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**David P. Gardner's
Remarks
Coalition for Utah's Future
October 9, 1996**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to be here helping to honor Kennecott and the Nature Conservancy for their contributions to our state.

These institutions, different in purpose, character, style, scope and size, share an uncommon commitment to Utah and its future well-being. Each, in its own way, is not only seeking to fulfill its own responsibilities and institutional objectives, but each is doing so in ways that reflect well upon their sense of civic duty and community pride, their dedication to excellence in all they do and their respect for and commitment to the long-term, best interests of all Utahans.

Our Chairman, Robert Grow, and our Executive Director, Stephen Holbrook, have tendered me a modest assignment for today's luncheon. I am to speak about Utah 100 years hence. This is not an assignment that lends itself to easy analysis or facile rhetoric. It is not a task susceptible to the mere extrapolation of data or the easy projection of current trends to long-term certainties. It is, in short, an improbable task. Too many moving parts. And while the past is always instructive, it is not necessarily more than a mere

introduction to the future. In this sense, then, the past is but mere prologue to the coming adventure.

I was born in Berkeley, California in 1933. Three days before my birth, President Roosevelt had declared a bank holiday. It was a hard time for our country, sinking into an economic depression more pronounced, broader in scope, and deeper in its effects, socially as well as economically, than any other in our nation's history. At that time, approximately 3.5 - 4.0 million people resided in California, and most of them lived in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento Valley. And Southern California was just hitting its stride.

California's fortunes had blown hot and cold since the discovery of gold in the Sacramento Valley in 1849. In-migration however, had been a near constant: fortune seekers from throughout the world; opportunists looking for easy money, if not instant wealth; army deserters; confessed outlaws; Chinese laborers to build the railroad through the Sierra Nevada and on to Promontory Point just north of here; Mexicans whose land this had been just a short time before; native Americans who had been here for thousands of years; in short, a menagerie of peoples, some native, but most coming from the east, west, north and south to seek their fortunes by taking their chances in what was a rough and

raw frontier only toying with the trappings of culture and barely edging up on civilization.

But energy and entrepreneurship abounded and the state grew and prospered, a function in part of its favorable geographic position -- after all what the world called the Far East was for California its near West --- a congenial climate for people and the growing of an infinite variety of crops in its rich and expansive central valley and golden coast; its size and climatic variations, from Mediterranean in the south to the central coast regions so conducive to the development of exotic agricultural products and to the great virgin forests and redwoods of the north coast to the unparalleled agricultural lands of the Sacramento Valley and San Joaquin Valley in the middle and to the source of its water and mineral wealth in the Sierra Nevadas on its eastern boundary.

It was, of course, this very description of California -- its beauty, emptiness, spaciousness and promise that prompted Sam Brannan, an early Mormon pioneer in California, to encourage Brigham Young to move through the Salt Lake Valley and on to California, rather than stopping in this great valley as Brigham Young instead chose to do. Brigham Young said in response to Brannan, that if California was as attractive as he was saying, California would prove to be irresistible to others, especially those seeking the more

material things of the world. The Mormon pioneers were seeking the more spiritual ones, he observed. As Brigham Young said, we'll settle a region not desired by others and leave California to those whose way of life and style of living were more likely to be accommodated in California than in the mountainous, semi-arid west. He, of course, needed to buy time, sink in roots, colonize and grow before reengaging the larger world. No, he would stay here in the Great Basin, an area then unwanted and little traveled by others.

The two world wars of this century had significant impact on California, but it was mostly the Great Depression of the 1930's and the World War of 1941-45 that gave California its push into the modern age. Large numbers of dispossessed and poverty-stricken mid-westerners moved to California in the 1930's from the failed agricultural areas of the great plains, as John Steinbeck recalled in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. During World War II, millions of soldiers, sailors and airmen moved in and out of California on their way to, or upon their return from, the Pacific War with Japan. Millions stayed in California, never returning home again.

California's economy boomed driven by population, economic growth and trade, along with the development of the defense industry, the entertainment industry, the creation of Silicon Valley, biotechnology and other high tech

companies and, most importantly, the vastness and diversity of its agriculture, then as now still the state's most important single industry. The University of California, which contributed so much to this economic growth, in remarkably little time, as such institutions go, attained levels of academic excellence and capability never seen by any public university in history, bringing talent and ideas to the state that helped fuel its prosperity. The state's infrastructure was put into place in the 1950's and 1960's: its freeway and water systems, sea ports, airports, bridges, and telecommunication systems. Its schools grew with the state as did its universities.

These were golden times for California from the close of World War II until the late 1980's and early 1990's. I do not mean that these years were entirely free of problems. Problems abounded: the free speech movement at Berkeley, anti-Vietnam War protests throughout the state, the Watts Riots, the oil embargo, fires, earthquakes and so forth. But on balance, life was good and the future looked even better.

But most parties end and California's did beginning in 1990, as the state's economy went slowly into the tank, a recession not seen in California since the Great Depression 60 years earlier. The state had been living on the momentum of its earlier investments in water systems, roads and freeways, bridges,

universities, K-12 and so forth. The state had been overly occupied with its economic successes, overly focused on the present, overly congratulatory of its accomplishments. It had undervalued the basic forces that gave impetus to its success, it had underestimated the impact of population growth on the state's infrastructure; it had miscalculated the demand on California's health and social services, not only from growth, but also from the growing ethnic diversity of the state's population; it had under invested in its future, and it had balkanized politically and was suffering from acute congestion, pollution, racial tensions, an eroding infrastructure and crime. Local governments were at the state's mercy when seeking to cope with these pressures and the state couldn't agree on what to do or how to pay for it.

California, in 1996, has 34 million people, nearly ten times the population of California when I was born there in 1933. All this in a mere 63 years. Its bridges and freeway systems are clogged. Its universities are ill-prepared to accommodate the near certain influx of students expected to be seeking admission at the close of this decade and well into the next century; the schools are overcrowded, under funded and under performing; the high rate of population growth persists, both from live births in-state, and in migration mostly from Mexico and Asia, and no small part of it illegal; the tax base relative

to social demand is eroding; pollution, especially in the central Valley is growing; and there is substantial migration from southern California masked by an even greater influx from south of the border and countries across the Pacific.

There is very pronounced urban sprawl in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys consuming unconscionable amounts of prime agricultural lands, and the urban sprawl in southern California is already world famous. The estimates of water availability contrasted with demand is not a cheering prospect in the long-term and the cost of dealing with the state's infrastructure needs is seemingly beyond anyone's ability to do anything about.

It is also true, however, that California's economy is regaining its strength, unemployment rates are down, crime has stabilized, and so forth. But it is equally true that California is not anything like it was a half a century ago and the changes in the next half a century will be even greater, given present trends.

Now, to Utah, whose fate these next few decades could easily parallel California's, and for many of the same reasons; or alternately, whose destiny could be fashioned differently, learning from California's mistakes as well as its successes; taking hold of our future, in other words, rather than drifting into it, our options unclear and unexamined, and as a result forfeited and irrevocably.

As the Utah Foundation recently noted, it took Utah since statehood in 1896, 70 years to reach a population of one million, 30 years to reach two million (which it just did this year) and it is expected to have three million in 22 years from now. I'm not sure what it will be in 2096, but it's likely to be quite a lot, with Utah's growth rate rivaling Southern California's a half a century ago. This population growth is driven mostly by the natural birth rates in the state (Utah's fertility rates are 2.68 compared with 2.05 nationally), that is, roughly 60% from births in Utah and roughly 40% from net-in migration. Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah Counties combined account for nearly 83% of the growth in Utah since 1940. Utah is the 6th most urban state in the nation with 87% of the state's population living in urban areas. This is a far cry from the Utah of 1850 with only 11,000 people living here almost all of whom were on farms, or the Utah of 1890, six years before statehood, with 211,000 people, two-thirds of them living in rural areas.

Compared with the Nation, Utah ranks 34th in size, fifth in the rate of population growth, first in births per 1,000 population, and last in deaths per 1,000 population. From 1994-1995, Utah's rate of population growth of 2.2% was more than twice the national rate of 0.9%. These data from the Governor's office are my reason for emphasizing the population growth of Utah, for it is

population that not only drives the economy, but also consumes our scarce arable land for nonagricultural purposes, increases the number of automobiles and all this means for the cohesiveness of communities, the integrity of our transportation systems, and the levels of attained pollution in the valley areas where most of us live. Population growth also impacts our parks, national and state, our wilderness and other areas of recreation and leisure, draws down our shrinking water supplies and other resources essential for life and living, such as our forests, influence our daily lifestyles at home and in our communities, crowd our schools, clog our public services and stress the expressions of our democratic life and civic functions. All of this is especially pronounced if the rates of growth are out of balance with the supporting infrastructure, the capacity of the local economy to create steady employment, and the capability of government and the nonprofit sector to do their jobs.

In these respects, Utah has done remarkably well over the years. Its conservative fiscal approach to public spending has been healthy, its citizenry has been well educated and trained and they are sought after as employees, business finds Utah to be a congenial state, taxes are moderate, its college and university system covers the state, its citizenry has been uncommonly homogeneous with respect not only to race but also to underlying values and

priorities; its politics are mostly civil; its people are down-to-earth and hardworking; children and families are valued and nurtured; and there remains a vast open space to give the average citizen proximate balance to one's urban life and the opportunity for year-round recreation that is nearly unparalleled for its beauty, accessibility and grandeur.

That is, at least, how it looks today. But that is how it looked to me in California in the 1930's and 1940's, even into the 1950's when I could fish a mountain lake in the high Sierra's and share it with no one; and if another party came to fish it, I'd move on to one I could fish alone. That's how it looked during my elementary years in school with a class of only 16; and even into my middle and senior years of high school with small classes, excellent teachers and splendid facilities. That's how it looked when as a teenager I would drive from the Bay Area to Lake Tahoe and feel that I was out in the country when I once passed the Sacramento River and the air at the lake was pristine. That's how I felt when driving up to the wine country for picnics or up the north coast abalone hunting along the shore with the solitude those areas then offered. That's how I felt when driving to San Francisco from Berkeley over a bridge built in 1935 that is today still the only span across that part of the Bay, but serving a population eight to ten times what it was when built.

So, as with California, it would be easy for us in Utah to become overly occupied with our economic success, overly focused on the present, overly congratulatory of our accomplishments. We mustn't come, as California did, to undervalue those things that account for our success, or underestimate the impact of population growth on Utah's infrastructure or miscalculate the demand on our health and social services arising from our growth and growing diversity. In short, we should not have to learn California's hard lessons in Utah.

Moreover, Utah is a more fragile place than California, and we are, therefore, in many ways more vulnerable. We have little water; a small proportion of arable land, mountain-locked valley's which trap pollutants and with no off-shore breezes to dissipate them as in Los Angeles and San Francisco; no viable public transportation alternatives to the private automobile or polluting buses; 80% of our land is owned by the federal government; a small population compared with California's and, thus, a very modest voice in the United States Congress; a physically beautiful state, full of grandeur, mountains, rivers, forests and unspoiled open space, an area in other words that is becoming the playground for Californians and others from throughout the country; and as President Clinton made clear recently in designating a new National

Monument in Southern Utah, the juxtaposition of only a few congressional votes in Utah to the many in California translates into actions that are intended to accommodate the many and not the few.

That is reality, as is also the beauty of our state and the healthy and exceptional lifestyle we have developed over the last 150 years. While Sam Brannan thought Brigham Young should not stop at the Great Basin but move on to California, today, residents of California are moving on themselves, to Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, and, yes one of the most popular of all, Utah.

Well, I could go on, but I believe you have the picture. What is to be done?

- ▶ We should learn from the mistakes of others here and abroad;**
- ▶ We should learn from the successes of others here and abroad;**
- ▶ We should not assume, because our economy is booming, that all is well as the old Mormon hymn goes;**
- ▶ We should acknowledge that there is a relationship between population growth in Utah, the state's capacity to deal with it, and the quality of our lives;**

- ▶ **We should look not just to others to deal with these matters, and not just to government, but mostly to ourselves and to our civic institutions and voluntary associations, such as the Coalition for Utah's Future;**
- ▶ **We should realize that wishing for solutions is no substitute for actively seeking them;**
- ▶ **We should not assume the inevitability of continued good times or of their conclusion; and,**
- ▶ **We should inventory our assets, which are formidable, take account of the challenges we confront, engage the talents, energy and interests of our citizenry and, in common, seek strategic not just tactical solutions to these problems of growth, crowding, water, transportation, crime, pollution, and related issues.**

Utah has a proud tradition of facing its problems and overcoming them. This state was first settled by people who did exactly that. It was not settled by the faint-hearted. Nor did Utah develop by each person looking out for himself. People helped one another, took account of one another's problems, worked in common for the larger good, and not just for their own. Sacrifices were made. They were expected. People worked hard. Education was valued. Public service was rendered and shared by a broad band of the populace. Risks were taken.

New ideas were tried. Success was obtained . That is our heritage. It is a pattern worth emulation. How can we, in light of our own past, do less.