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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

OF COUNTIES, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

MONDAY, JUNE 21, 1976

I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU DURING THE 41st ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES. I REGRET THAT I CANNOT ATTEND YOUR CONFERENCE PERSONALLY, BUT I DO WANT TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR THE POSITIVE LEADERSHIP ROLE THAT YOU AS LEADERS OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAVE PLAYED BOTH AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL.

IN ADDITION TO ASSUMING INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING OF MANY LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES, YOU HAVE PLAYED AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF FEDERAL POLICY AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION.

THE PASSAGE OF THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION

ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1974 WAS AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF THE PRODUCTIVE
COOPERATION BETWEEN YOUR ASSOCIATION AND MY ADMINISTRATION
WHICH HAS PROVEN SO SUCCESSFUL ON SO MANY OCCASIONS IN THE
PAST TWO YEARS.

MOST RECENTLY, WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A JOINT EFFORT
TO SECURE THE RENEWAL OF GENERAL REVENUE SHARING. AFTER
A VERY DIFFICULT STRUGGLE FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THIS
LEGISLATION, WE HAVE CONVINCED THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TO ACT -- AND ACT FAVORABLY -- ON REVENUE SHARING.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE ROLE THAT YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIATION HAVE PLAYED IN THIS EFFORT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE.

WHILE THE HOUSE BILL IS NOT EXACTLY AS I HAD REQUESTED, IT DOES PROVIDE A GOOD BASIS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE SENATE. THROUGH CONTINUED COOPERATION, I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN SECURE FINAL PASSAGE OF A LONG-TERM REVENUE SHARING BILL THAT WILL HELP RESTORE A BETTER BALANCE OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY AMONG FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

THAT BETTER BALANCE MEANS THAT PROGRAMS OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE WILL GIVE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY TO LOCAL DECISION MAKERS, AND YOU WILL BE AS FREE AS POSSIBLE FROM UNNECESSARY RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT TOO OFTEN FRUSTRATE YOUR EFFORTS, TIE YOUR HANDS AND INHIBIT YOUR PROGRESS.

THIS REBALANCING OF RESPONSIBILITY CARRIES WITH IT
THE CHALLENGE OF MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK BETTER AT ALL LEVELS.
IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL, THE REWARDS OF OUR EFFORTS WILL BE SEEN
IN THE IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR CITIZENS. FOR THOSE
OF US WHO SERVE IN GOVERNMENT, THERE CAN BE NO HIGHER REWARD,
NO GREATER SUCCESS, THAN THIS.

FINALLY, LET ME EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION AGAIN
FOR THE WORK OF YOUR ASSOCIATION. I LOOK FORWARD TO
CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH YOU, AND I WISH YOU A VERY
SUCCESSFUL AND PRODUCTIVE CONFERENCE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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