P.S. to the NEWS
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LAND USE PLANNING ACT

The largest single investment the average individual makes in a lifetime is usually a home to live in. The right to buy, use, enjoy, sell, or leave this home to a spouse and children is sanctified by law and essential to what we call the American way of life. You select your residential property on the basis of family purse and lifestyle, and existing housing, business, school, and industrial patterns.

If you want to live near multiple housing, business or stores, you buy there. If you want to live in a rural or suburban community, you buy there. The value of your property is based significantly on local zoning laws, residential patterns, nearby schools, and neighbors.

Now comes a new Federal bill drafted by that breed of bureaucrats which assumes that Government can manage our lives and property better than individuals. Loudly proclaiming their "environmental concern," these bureaucrats have devised a package of horrors called the Land Use Planning Act.

This Act would require the states to adopt a "comprehensive land use planning process" which must include "a method of assuring that all state and local agency programs are consistent with the state comprehensive land use planning process." Under the extremely broad language of the bill, practically any land in the United States can be designated to be an "area of critical environmental concern."

Among other things, the bill would restrict the ways in which property owners can dispose of their own land, authorize state-ordered

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alternatives of land for which the owner would have to pay, and extend the powers of eminent domain over private property.

The Department of the Interior, through its state-level bureaucrats, would be able to tell citizens where they can and cannot build their homes, what crops they can and cannot plant, what timber they can and cannot harvest, and where they can and cannot drill for oil or gas. The Federal land-use blueprint will dictate local community development.

The Land Use act will not only affect almost every property owner in the country by placing severe restrictions on the uses of private land, but it will also have a serious effect on workers in the building trades, farmers, miners, oil industry workers, homebuilders and forest managers.

Of course, all this is going to cost lots of money. The Land Use Planning Act would appropriate $100 million per year to the states for the innocent-sounding purpose of promoting environmental protection and land-use planning. It would establish rigid requirements that the states must meet in order to qualify for these funds, with the Interior Department empowered to write whatever regulations it feels necessary. This is, of course, the customary route of eventual Federal control.

The 5th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that no person shall "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." The Founding Fathers thus bracketed property rights in an indivisible phrase with life and liberty. This makes good sense when you think how much of your life's earnings go into the piece of residential property you call your home. It doesn't make sense to give the Federal Government control over how we use that property.

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