es to the NEWS
by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY
Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: **618-462-5415**

RELEASE: May 30

LAND USE CONTROL

The land controllers are back again with retreads of last year's defeated bills. Congressman Morris Udall's Land Use and Resource Conservation Act of 1975 could prove to be the most damaging blow ever dealt _to the American concept of private land ownership.

Udall's bill· would establish a six-year, $500 million grant program to "assist states in developing and administering land use programs." The states would have three years to develop land use programs, which would have to be "approved" by the Secretary of the Interior, and be subject to his regulations and to the "guide lines" issued by other Federal departments.

The wide potential for social engineering by the Government planners is revealed in the broad language describ ng the scope of the state programs to be funded by the Land Use bill.

The four "key land use activities and areas" which are to come under Federal control include (1) "environmental, economic and social implications of developments of regional impact," (2) large-scale subdivision projects, (3) key facilities, and (4) designated areas of "critical" state concern. It is difficult to imagine what•might not be included.

The Udall bill includes provisions to ensure that local government and the public are "involved" through an "advisory council II of local government officials. Although the Udall bill

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is couched in the language of voluntarism, in fact it represents an attempt by the Federal Government to centralize control of land use in the hands of the Washington bureaucrats.

There are provisions for "fair administrative procedures" and "fair hearings." But this language is a slick cover for replacing representative local government with a vague and meaningless "involvement," and for replacing local laws with the caprice of the "hearing" officers.

Zoning is traditionally a state and local prerogative. There is absolutely no evidence that the transfer of this au thority to Washington, D.C. would bring more honesty or wisdom in dealing with the problems of land use.

Actually, by encouraging statBs to place strict restrict ions on the use of privately-owned land, the Udall bill could drastically reduce the value of many citizens' property with no guarantee whatsoever of compensation.

A bill similar to the current Land Use bill passed the Senate last year, but the House, led by Congressman Sam Steiger defeated it 211 to 204. Since the liberal gains in the 1974 Congressional election, the Ford Administration appears to have lost its stomach for the fight.

If the Land Use bill is to be defeated, it will be because Congressmen hear from their constituents who value the right to control their mm property.

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