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# **CONFERENCE REMARKS FROM MANAGING MEGAGROWTH - FLORIDA'S NEW MANDATE†**

**FLORIDA STATE CONFERENCE CENTER  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
JANUARY 24-25, 1985**

## **CONFERENCE CHARGE**

**JON MILLS††**

Dean D'Alemberte, panelists, and other participants in this conference, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning, and I am very honored to have been asked to be General Chairman of our deliberations for the next two days. A quick look at the program will tell us at once that we have the makings here of an excellent and productive conference.

It is a particular pleasure to be introduced by Sandy D'Alemberte. As most of you know, and as all of you should know, Sandy has, over the years, been an extremely important participant in the effort that has made Florida the outstanding state that it is. He served in the Florida House from 1966 to 1972, and during those years was a key player in shaping the Florida Legislature into the very effective and nationally recognized institution that it is today. He served as Chairman of the Constitutional Revision Commission in 1978, and over the years has selflessly given his time to public service. At the same time, his professional career paralleled his career in public service. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association, President of the American Judicature Society, and he has a national reputation as an outstanding constitutional lawyer. All of us are blessed now to have him as the new Dean of the Florida State University College of Law.

One of my tasks this morning is to attempt to tell you why we are here. Actually, I really do not think I need to do that. The

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†The Conference Remarks appear in the order in which they were presented. Video tapes of the entire Conference are available for viewing at the Florida State University College of Law Library, Tallahassee, Florida, during normal operating hours. Please allow one day set up time. Audio tapes of the entire Conference are available from the *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, Florida State University College of Law, Tallahassee, Florida, 32306, for a nominal fee.

Although Christopher C. Brockman primarily was responsible for the compilation and editing of the Conference Remarks, the following individuals are to be recognized for their assistance: Daria L. Burgess, Anna Cam Fentriss, and James A. Jurgens.

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answer is obvious. We are here because we care about Florida. We are here because we are concerned about Florida today and worried about Florida tomorrow. We are here because we know Florida is growing very rapidly and because we know now is the time to put into place responsible mechanisms and processes to accommodate and manage this extremely rapid growth.

Between 1950 and 1970, our state's population increased by 145 percent; between 1970 and 1980, it increased 43.5 percent. We learned two months ago that Florida is currently the sixth largest state in the nation, not the seventh largest, as was previously thought.

We hear predictions from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget that by 1988 Florida will be the fourth largest state in the nation. And we have projections by the U.S. Census Bureau that by the turn of the century Florida will be the third largest state in the nation, topped only by California and Texas. To put it another way, Florida's population by the year 2000 could increase by about 5.4 million, a number equal to the current population of Georgia. The numbers alone, though, do not give us an adequate picture of what this rapid growth will mean.

The truth is that these new Floridians are arriving in cars, trucks, planes, boats, and buses. They are bringing with them furniture, children, pets, funds, and plans for new opportunities, and new lifestyles. They are not bringing with them — and this is the important part — the roads, the sewers, the schools, the water supplies, the recreational facilities, and the electrical power generating capabilities to support their numbers.

It is clear to me from my six years in the legislature, and my involvement in the past two legislative sessions in environmental and economic legislation, that our major asset in Florida is our major problem. In a sense, we are faced with the very difficult task of preserving an asset, our unique environment and quality of life, which is a magnet for its own destruction. The task is so difficult, in fact, that the tendency is to postpone facing it. But we must face it, and we must make decisions, remembering always that in-decision is a decision — the worst one.

One of the truths that one discovers very quickly in the growth management area is that the management of growth is by no means exclusively an environmental issue. The real bottom line of growth management is economic. What we are really doing when we are putting into place the programs necessary to sensibly manage our growth is assuring our state's economic viability and vital-

ity for the years to come. I feel confident in predicting to you that 1985 will see more people talking about growth management and doing things about growth management and passing legislation aimed at managing growth than any year in our state's history.

The House of Representatives' initiative in growth management legislation actually began more than two years ago, with the appointment by Speaker Lee Moffitt of a Select Committee on Growth Management. That committee created for the 1984 Legislative Session a number of proposals addressing a variety of growth management issues. Few of the proposals emerged as law but one that did result in the creation by the Governor's Office of a proposed state plan which is currently the subject of public hearings throughout the state.

While that Select Committee did not see the majority of its bills passed, that committee did perform, under the able leadership of Representative Ray Liberti of West Palm Beach, an extremely important function. It laid the groundwork for what we see emerging as a statewide sensitivity to growth management issues.

In speeches I gave last summer I spoke of my perception that the times were changing, as related to concern for growth management issues. I can say now the times have changed. I perceive a new awareness of the need to meet the challenges posed by rapid population growth — a need to meet these challenges to preserve our excellent quality of life and, perhaps more importantly, to ensure our economic vitality.

I think all of you know that the passage of growth management legislation is an announced priority in the House of Representatives. One segment of the overall issue, a re-examination of the procedural aspects of the development of regional impact process, is currently being studied by the House Natural Resources Committee. I have prepared, and am prepared to introduce in the near future, a comprehensive, omnibus growth management package that will address a great many of the issues studied by the select growth committee during its two-year-long life span.

Senate President Harry Johnston has announced that growth management legislation is near the top of his agenda for the 1985 session. Governor Bob Graham has announced that growth management legislation is a top priority on his agenda, as well. The Florida Chamber of Commerce six months ago appointed a special committee to study the growth management issues, and my understanding is that the members of that committee realize that responsible planning for growth is an absolute key to their long-term

prosperity. The state's major community developers have been actively studying growth management issues since mid-summer. Other groups are following suit.

The general public is involved. In a recent state-wide survey of adult Floridians conducted by the Policy Sciences Program at Florida State University, more Floridians mentioned rapid growth as the most important issue facing the state than any other problem. In a recent issue of *Florida Trend* magazine, Robert Ehrling, Chief Executive Officer of the General Development Corporation, wrote that his firm is "very much in favor of some form of growth management." He said that the most important step Florida should take now is to put together a good growth management program. An opinion poll conducted recently by the *St. Petersburg Times* resulted in an overwhelming majority of respondents supporting growth management legislation. All of this tells me that the awareness of the problem is there and that it is growing, on the part of both the public and private interests. It also tells me that there is a recognition that something must be done now.

The challenge is an enormous one, but the consequences of not addressing that challenge are grim and irreversible. To know the dimensions of the problem — and I believe we do — and to know some of the solutions — and I believe we do — and not to act is to guarantee the death of our state as we know it. The fact that you are here tells me that you are in the forefront of that group of citizens concerned about the need to intelligently manage our state's growth.

Your charge, as you begin this conference, is to listen to the dimensions of the problem, to participate in the creation of solutions, and to prepare to take part in the process that gets the right things done at the right time — which is now.

I look forward to working with all of you during the next two days and during the months to come.