

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 20, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

I am withholding my approval from S. 2081, the "Agricultural Resources Conservation Act of 1976."

S. 2081 would have required the Federal Government -- the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture -- to appraise the land, water and related resources of the Nation, and to develop a plan and administer a program for the use of private and non-Federal lands.

I have several objections to S. 2081. The bill would set the stage for the creation of a large and costly bureaucracy to "cooperate" with State and local governments and private landowners in an attempt to insure land use in compliance with the master plan. Too often Federal "cooperation" -- when accompanied by vast amounts of Federal dollars and a large bureaucracy -- becomes Federal "direction."

I am not opposed to providing technical assistance to those who need it. The Federal Government, including the Soil Conservation Service, already does a great deal in the management and protection of our natural resources. My 1977 budget proposal called for outlays in excess of \$11 billion for these programs. Included in that amount is over \$400 million for the very program administered by the Soil Conservation Service to which this bill is directed.

In addition, the bill would subject the President's statement of policy -- a document that would be used in framing Executive Branch budget requests for this program -- to a 60-day review period during which either House of Congress may disapprove the statement of policy by simple resolution. This would be contrary to the general principle of separation of power whereby Congress enacts laws but the President and the agencies of government execute them. Furthermore, it would violate Article I, section 7 which requires that resolutions having the force of law be sent to the President for his signature or veto.

In summary, S. 2081 would violate the principles of fiscal responsibility, minimum Federal regulation, separation of powers, and constitutional government, and accordingly, I withhold my approval.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

October 19, 1976.

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