

With respect to our response to Bush's oft-repeated statement that Federal tax receipts are "our money," *Insight* wishes to inform the President what we want done with "our" money.

First of all, we don't want a penny of "our" money given to the Department of Agriculture (DA), which seems entirely dedicated to raising farm prices

and lowering farm output. Every year, the government sends out checks to about 700,000 to 900,000 farmers.

Since 1978, Federal payments to stabilize farm incomes have been over \$300 billion. Some of the DA's payments involve "stabilizing" produce prices by buying "surplus" crops.

We are told that payments to growers, to destroy 20,000 acres of plum trees, were necessitated by a glut of prunes. And that the Agriculture Department has also been paying farmers to destroy potato and sugar crops and to sharply reduce the amount of cranberries that could be brought to market. →

► We are told that unless quotas on tobacco growing are maintained, the nation will be flooded with health destroying cigarettes. Nevertheless our personal greed demands that we inform the president that we don't want any of "our" tax money devoted to this worthy cause.

Further, we wish to inform the President that we do not wish a penny of "our" money to be spent on roads, rapid transit, bridges, yacht harbors or any other pork barrel infrastructure improvements. The President's men reluctantly announced that Bush's proposed budget would slice 9 billion from Federal highway programs, attributable to a sharp decrease in gasoline tax collections. Congress has decreed that Federal highway money be distributed according to a formula, which depends on revenue from Federal taxes on gasoline and the sale of big trucks. The effect of Federal highway spending on land value can be seen in every state in the country.

Since the traffic from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, has become more and more congested, the Nevada Visitors Authority has hired a traffic consultant to lobby Federal and State officials. They wish to widen the Interstate 15 in order to lessen the growing congestion, aggravated by the public's fear of flying which came about since the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York. Approximately 50,000 super optimistic gamblers are using the desolate route 272 to spend

their hard earned wages on what usually ends up as a financial debacle.

In a very one sided arrangement, the California Highway Authority is spending part of its Federal Fund allocation to fatten the coffers of Nevada gambling moguls, while the state of Nevada is contributing \$10 million of its own Federal highway funds to California authorities to widen Interstate 15 in California.

California State officials are also pushing for Federal funds to add high-speed trains that would shave two hours off the trip from Southern California to Las Vegas, a journey that now takes as much as eight hours.

Insights is so greedy as to plead that the casinos pay for their own wealth producing highways and the same principle applies to every other Federal highway project.

The State of California will receive over \$357 million from the Feds as highway allotments. But California still complains that it lost more Federal highway funds than any other state because congressional members have redirected this money to their own pet projects. Relative to distribution of highway funds, Gordon Wachs, the Director of the Institute of Transportation Studies in Berkeley, CA, calls this process "pure pork barrel politics." It will nevertheless prevail.

Southern California is particularly in need of Federal money, because it bargained away the right to operate a toll road on a congested roadway from Riverside County to

Orange County. Under its agreement with the State, the toll road will receive millions of dollars from the State of California if the State installs any road improvements on a parallel highway operated by the State, because this would lure drivers away from the toll road. Furthermore, when the public authorities tried to install correctional improvements, on a stretch paralleling the toll road, in order to diminish many fatal auto accidents, the toll road authorities obtained a court order preventing the State from improving that dangerous stretch of road.

The State now needs a great amount money from the Federal government to buy out certain lanes on the toll road, and price is a key factor. It is estimated that these lanes on the toll road are worth from 200 million to \$300 million. They were built a few years ago for \$135 million.

It is obvious to every substantial campaign contributor that to alleviate the consequences of this fantastic agreement, California deserves Federal assistance, which comes from citizens of every state in the Union--but not with "our" money, please!

We also do not wish "our" money to go into HUD grants and loans for low and middle-income families. Applicants for HUD aid in Orange County must show that they earn less than \$90,500 a year to qualify in the "low and middle income" category.

What is one man's economic impetus is another man's pork. ☺