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Sparkman-Jones Rural Farm Housing Act

Strom Thurmond

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 28--Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) today joined Senator John Sparkman (D-Ala) in sponsoring a bill that would provide loans to enable farm families to build new homes and to repair and modernize existing dwellings.

The South Carolina Democrat stated he will press vigorously for re-enactment of the Sparkman-Jones Rural Farm Housing Act. It was originally passed in 1949, but no funds were provided for the loans last year even though Congress voted the authority to extend the program.

Since the program went into operation in 1950, approximately 20,000 farm families have been able to build or repair their homes or to construct farm service buildings needed for profitable farming operations. Most of the loans have been made in the Southern States.

Thurmond, along with Sparkman, cited figures to show there is a critical need for the continuation of the farm loan program. He pointed out one-fifth of America's more than 6 million farm dwellings are in a dilapidated condition and more than three-fourths of all farm houses still lack hot water, or private bath and toilet facilities.

"This program is the only farm housing program that gives farm families similar opportunities to have decent housing on a par with city residents."

"I am vitally interested in helping the little farmers. In my experience as a farmer and as a former agricultural teacher, I know how difficult it has been for them to obtain financing and desire to take every step possible to help them," Thurmond said.

The program is designed primarily to aid farmers who are unable to get loans from banks and other lending institutions. The loans would run at four per cent interest up to a 33-year repayment period.