DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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REMARKS BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR FRANCIS C. TURNER, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION, AT CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, APRIL 2, 1970

Thank you for inviting me to Concord and giving me the opportunity to enjoy a brief visit in New Hampshire.

Since 1956, when the Interstate Highway program was officially launched, New Hampshire has committed more than $320 million in funds obligated and contracts advertised to improvement of the Interstate and other Federal-aid highway systems. This includes more than $85 million of your own State tax funds, and about $235 million from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

Now, the people of New Hampshire have a reputation for knowing the value of a dollar. So I will conclude that you regard this expenditure for highway improvements as a wise and sound investment.

It is an investment that recognizes the importance of highways to the economic and social well-being of your State. In New Hampshire, as in the other 49 States, highways provide the great bulk of transportation services required by our citizens.

We can see the evidence of this in how our transportation dollars are spent. In 1968, the latest year on which we have information,

total transportation costs throughout the nation were $171.4 billion and highways accounted for $142 billion, or 83 percent of the total.

Highways, then, account for four of every five transportation dollars, and about 16 percent of the Gross National Product.

Breaking it down further, we find that truck movements account for $55 billion, or 73 percent of the total transportation freight bill while movements by automobile and bus account for $87 billion, or 90 percent of the costs of passenger transport.

In intercity travel in 1969 it is estimated that of 1,130 billion person miles of travel, 977 billion were by automobile and 26 billion by bus, for a total of 1,003 billion, or 88 percent of the intercity total. Air travel was second with 111 billion passenger miles, or less than 10 percent of the total.

Urban areas are almost totally dependent on highway transportation. In 1968, in urban areas of more than 50,000 population, over 97 percent of all person miles of travel were by highway vehicle.

In smaller urban areas the proportion of travel by highway is practically 100 percent.

In the movement of goods, virtually all movement within urban areas is by truck. In intercity movement highway transportation is not overwhelming, but it is larger than many realize. Of a total of some 1,850 billion ton miles of goods movement in 1968, 430 billion, or about 23 percent, were by truck. Rail movement, with its longer haul distances, accounted for 41 percent.

However, the value of truck transportation is considerably greater in proportion, as indicated by the fact that regulated and private truck carriers together accounted for 73 percent of the freight transportation bill.

In New Hampshire, trucking would be relatively more important than the national figures indicate, due to the comparatively low level of rail service here.

In presenting these figures I do not mean to minimize the contributions of any of the modes in our transportation system. All of the modes are needed to provide the mobility of people and goods our nation requires, and each of the modes should be encouraged to do the job it does best as complementary -- not competing -- elements of the total transportation system.

But the figures are evidence of the fact that within our transportation system highways are the predominant mode. They provide the overwhelming proportion of the transportation services used by Americans today. They are the backbone of our whole mobility network.

Highways tie all the other modes together. No one of the other modes can be self-contained like highways can. No one of the others can provide all of the travel required for either goods or services to their final destination and thus must depend on highways at some part of the trip.

Virtually every air traveler, for example, requires highways to complete some part of every trip, But more than that, the airplane crews, maintenance operations, air traffic control, passenger food service, and the whole air terminal complex couldn't function without highways. The same applies to rail travel.

So highways are not only a large prime mover of people and goods in their own right, but they also provide essential services to complete the operations of all the other modes.

It is hard to conceive of very many trips or freight movements that do not depend on highways to some substantial extent.

There is every reason to believe that highways will contine to be the predominant mode in the future. There is no alternative in sight which can provide either the volume or the variety of transportation services which are so indispensible to the way of life we Americans have chosen.

Motor vehicle travel now exceeds a trillion vehicle miles a year, and is expected to reach 1.5 trillion miles in 1985, or about a 50 percent increase in 15 years. This would follow a 100 percent increase in the preceding similar period of time.

This gives some indication of the dimensions of the challenge facing the highway program.

Not only are highway improvements vital to continued social and economic growth, they also are needed to reduce the cost and enhance the quality of transportation, especially in terms of safety and efficiency.

For example, analysis indicates that opening 1,000 miles of Interstate highways results in saving more than 150 lives a year and preventing at least 6,000 injuries and 13,500 accidents a year for every year into the long future.

Savings in travel time from the opening of 1,000 miles of Interstate result in savings of about $15 million a year, repeated every year into the future; not to mention the additional benefits in comfort, convenience and vehicle operating cost savings.

The often dramatic reductions in travel and transport time brought about by the opening of long segments of the Interstate are creating special opportunities for New Hampshire.

I am referring to the fact that the Interstates provide you with fast, overnight truck freight service to the big market centers of Boston and New York City -- a service virtually unavailable by other modes.

This has opened an opportunity to develop industry in New Hampshire, such as the small wood products industry, which can service customers in nearby States on a favorable, competitive basis.

It means that the middle-man in the marketing center does not need to stock a large inventory, since he can get overnight freight service from New Hampshire, and therefore it cuts his storage and re-handling costs.

In this way highway transportation is enabling New Hampshire to experience an economic regrowth and an expansion of its economic base. It also can help the State to reverse the out-migration which had been taking away its young people.

The main artery of commerce from here south to the metropolitan centers is Interstate 93. Your highway engineers deserve high praise for the way they have designed this freeway. To my mind, Interstate 93 is an excellent example of a highway that blends with and complements its beautiful natural setting. It is a joy to travel on.

This brings me to another subject I would like to discuss and that is the interrelationship of highways with the environment.

Highways, obviously, have a significant impact on the environment. The impact can be negative, but there are many ways in which it can be positive and beneficial.

Recognizing this, highway officials have sought to identify areas where highway planning, location, design and construction can be used to accomplish public desires with regard to conservation, historic preservation, scenic enhancement, community development, and the control of air and water pollution, to name some of the most prominent concerns.

For example, some time ago the Bureau of Public Roads conferred with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, of the Interior Department, to discuss highway impact on fish and game. The result was a requirement, issued in 1963, that all Federal-aid highway projects be reviewed by the responsible State fish and game agency.

Soon thereafter the same consideration was extended to the protection or improvement of parks and other outdoor recreational and historical resources.

In the matter of water pollution, the Bureau in 1966 issued rules for the protection of streams, lakes and reservoirs. The following year, after consultation with the Soil Conservation Service, of the Agriculture Department, guidelines were issued for minimizing soil erosion.

More recently we have adopted a policy of giving priority to access to recreational areas in our roadbuilding projects for public lands.

This continuing and expanding interest in environmental concerns has produced many interesting and desirable benefits in the roadbuilding program.

Let me cite a few: New York has created a bird sanctuary in the median of State Route 17 between Binghampton and Elmira.

South Dakota built a dam with an embankment on State Route 63 which created a 60-acre lake on a reservation of Souix Indians near

Parmalee. Besides offering the opportunity for fishing, swimming and canoeing, the lake serves the watershed as a water storage facility.

On Interstate 65 in Alabama a proposed dual roadway bridge was lengthened 4368 feet and raised so that ducks from the neighboring Wheeler Wildlife Sanctuary could fly under it. The cost was an additional $1.3 million. Furthermore, the construction contract specified that the contractor would cease all work during the winter months so as not to disturb the hibernating birds.

In Montana, road alignments have been moved, at the suggestion of the State Fish and Game Department, to avoid encroaching on trout streams on the Madison, Big Hole, Missouri and Blackfoot rivers.

In Nebraska more than 50 State-owned lakes were created along a 160-mile stretch of Interstate 80, and now are developed as parks, rest areas, camping and fishing sites.

These are just a few examples to indicate the extent of the commitment that highway officials are making to environmental concerns.

Another measure is the fact that in fiscal year 1969 at least 15 percent of total project costs for Federal-aid highway improvements were devoted to items generally associated with the environment. That is more than one-half billion dollars in Federal highway funds alone committed to protect and enhance the environment in just one year. Can any other program match that?

These environmental items include such things as landscaping, beautification, construction of rest areas, added costs in design features -- such as depressed roadways or aesthetic treatment of structures -- and added costs in right-of-way -- such as buffer zones or wider medians. They include control of erosion and siltation, control of rodents, and control of noise and air pollution. They also include planning work and public hearings devoted to consideration of community and environmental impact.

This extensive use of highway dollars indicates that the highway program is responsive to the public interest in conservation and in environmental quality.

As this public interest develops the highway program will keep in step and will meet its responsibilities in the years ahead.

As you know, all money for the Federal-aid highway program comes from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, which is financed entirely by taxes on highway users. Under present legislation the Trust Fund is scheduled to go out of existence in 1972.

Work on the Interstate, not to mention other Federal-aid systems, will extend well beyond that date. This will call for decisions this year on the future of the Trust Fund.

As a highway administrator I can say that the Highway Trust Fund has been a tremendous success. It has provided the stability and certainty needed for long-range planning, which is absolutely essential to efficient management of the massive Federal-aid program -- a program

which involves not only the cities and state highway departments, but thousands of contractors and suppliers and other interests in our economic system.

I believe the Trust Fund is the best instrument for seeing the Interstate program to completion and for guaranteeing a smooth transition into essential follow-on programs.

With Trust Fund financing assured, I have full confidence in the ability of the highway program to meet the many economic, social and environmental challenges it faces.

As we shape our highway plans with respect to all of the social and environmental factors as well as the economic and engineering considerations, these in turn bear heavily on the financing aspects. So, this is a crucial time in connection with both near and long term policy decisions in the highway program. You and I and our more than 200 million fellow citizens have a large and important stake in the outcome. For these reasons, you have a responsibility to let your wishes in the matter be known to your public representatives as the question is being considered in the Committees of Congress.