

137-4711

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Progress report on simplifying Federal assistance

Attached is the report you requested summarizing progress during the first 90 days of our three-year effort to simplify Federal assistance to States and communities. I suggest we discuss this at an early meeting of the Urban Affairs Council.

Beginning with your March 27 directive that five departments adapt common regional boundaries, a major interagency effort, led by the Bureau of the Budget, is now underway to streamline administration of assistance programs totalling many billions of dollars each year. It is an objective to which this Administration is heavily committed.

Our initial efforts have met with bipartisan support in Congress. They have also received enthusiastic endorsement, and offers of cooperation from the National League of Cities, the National Governors' Conference, the National Association of Counties, and the International City Managers' Association, as well as from several individual Governors and mayors.

Despite this broad initial support, some of our work will be misunderstood and opposed by well intentioned but narrowly based pressure groups and their lobbyists. Some of the program consolidation proposals may also meet resistance in Congress because of committee jurisdiction concerns.

One of our major problems will be to maintain sufficient sustained interest by department and agency heads to move this broad project forward. Although the Bureau's Office of Executive Management is prepared to provide leadership throughout the three years, departments must earmark sufficient talent to carry out a far reaching massive program of systems redesign, involving several hundred programs.

To insure that department heads make these commitments, I urge a brief discussion of this unprecedented attack on red tape at an Urban Affairs Council meeting in July or early August. A proposed letter of encouragement from you to the department heads is also attached.

cc:
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Director
Deputy Director

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(signed) Robert P. Mayo
Robert P. Mayo
Director

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