

programs. The Department also advises the Governor as to the means available to coordinate the plans and programs of Federal, State, local, regional, metropolitan, county and municipal governments in order to avoid duplication and conflict.

The Department's existing authority to guide and to direct State developmental planning process was expanded by Chapter 291, Acts of 1974, by placing new legal requirements on both the local subdivisions and the State. Effective July 1, 1974, the local subdivisions of Maryland are required to determine, to designate, and to recommend areas of Critical State Concern as a part of their comprehensive plans and to submit such recommendations to the Secretary of State Planning. After consultation with the local subdivisions and considerations of the areas recommended, the Secretary of State Planning must make final determination of areas to be designated as being of Critical State Concern and include such determinations as a part of the State Development Plan. Additionally, the Secretary is empowered to identify areas of Critical State Concern and has established guidelines for use by the local jurisdictions in making their recommendations.

Other new or expanded powers of the Department of State Planning include the authority to expand the Department's functions as the State's Clearinghouse to include review and analysis of State grants to local governments; the authority to establish and to recommend a Statewide referencing system for all basic planning data for use by all units of State and local government; the right to intervene in, and become a party to any administrative, judicial, or other proceeding in the State concerning land use, development, or construction; and the responsibility to establish a State Depository for all Government general, area, and functional plans prepared by State, Regional, local, municipal, and interstate agencies. Each entity is required to submit such plans to the Department of State Planning as they are promulgated.

The State Intergovernmental Assistance Clearinghouse is responsible for coordinating the review of approximately 200 Federal grants-in-aid programs, direct Federal Development projects in the State and draft Environmental Impact Statements pursuant to the provisions of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 as implemented by Office of Management and Budget Circular A-95. All applicants for Federal aid under the specified programs must first submit to the State Clearinghouse a Notification of Intent to Apply for Federal Aid. This notification is forwarded to appropriate State, regional and local governmental agencies for review and comment to assure consistency with comprehensive State, regional and local plans; for environmental impact; and to eliminate duplication and conflict thereby increasing the effectiveness and value received from the expenditure of resources. The Clearinghouse is also designated as the State Central Information Reception Agency to receive all information from Federal agencies on grants made within the State. This information is compiled and distributed monthly and annually to interested officials and agencies of the State and its subdivisions. The Clearinghouse is responsible for coordinating the review and analysis of State grants to local governments, e.g. Program Open Space, Water/Sewerage, etc., and proposed nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, the Clearinghouse has been designated by Federal Regulatory Agencies as the focal point in regards to requests for or the dissemination of information by those agencies, e.g. railroad abandonments, licensing of nuclear power plants, public hearings, etc. The Clearinghouse is also responsible for maintaining an inventory of all State and Federal owned land in the State and for coordinating changes in use and disposal of all excess State and surplus Federal property.

Staff: 1975, 110; 1976, 119; 1977, 119.