United States Senate

1965

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Dear:

Thank you for your recent communication concerning the watershed budget situation. Although the President's budget for fiscal year 1965 calls for an increase of $6,131,000 for P. L. 566 watershed work over last year, this only brings the total in the watershed protection category to $57,171,000 for the entire country.

The new money would allow only 70 new project starts during the year and would expand river basin investigation funds about 40 percent. Watershed planning and flood prevention in the authorized watersheds would remain at last year's levels with $5,721,000 and $25,177,000 respectively.

The proposed slash of 20 percent in funds for technical assistance to Districts does not reflect adequately the need to advance upstream water programs. Nearly 1,200 applications for planning assistance are pending in the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture. With present funds, only a fraction of these can be serviced each year. In view of the extent of the water problems across the country, 100 new project starts would be more reasonable than the 70 referred to above.

Districts and other local and state sponsors have demonstrated their willingness and ability to move this needed and productive work forward, and I hope the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate will find ways and means to give greater priority to this fundamental program.

The number of key water bills in the water resources field that have already been introduced in the 89th Congress reflect the increasing interest in water development throughout the nation. I appreciate your interest and concern.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen