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January 23, 1975

SUBJECT:

MIGRANT WORKERS

Proposed new Federal standards for migrant workers' housing are being denounced as a step backward that threatens the well-being of thousands of the nation's poorest people. Critics say the proposed standards are a retreat from existing standards which are inadequate.

Why is the Government proposing less stringent standards for migrant housing than the already inadequate existing standards?

GUIDANCE: It is my understanding that the present migrant housing standards contain some impractical aspects which makes it very difficult to enforce, such as the requirement that all houses be 500' from any livestock. Many barns are 500' from a farmers house. In addition, in some remote areas it is difficult to have running water because of the rural location of that work site.

> At any rate; the Department of Labor has proposed various new standards and these were published in the Federal Register for comment several weeks ago. They are now following-up the public comment with hearings throughout the country. These hearings began yesterday here and then moved to Toledo, Portland (OR), Fresno, Corpus Cristi, and Fort Lauderdale. Following these hearings throughout the country, the Department of Labor, based on the comments in testimony in these hearings, will promulgate permanent standards.

I'm quite sure that the Department of Labor will be responsive to the needs of all parties, as reflected by the public comments, the hearings, the testimony, etc.