

Comments to North Carolina Sheriffs' Association
(not given)

Rebuttal to the Establishment of Regional Laboratories

I think you can easily see what might happen should we allow this to occur. We must continue to press for an adequate share of local appropriations because if we fail to do so and federal funds cease to flow, a gap between funds appropriated for essential services and the funds required would probably be too great to bridge. For a time you and your department could flounder while trying to re-establish support on the local level to provide adequate law enforcement.

So, I urge you as you consider projects for your areas to consider those which would in a sense be "icing on the cake" and, in turn, make sure that your local governments understand the necessity for providing the cake itself.

You know some controversy has arisen concerning regional laboratories and law enforcement agencies proposed by some of the criminal justice planning units. Charles Dunn, Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, has spoken out in opposition. For several reasons, I must agree with him.

The State Bureau of Investigation is making a constant effort to build its laboratories, staff, and facilities, both in Raleigh and in the various regions so that all law enforcement agencies will have access to and prompt service by expert laboratory facilities. We are doing this, I think, in a sound way by building on the foundation already established and expanding in all areas.

It would^{be}/tragic, I think, when we see a good state-wide laboratory system in sight, to allow their efforts to become fragmented and establish regional laboratories not under the supervision of the State Bureau of Investigation and funded by federal funds which certainly cannot last forever. If by using LEAA funds, local agencies establish laboratories, operate them for awhile and thus cause diversion from the State Bureau of Investigation facilities, and then federal funds cease to trickle, we will have the same gap I mentioned a moment ago.

The State Bureau of Investigation will then be called upon, after reallocating its resources to other areas to come back to the region which is in trouble and

and reestablish laboratory resources. This would be difficult to do on a short notice after other aspects of the Bureau have been given priority.

Frankly, I think that our first consideration at this time should be strengthening carefully and uniformly our laboratory system throughout the State rather than concentrating on uses of federal funds in your particular areas of the State. If there are federal funds for crime laboratories, then I think they should be used to upgrade the state-wide system, else we are right back where we were before we started making a united effort to work together to improve law enforcement in North Carolina; we are developing one area possibly to the detriment of the other, with no eye to the overall picture.

There are other questions which must be answered when one proposes a regional law enforcement agency. It is clear, I think, that there is no statutory authority for local officer's power to transcend jurisdictional lines. Traditionally, this has been a function of the Bureau or other statewide law enforcement offices, and I think that it would take an act of the legislature to

effectuate some of the proposals made such as regional undercover agents and other officers who would cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Again we are right back to the question of fragmentation. If we are going to develop an expert investigative agency, then I believe strongly that we should build upon the foundation that we already have in the State Bureau of Investigation rather than by overlapping through regional agencies, which again might cease to exist anytime federal funds are stopped and local governments cannot pick up the tab.