on the desirability of the range users having a business-like
basis for the reinvestment of their money in the resource they were using.

A Republican Senator (not up for re-election) told me the other day that
there was, to his great surprise, no mileage left in abusing the Bureau of Land
Management on this issue. And Democratic Senators and Congressmen of the West
who have regarded the bureaucrats as the natural enemies -- whatever party was
in power -- are concluding that range rehabilitation projects, and cooperative
efforts toward a management of the resource which is sound and sensible, remove
this program from violent partisan conflict.

The basic philosophy behind the improvement in our relationship is not
founded in more "liberal" range management policies. The users are regarded as
conservationists, too.

And why not? They have a greater stake in the continued fruitfulness of
the land than even those whose interest in it is recreational.

I could go on at considerable length about our relationships with the
private sector of the economy. For example, in the case of the Virgin Islands
Corporation, the Department of the Interior is in business; or rather was. This
Administration has quietly delivered on a promise that other Administrations,
supposedly more business-oriented, have only talked of. We have gotten the Federal
Government out of business.

The sugar plant, the power systems, and the hotels and other projects we
were in in the Virgin Islands have been, or are being, turned over to private
enterprise.

And I might say, parenthetically, that some of the private landowners screamed
bloody murder at the ending of operations of a Government subsidized sugar mill.

Or take the case of concessions in the national parks. We have firmly
declared our policy commitment to a system of private enterprise operations. Here
is how I stated it to a Congressional Committee:

"A study of concessions management operations and policy by the House
Appropriations Committee (with the knowledge and concurrence of this
committee) will present extensive data on our experience in trying to
accomplish the governmental objective of furnishing services in national
parks through concessioners. At a meeting with the concessioners last
fall, I outlined my own conclusions: that utilization of private enterprise
to furnish needed facilities in national parks on a regulated basis seemed to me a sound policy which had achieved a measure of legislative sanction; that Government in these circumstances owed it to the concessioners to understand and accommodate, as far as practicable, the incidents of private enterprise operations, principally those necessary to amortize debt-financed capital investments requested by the Government; that low franchise fees were causing criticism of concession operations, a matter which the concessioners themselves ought to look to; that although difficult to regulate, the so-called non-profit distributing companies which combine profitable with unprofitable operations at different parks would not be disturbed unless or until Congress told us to; and that certain archaic practices, principally having to do with transportation monopolies ought to be carefully re-examined by both the concessioners and the Government as contracts come up for renewal."

The Alaska Railroad is another case in point. This is essentially a proprietary enterprise. We came into office to find that the railroad was caught in a whipsaw. Oversimplified, it was catching hell at one and the same time for rates which were too low (from the growing competitive trucking industry), and were too high (from Alaskans widely conditioned to the idea that high railroad rates were solely responsible for the higher cost of Alaska living, and depression of Alaska industry.)

We fought, hard and successfully, to relieve the Department of the Interior of the task of umpiring rate controversies. It was only fair, we thought, that both the railroad and the competitive trucking industry, be subjected to economic regulation from an agency independent of each. So we were able to get President Kennedy to sign an Executive Order assigning this function to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

But our task is bigger than the proprietary operation of a railroad or sugar mill, or the supplying of timber or forage or other raw materials to private enterprise customers. Fundamentally, our task is land management.

Here also, we can report magnificent progress.

The greatest single accomplishment of the Congress just concluding its work (I hope) in this field was the Public Land Law Review Commission authorization bill.

Everyone here will be affected by the work of this Commission because all America will be.

The Constitution gives to the Congress the policy control over the public lands, but never in our history have Congressional enactments pertaining to public lands been comprehensive. The Taylor Act is by its terms temporary. National Park Acts, mining laws, laws creating wildlife and other reserves, and laws for military and other uses, have either been disposition laws or reservations.
We have, as a result, a hodge-podge of laws which practically defeat efforts to administer the lands on a rational basis.

Take the question of disposition itself. What is the policy? The answer is that there are numerous policy statements, some of which don't accord very well with the facts of modern life.

For example, mining laws, right here in Arizona, have defeated the objective of urban expansion. Desert land entry laws have disrupted existing cattle operations. Our public sale authority, until temporary legislation just passed, was woefully inadequate to permit us to dispose of lands whose continued management was by all tests an unjustifiable burden on the Federal Government, and an unconscionable nuisance to our neighboring private owners.

The Multiple Use Act, just passed for the Bureau of Land Management, has cleared up questions about the expenditure of Government funds for recreation developments on public lands which were being heavily over-used for recreation by members of the public entitled to be there -- creating in their entitlement considerable public health and related problems from the absence of such facilities as privies.

This Administration supported, and supported strongly, the Public Land Law Review Commission bill. It is a sound approach, with a charter broad enough to permit exploration into any aspects of public land use and management that the Commission itself determines to be proper.

The Commission is a legislative creature, made up of members from the Senate and the House, six from each house evenly from each party, and six public members. The eighteen so selected elect the nineteenth member as chairman, to serve full time assisted by a full-time staff director and necessary staff.

Federal agencies with direct interest in the public lands, like Interior and Agriculture, will have liaison representatives; an advisory council will assist the commission, with representation from specified organizations listed in the act, involving both commercial and noncommercial interests. Governors can name representatives to work with the Commission and the advisory council.

The act declares that the public land laws are a jungle requiring comprehensive review. The Commission will study both the laws, and the rules, policies and practices and regulations promulgated under the laws.

Inadequacies in the public land laws have hampered good land administration, and good land administration is our goal -- under Congressional mandate.

The climate for our work together has been most eloquently stated by the President. At Portland, where some of you came to participate in a victory celebration of cooperation between public and private power interests in the mutually advantageous Pacific Northwest-Pacific Southwest Intertie, he paid tribute to both. "The public power yardstick is essential. Private power will
always play a substantial and a vital role in the future of this great land . . . By your reasoning together, your cooperating together for the benefit of all, I think that is true conservation. This is the kind of conservation action that your Government is going to continue to provide the leadership for."

The President made a statement of a program for conservation, very broad in its scope, and inspiring for all America: A guarantee for our children of a place to walk and play and commune with nature -- outdoor recreation. Control of waste products of technology, in the air, the water, the soil. Comprehensive river basin development, regional planning, increased mastery over our environment through technology. Cooperation with local government and private industry to prevent urbanization and growth from ravaging the land.

And finally, the conduct of conservation on a global scale -- following the examples set by the Antarctic Treaty, weather and fishery agreements, and the power agreement with Canada.

Stewardship of all of our natural resources is a solemn responsibility of our age, a private as well as a public responsibility.

Fifty years from now, when four hundred million Americans review our foresight and vision our record must be creditable.

I am confident it will be. Nothing less than our best will suffice if we are to insure that our children will have food, fiber and fuel, pure air and clean water, parklands and seashores and decent cities--not just to live, but to live the good life.

The West is bound to continue to grow faster than the rest of the Nation, as it has for the past three decades.

There is solid evidence that we've learned the lessons of history. The great private lumber industry of the Northwest, which relies upon the National forests which were set aside by Theodore Roosevelt sixty years ago, will furnish jobs and payroll, and supply the forest products needs of our growing country, not for tens but for hundreds of years. Why? Because after we had laid bare the white pine forests of Wisconsin and the Lake States we learned that we could not give away the public lands for a cut-out and get-out policy. With sustained yield, and multiple use, the forests are a permanent resource.

The need for minerals opened parts of the West in Lincoln's time. Ever since then, the public lands of the West have furnished the needs of our growing Nation for minerals and petroleum, and another great industry of the West continues to prosper, and helps to build America.

Congress has appropriated a billion and a quarter dollars for reclamation of arid Western land since the Reclamation Act of 1902, but this has been the wisest of investments. The users repay the cost, with interest; the appropriations are made from a Reclamation Fund which itself amounts to a reinvestment in the West, for 52\(\frac{1}{2}\) percent of the Federal Government's share of the proceeds of mineral sales and leases go into it. The farmers who've taken up the reclamation homesteads have built the West, and their capital--$425 per acre on the average--has helped to build an irrigated agriculture of $47 million last year, just from Federally aided Reclamation lands.
The pattern of cooperation and investment in the West by the people of the United States does not begin or end with these great laws, or with the sustenance of private, taxpaying industry which has prospered as a result of them. Forest and mineral revenues are shared with the States to build roads and schools and sustain governmental functions.

Naturally there is some friction and frustration from the administration of these Federal programs. But the spirit of cooperation in the common cause of conservation is growing. The record of the past four years is one of solid accomplishments.

-- Pending the report of the Public Land Law Review Commission, broadened authority for management, and particularly for the sale of public lands has been granted, to help Western cities get expansion room, and for other public purposes.

-- Land management advisory boards have been expanded, to represent all the uses of the public lands, and pilot units of multiple purpose public lands rehabilitation projects have been inaugurated.

-- In Oregon two years ago, a model of cooperation between public and private forest owners helped to accomplish the salvage of many billion board feet of timber damaged by the Columbus-Day windstorm.

-- A Federal oil shale research facility has been reopened, the Federal Government and private industry cooperating to unlock the vast reserves of energy in this public resource.

-- A Water Resources Research Act brings the land grant colleges into the vital task of water research, under a program of Federal assistance.

-- A saline water conversion program is unlocking the water resources of the oceans.

-- Water development needs are seen regionally and nationally, not piecemeal and partially.

The national sense of responsibility about natural resources is a national consciousness of conservation. The concept of national stewardship is not evidenced only in the Wilderness Bill and the authorization of new national parks, although we are proud indeed of these accomplishments.

It is not evidenced alone in the great land and water bills, like the Reclamation Act, the Flood Control Act, and the National Park Act, the Taylor Grazing Act, and most recently the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill, although all these are part of it.

It is not evidenced alone in our concern for our cities and open space, for food free of pesticides, and sufficient wildlife habitat, and measures to control pollution--although we've been successful in all of these efforts, too.
This national consciousness of conservation is a concern for the future, a concern for the kind of world our children will have. Like the thrifty farmer who wants to leave all of his children land sufficient to meet their needs, too, all Americans are determined that America shall continue to offer the good life.

As President Johnson has said, we shall continue to cooperate with the States and local governments, and with private citizens, in the execution of our governmental responsibilities for stewardship of resources. These responsibilities cannot be delegated or abdicated, postponed or neglected, but they can be cooperatively performed.

Policies of multiple use and sustained yield will continue to support private enterprise under fair laws and rules, fairly administered.

America cannot be made strong by leadership which reacts only to the needs or the frustrations of the moment. America cannot shut her eyes to the world. America cannot fail to cooperate with her neighbors. America must never cease to strengthen the fabric of our unity.