

S.1273

introduced May 21 Byrd + Rockefeller

Environment Public Work

13 cosponsors

Carol M.

House Bill
also referred
to Senate
Environment,
Aug 7-8,

no hearing scheduled as of 8/12/87

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

SENATOR BYRD: MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED TO JOIN TODAY WITH MY COLLEAGUE, SENATOR ROCKEFELLER, IN OFFERING LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION.

THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION HAS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF APPALACHIA. WHILE MUCH HAS BEEN DONE SINCE THE 1960'S, IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH CARE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF APPALACHIA, THERE IS MUCH THAT REMAINS TO BE DONE. OF THE 272 DISTRESSED COUNTIES NATIONWIDE, 88 ARE IN APPALACHIA. THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE 1980'S HAVE SERIOUSLY ERODED OUR MANUFACTURING BASE. THE DOORS OF TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES IN WEST VIRGINIA, SUCH AS GLASS, SHOE, TEXTILE, AND STEEL HAVE BEEN CLOSED. FURTHER, THE DEMAND FOR COAL AT HOME HAS FALLEN BECAUSE OF CHEAP OIL PRICES, AND THE DEMAND FOR COAL ABROAD HAS FALLEN BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED VALUE OF THE DOLLAR

OVERSEAS. THE END RESULT HAS BEEN HIGH, LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT.

IF APPALACHIA IS TO ATTRACT NEW INDUSTRY, IT MUST HAVE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS INFRASTRUCTURE. ONE KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER INDUSTRIES IN APPALACHIA, AND WEST VIRGINIA IN PARTICULAR, IS THE COMPLETION OF THE APPALACHIAN HIGHWAY SYSTEM, WHICH IS FUNDED THROUGH THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF CORRIDOR G WOULD GREATLY IMPROVE ACCESS TO MANY OF THE TOURIST AREAS IN WEST VIRGINIA, INCLUDING WEST VIRGINIA'S SKI AREAS. WEST VIRGINIA BOASTS SOME OF THE BEST WHITE WATER RAFTING SPOTS EAST OF THE ROCKIES. WEST VIRGINIA IS TRULY A BEAUTIFUL STATE. HOWEVER, WHAT IS UNIQUE TO WEST VIRGINIA AND MAKES THE STATE PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE, ALSO ACTS AS A BARRIER TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ACCESS TO MANY OF THOSE AREAS IS LIMITED DUE TO THE LACK OF A MODERN HIGHWAY SYSTEM. UNLESS THERE IS SOME EFFORT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THOSE AREAS, APPALACHIA WILL REMAIN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AND ITS CITIZENS WILL CONTINUE TO BE SHUTOUT FROM MANY OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THE MORE URBAN AREAS OF THIS COUNTRY.

I HAVE SUPPORTED EFFORTS THAT WOULD HELP OTHER STATES ADDRESS PROBLEMS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO THEIR PARTICULAR AREA, AND I WILL CONTINUE THAT SUPPORT. HOWEVER, APPALACHIA HAS ITS OWN

UNIQUE SET OF DIFFICULTIES, AND I WOULD HOPE THAT MY
COLLEAGUES WILL RECOGNIZE THAT UNIQUENESS AND SUPPORT THE
REAUTHORIZATION OF THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION.