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Where the Action Is

In his address to the 1971 National Conference of the American Society for Public Administration, Congressman John W. Davis (D-Ga.) highlighted the confluence of three major trends in the United States: (i) a renewed interest in federalism, caused by the realization that all problems cannot be solved in Washington; (ii) a shifting of our national priorities from defense and space to domestic problems, which traditionally have been the responsibility of state and local governments; and (iii) a rapid increase in funds for applying science and technology to domestic problems, such as housing, transportation, health care, crime, and pollution.

This same theme—a need for local government involvement—was expounded by Edward E. David, Jr., in an article in *Chemical and Engineering News*: "As our domestic programs begin to focus on societal needs, they will require new forms of participation by industry, academia, and local governments if our strategic approach is to work." And in his science message to Congress, President Nixon stated:

A consistent theme which runs throughout my program for making government more responsive to public needs is the idea that each level of government should do what it can do best. This same theme characterizes my approach to the challenge of research and development. . . . If we are to use science and technology effectively in meeting these challenges, then state and local governments should have a central role in the application process. That process is a difficult one at best; it will be even more complex and frustrating if the states and localities are not adequately involved.

How does one adequately involve state and local governments—long ignored by the scientific community—in the application of science and technology to domestic problems? Two avenues have already been opened. First, several states and larger cities have begun to incorporate science into their decision-making processes. According to recent statistics of the National Science Foundation, 49 governors have appointed personal science advisors, 23 states have created science advisory committees or commissions, 5 have established state science foundations, and 5 have appointed science advisory committees to their legislatures. Second, two recent reports have drawn a blueprint for establishing an effective federal-state science partnership.

In the preface to one of the reports, *Public Technology: A Tool for Solving National Problems*, which was issued by the Federal Council for Science and Technology, Vice President Agnew states: "[This report] will provide a useful basis in developing federal policies to foster more effective scientific and technological relationships between the federal government and state and local governments." In a companion volume published by the Council of State Governments (*Power to the States: Mobilizing Public Technology*), Russell W. Peterson, governor of Delaware, emphasizes that "one great need is for government to find ways to best harness science and technology in solving problems. . . . Each governor will find this report extremely helpful in accomplishing his prime mission—solving problems and thus increasing the quality of life for the citizens of his state." In Victor Hugo's vernacular, the hour and the idea have arrived; the President and the governors are playing the same tune.

In his closing address at the National Action Conference: Intergovernmental Science Policy (21 to 23 June 1972, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), Congressman Davis stated: "It has been observed that the federal government can open the gates to an action partnership in domestic technology. But only the state and local governments themselves can make the decision to walk through that gate." This is the challenge of the 1970's—one that the states can ill afford to ignore.—JOHN E. MOCK, *Science Advisor to the Governor of Georgia, Box 32745, Atlanta 30332*