

**Citizens League** non-partisan public affairs research and education in the St. Paul-  
Minneapolis metropolitan area. **84 S. 6th St., Minneapolis, Mn. 55402 (612) 338-0791**

May 19, 1978

Mr. John Boland, Chairman  
Metropolitan Council  
300 Metro Square Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Boland:

We understand that the Metropolitan Council soon will take action on a recommendation from its Metro HRA Advisory Committee that the Council assume responsibilities of owning and operating public housing.

As you undoubtedly are aware, we have urged consistently that the Metropolitan Council remain a policy body and leave direct operations of the functions to other bodies, such as, for example, leaving transit operations with the MTC and parks operations with the counties. This model has been extremely helpful in permitting the Council to be effective across a broad range of governmental activities by concentrating on the deciding, while leaving the doing to others.

We appeared before the Metro HRA Advisory Committee at the time the proposal was being formulated.

We made it clear that we do not oppose the proposal that public housing for low-income families be built in the Twin Cities area suburbs.

But we feel the Council's job is to see that such housing is provided, not that the Council itself take on the operational responsibilities of owning and managing public housing. Other bodies could better handle that task. If it is felt the operational responsibilities must be handled on a metropolitan basis, then it might be appropriate to establish a metropolitan agency, separate from but subordinate to the Metropolitan Council, such as the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission. Another approach would be for the Council to contract with county or municipal HRA's which have a demonstrated experience and capability in owning and managing public housing.

As the Metropolitan Council now proceeds to make the decision to see that public housing for low-income persons is provided, we hope the Council makes no commitment at the same time to own and operate such housing itself. The operational questions need a great deal of thinking and should not be decided prematurely. We would welcome the opportunity to talk through the options with the Council at an appropriate time.

Sincerely,

EC:VS

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