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REMARKS BY THE  
HONORABLE G. WILLIAM MILLER  
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY  
AT THE ISSUANCE OF AGENCY CONSUMER PROGRAMS

At the President's direction my colleagues in the cabinet, as well as the heads of the independent agencies, have begun a process that builds the confidence of the American people in their government. The Consumer's Executive Order establishes for the first time a government-wide focus for consumer participation in the processes of government and a standard for responsiveness to consumer needs and interests that all agencies must achieve.

At a cabinet meeting shortly after the President issued the Consumer's Executive Order, he shared with us his sense of commitment to the goals embodied in this Order and charged the cabinet members to carry that commitment back to their respective departments.

Today marks the culmination of the initial phase of the President's program to improve the responsiveness of the Federal government to citizen-consumers. I have been asked to highlight some of the actions undertaken by the Treasury Department in response to the Executive Order.

It is no surprise that many activities of government departments and agencies directly affect the lives of each of us. For example, Treasury activities affect:

- taxpayers who request and receive assistance from the Internal Revenue Service in preparing their returns;
- travelers who go through U.S. Customs;
- savers who buy U.S. Savings Bonds;
- recipients of government checks;

- borrowers who rely on the Comptroller of the Currency to ensure national bank compliance with consumer credit protection laws;
- farmers who seek gasohol plant permits to help reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy sources;
- and, of course, every citizen is affected by inflation and the need to address our nation's energy problems.

President Carter's Executive Order goes a long way to resolve the problems consumers and citizens have had in dealing with the Federal Government. Our shared commitment in the Administration is:

- to have professional consumer affairs representatives who participate on behalf of consumers in agency decisionmaking;
- to involve the citizen-consumer directly in the development and review of regulations, policies, and programs;
- to provide informational material that is useful to consumers;
- to provide training to our employees to ensure they are helpful and responsive to consumer needs;
- to act as true servants of the public in responding to consumer complaints.

Although the fruits of the Executive Order are just beginning to be realized, let me mention some of the actions already taken by the Treasury Department to implement this Order.

I have directed my newly-appointed Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs

- to apprise me of the potential impact on consumer of all policy initiatives within the Treasury Department;
- to monitor consumer complaint systems within the Department;
- to represent me on the President's Consumer Affairs Council;
- to chair the Treasury Consumer Affairs Council, which consists of consumer representatives of each Treasury Bureau.



I have issued a Directive to all Treasury employees that emphasizes our long-standing commitment to the goals of the Executive Order and describes the functions of my Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs. We now have within the Treasury Department a "consumer team" analogous to Esther Peterson's consumer affairs team within the White House. Each Bureau within Treasury is required to prepare its own consumer plan to adapt the requirements of the Executive Order to the specific consumer issues in each Bureau. These plans reinforce ongoing consumer representation programs, such as the Taxpayer Ombudsman program at the Internal Revenue Service and the Customer and Community Programs at the Comptroller of the Currency. Each Bureau has a consumer representative who has assumed responsibility for overall implementation of the Order within that Bureau and participates in the Treasury Consumer Affairs Council.

Finally, along with the other officials at the Treasury, I will continue to work with Esther Peterson and her staff at the President's Office of Consumer Affairs to assure the fulfillment of the goals outlined in the Treasury Consumer Program Plan published today in the Federal Register.

All of us in the Administration have accepted President Carter's challenge to ensure that the people of the government become more nearly a government of the people.

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