

POLICY POSITION

2. Agriculture and Rural Development Center for the States

Background

The recessionary conditions in agriculture and the related deterioration of rural communities and agriculturally dependent businesses, coupled with the prospect of substantial changes in federal farm and rural development policy, have and are likely to continue to require state elected and appointed officials to examine and expand or implement state farm and rural development programs. The years 1985 to 1987 will be important years for state farm and rural development policy-makers as long-term initiatives are explored and as they work to resolve short-term problems.

Recommendations

In order to provide state elected and appointed officials with services targeted to those officials directly responsible for farm and rural development program administration and legislation; provide a means for those officials to share information and resources; and evaluate existing and alternative programs and policies, the Southern Legislative Conference endorses the Council of State Governments' (CSG) proposal to establish an Agriculture and Rural Development Center for the States.

This Center will conduct research on state programs and problems, maintain an information service, issue publications, assist in state-federal liaison, promote regional and state-local cooperation and staff organizations of state government officials. The Center will increase the awareness and understanding of farm and rural community problems and state initiatives and proposals to deal with those problems during a period of changing federal policies and farm and rural area economic conditions.

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