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April 24, 1975

SUBJECT: LAND USE

Secretary Morton in Congressional testimony, stated that he supported the Jackson Land Use Bill and thus, disagreed with President Ford's opposition to land use legislation.

What is the President's reaction to the comments by Secretary Morton that he opposes the President's position on land use?

GUIDANCE: Secretary Morton or any other Administration official is certainly free to speak his mind on any issues facing him or the Administration. However, I don't feel there is any big disagreement here in that the President also supports responsible land use legislation. However, the President has said that he will support no new spending programs this year, and land use legislation would violate that principle and would contribute to the already burdened financial deficits facing this country.

Isn't it correct that even if there were no budget deficits the President would not support the pending land use legislation on the Hill?

GUIDANCE: The President does support responsible land use legislation. The major question is just who should do it and how it should be done, so I think it is incorrect to say that were it not for the no new spending program pledge, that the President would not even then support land use legislation.

What is the President's position, other than the fact that it would contribute to an increased deficit, on the pending land use bills now before the Congress? (Jackson has a land use bill in the Senate and Udall in the House).

GUIDANCE: We are watching those bills currently before the Congress, but it would be premature to make any comments at this time until they are further along in the legislative process. Various Administration officials will be testifying on the bills from time to time, but as I have stated, the Administration cannot support any land use legislation at this time.

JGC