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NATIONAL PLANNING BOARD
FEDERAL EMERGENCY
ADMINISTRATION
OF PUBLIC WORKS
FINAL-REPORT
1933-34.



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OF PUBLIC WORKS

HAROLD L. ICKES, ADMINISTRATOR

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FINAL REPORT—1933-34

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

FREDERIC A. DELANO, CHAIRMAN

CHARLES E. MERRIAM

WESLEY C. MITCHELL

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1935

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

NATIONAL RESOURCES BOARD,
INTERIOR BUILDING,
Washington, August 1, 1934.

To the Administrator of Public Works:

SIR: We have the honor to submit herewith the final report of the National Planning Board, appointed by you July 20, 1933, and transferred to the National Resources Board by Executive order of the President on June 30, 1934.

We venture to suggest that as a matter of record the body of this report and appendix F, also possibly the appendix giving the financial statement, be printed as a public document for general distribution.




Respectfully submitted.

(Signed) FREDERIC A. DELANO, *Chairman*.
(Signed) WESLEY C. MITCHELL,
(Signed) CHARLES E. MERRIAM.

STATE PLANNING BOARDS

To Accompany Circular of National Planning Board



-  Board Appointed
-  Application for Help
-  Consultant from National Planning Board

Revised to
June 30-1934

Prepared in Office of The National Planning Board

NATIONAL PLANNING BOARD REPORT

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PLANNING ACTIVITIES

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Section I

APPENDIX

APPENDIX
PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS—GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION
OF PROJECTS

National Planning Board, September 26, 1933

The geographic distribution of funds for approved Federal projects, as shown on the bar chart prepared in the office of the Deputy Administrator, raises a question as to the *criteria* for geographic allotments under the "Comprehensive Program of Public Works." Current talk as to the "legitimate share" of this or that State indicates that this problem may prove troublesome, although it is understood that no allocation of funds by States has been or is contemplated by the Administrator or Board for Public Works.

**Need of criteria
For geographic allocations**

Less than half of the funds for a public works project are ordinarily spent at the point of construction. Usually about 60 percent of the cost of public works is in materials and transportation. These materials must often be obtained from other States or regions away from the location of the project. The figures showing distribution of funds geographically may be made more useful if regions or other large area units are used as a basis, since regions will more often include the source of materials used on the job, but even regional units would not cover such cases as the machinery for Boulder Dam in Arizona, which will come from New York or Pennsylvania.

The sources of materials for public construction were investigated last year by the Federal Employment Stabilization Board, and a chart was prepared to show the State distribution of the "material dollar." This chart offers a general guide for the geographic distribution of approximately 60 percent of the funds allocated under the "Comprehensive Program of Public Works."

Only the remaining 40 percent may safely be considered as spent at the site.

Possible criteria testing distribution

Possible criteria by which to test the geographic allocation of funds and to assist the Administrator in preventing a dislocation of the comprehensive program, are—

1. Population by States or regions.
2. Unemployed by States or regions.
3. Relief funds by States or regions.
4. Families given assistance by States or regions.
5. Federal income by States or regions.
6. Area.
7. Combinations of some of the foregoing, with varying weights for different factors.

Each of these possible methods of testing distribution of funds has its own advantages and limitations, and each may contribute significant considerations to be kept in mind.

1. *Population* provides a general test by comparing percentage of funds with the percentage of population in the several States. The advantage of this method lies in its simplicity. But the *needs* of the States, from the social or economic point of view, may or may not be proportionate to population. Just as the aid to the unemployed provided by a project cannot be judged wholly on a basis of location, so also the need for aid cannot be judged wholly on a basis of population.

Some of the apparent dislocations between the allocation and population bars on the chart are not, perhaps, as significant as a first glance might indicate. For instance, the shortage in such States as Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee is more than made up by the \$50,000,000 allotted to the Tennessee Valley Authority. Further, it may be argued, in justification of the allotments to the "public lands" States of Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, that these States are less likely to require further funds for State, local, or private projects than other States, because so large a part of their area is owned by the Federal Government.

2. *Unemployment figures* would presumably show the need for aid if they were available or accurate. The best indications available show a distribution of unemployed in approximate percentages. This indication is perhaps better than nothing, but no reliable figures are obtainable for a comparative study throughout the country. Even if such figures could be obtained, they would not show the whole story, for they would not include many cases of distress which are well known to exist. Self-employed rural distress cases, for instance, would not be covered by this classification.

3. *Relief funds* also are incomplete as a guide. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration has compiled the available information by States and months.

4. *Families receiving aid* as shown on the tables compiled by the Federal Emergency Relief are, perhaps, the best indication of need so far available.

5. *Federal income*. It may reasonably be urged that those who pay for relief or for public works should benefit accordingly, or at least be given some preference. Since the congested and industrial areas, where large taxes are paid, are now the areas of great distress, this basis for distribution might also approximate the need.

6. *Area* bears less relation to need than any of the methods just discussed, and is therefore not recommended.

7. *Combinations*, with varying weights for different factors. The Recovery Act, in sec-

tion 204 (b), establishes a basis for allocation of highway funds, as follows:

7/24ths by area;
7/24ths by mileage of rural delivery routes, and
10/24ths by population.

This combination of factors is obviously not applicable to the whole program of public works, because of its special relation to post-roads and omission of unemployment relief as a factor. The existence of this method as a part of the basic act does, however, suggest the advantages of a weighted factor combination as a test for distribution of projects.

Recommended Test

The best combination appears to be an average of the population, unemployment, relief, and family figures discussed above. This average may prove useful as a measuring stick if allocations are figured 60 percent, in accordance with the material dollar distribution among the States, and 40 percent in accordance with location of the project. The possibilities of so measuring the distribution of projects is illustrated by the analysis of the allocations to projects up to September 18, 1933, shown on the bar chart.

FREDERIC A. DELANO, *Chairman*.

WESLEY C. MITCHELL.

CHARLES E. MERRIAM.

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