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REMARKS BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR FRANCIS C. TURNER, PREPARED FOR DELIVERY AT THE 31ST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PRIVATE TRUCK COUNCIL, AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL 13, 1970.

As a public official, I try to listen to what the public is saying about the highway program. From all indications a healthy majority still believe strongly in the benefits of highway transportation.

But there are some dissenters. One line of thinking that has picked up a few spokesmen seems to be leading to the conclusion that we could solve a whole pack of social and environmental problems if we would just stop building highway improvements.

As highway users, you might find this approach rather baffling -- as I do. But I have seen it advanced to one degree or another by writers, editors and other presumably well-meaning persons.

What it reveals, to say the least, is an underdeveloped understanding of what highway transportation does for the United States.

I won't try to cover that whole subject today, but I would like to point up some aspects and impacts of highway usage that deserve sober reflection by those who are inclined to offer glib and impractical answers.

We can get some perspective on the relative importance of highway transportation by looking at how we spend our transportation dollars. Commercial aviation, for instance, is a fast growing industry. In 1968, expenditures for commercial air travel amounted to about \$5.2 billion. In that same year, expenditures for private auto transportation totalled \$83.1 billion. This was an increase over 1967 of \$10.1 billion.

In other words, a one year's increase in private auto outlays was nearly two times as much as the total outlays for commercial aviation.

Cars and buses together accounted for 89 percent of the nation's total passenger bill, and 10 percent of the Gross National Product.

But this is only one side of the highway use story. Motor trucks, which accounted for 17 percent of the registered vehicles and nearly 20 percent of the vehicle miles traveled, accounted for 73 percent of the nation's total freight bill and over 6 percent of the GNP.

This represents an expenditure of \$54.8 billion in 1968 for the movement of goods by truck over the nation's roads and streets.

It might be contended that a portion of the passenger car outlay could be considered frivolous. After all, many people do enjoy driving just for the fun of it -- for recreation or sight-seeing.

But the same could not be said of this \$54.8 billion. By and large this is money spent by shippers and businessmen like yourselves to move goods and services and make a profit. It also includes money spent by government to provide necessary public services.

It is interesting that less than \$12 billion -- that is, only about 22 percent -- of this cost of truck transportation was devoted to over-the-road for-hire carriage. Nearly \$16 billion was spent on non-regulated line-haul carriage, and over \$27 billion was spent on local truck transportation.

This means, as you well know, that the bulk of truck transportation is done by persons or firms whose business is not trucking but who must have the services of truck transportation in order to function.

Just as highways have given our citizens the opportunity to own and operate their own personal transportation systems, so they have given businesses a similar opportunity to meet their individual needs for the movement of commodities, of finished goods, and of services.

Because of its economic utility, truck transportation has become an integral part of most business activities. There is hardly a commercial enterprise -- manufacturing, farming, distributing, wholesaling, retailing, or servicing -- that is not somehow dependent upon the services and support of trucks.

There is a rough parallel to the private use of trucks in the so-called captive railroads operated by large coal and steel companies. But in highway transportation, with the rights-of-way owned by the public, the opportunities are virtually unlimited.

Business use of truck transportation -- whether it be for-hire or private -- hinges on more than the fact that it is an economically

acceptable means of getting the job done, however. It hinges on the quality of transportation services afforded by trucks on highways.

This stems from the inherent advantage of highways in offering both flexibility and speed and dependability of delivery.

What do we mean by flexibility? We mean door-to-door service. We mean the ability to go wherever the roads go with no fixed right-of-way. We mean access to the land and its development.

We mean versatility in designing vehicles to carry nearly all types of cargo -- petroleum or milk, structural steel or lumber, hogs and cattle, newspapers or TV repair shops-on-wheels, mail or garbage, furniture or parcels. The list is almost endless.

Through the combination of this flexibility with speed and dependability, highway transportation has had an impact on business practices and on our whole economic and social development that would be difficult to exaggerate.

The impact is so pervasive it is even difficult to comprehend.

We simply tend to take it for granted.

Leaving aside the fantastic amount of personal mobility afforded by highways, let us just look at some of the ramifications of highway movement of goods and services.

Highways free business and industry from traditional restraints on location, such as distance from dock or depot. They open new land for development and make urban dispersal possible. Commercial and industrial development can take advantage of less expensive sites than

in already-developed areas.

Highways have brought about new concepts in distribution. They have permitted new flexibility in the location of distribution and warehouse centers, and new methods in the handling of inventories.

High-speed freeways, such as the Interstate System, have promoted economic development in once-declining areas that are now linked with overnight truck service to big city markets. For instance, it is now economically feasible, as demonstrated by the new small wood products industry that has sprung up in New Hampshire, to provide speedy deliveries to the New York and Boston markets and eliminate the need and cost of keeping and handling large inventories in the cities.

Today, both wholesale and retail outlets can operate with lower inventories than in the past, and buyer-seller patterns have changed accordingly.

This flexibility in marketing, together with the mobility of the consumer, has resulted in the growth of the shopping center as a phenomenon of American life.

The conclusion is inescapable -- the way we do business in America today would be impossible without economically healthy and efficient highway transportation, and I mean highways that move an incredible amount and variety of goods and services as well as people.

Ours is a mass consumption society. And everything that we as consumers use gets to us in some part, if not entirely, by trucks using our highways. Mass distribution without highways is unthinkable.

More than 25,000 communities in the United States rely exclusively on truck transportation to provide them with virtually all their life-supporting goods and services.

Even when the line haul is not by highway, the eventual distribution is. So, our urban areas are almost entirely dependent on trucks for intra-city goods movement. Interestingly, residential areas attract more truck trips than any other urban land use area.

Urban areas also are dependent on trucks for many municipal services, from emergency ambulance service to school lunches -- and for the operation of utilities and service industries.

Obviously, the effectiveness and efficiency of truck transportation has an important bearing not only on the costs of goods and services to the consumer but also on the quality of our lives.

It is obvious, also, that the very economic health of our communities depends on a level and quality of transportation that only trucks can provide.

Businessmen, wage earners, consumers, community leaders and public officials all have an interest, therefore, in assuring that truck transportation is adequate, effective and efficient.

One of the primary factors in determining this is the adequacy and efficiency of the rights-of-way that trucks must operate on -- our highway system.

Today, 17 million trucks share the highways with some 87 million passenger cars. So the question of highway adequacy necessarily involves adequacy for the total usage to which highways are put. Highway improvements, therefore, are planned to accommodate the total mix of private and commercial vehicles.

Our current forecasts anticipate a growth from 105 million vehicles today to 134 million in 1980 and 158 million in 1990. This includes a growth in the number of trucks in use from about 17 million now to about 23 million in 1980 and about 27 million in 1990. I might add these are probably conservative predictions since we have had a tendency to underestimate in the past.

We expect a corresponding increase in highway travel, anticipating a 50 percent increase by 1985.

Use of the other modes of transport also will increase during this period, and hopefully in certain instances these modes will relieve some of the burden on highways. But even optimum development of other modes, such as foreseen in the programs now being promoted by the Department of Transportation, will not have a substantial impact on the overall demand for highway transportation.

If we are going to meet this demand, we will have to maintain a continuing high-level program of highway improvements. Simultaneously,

we will have to make every reasonable effort to squeeze more efficiency out of our existing road and street system.

As to highway improvements, I do not foresee any significant new freeway construction in the central cities beyond those projects now underway or planned. Instead, the main thrust will be to meet the needs of the outlying suburban and exurban areas where most of the nation's growth will take place in the coming years. In addition, we will have to catch up with needed improvements on intercity routes and rural arterials, which have had to wait while we concentrated on building the Interstate System.

It is important to note that most of our roadbuilding effort does not result in increasing our highway mileage, but rather in up-dating facilities that have become inadequate for the needs of a growing population and a dynamic economy.

Trucking is a beneficiary of this improvement process. Let me cite just one example. Modern freeways eliminate grade crossings and stop signs. Stops cost money, particularly for heavy trucks. We have computed that it costs almost 23 cents to stop a 20-ton truck from 50 miles per hour, and then bring it back up to 50 miles per hour again. If you stop 1,000 such trucks a day at a particular crossroad, 365 days a year, you have cost truckers a total of \$84,000 a year. If you eliminate the stop with a grade separation you have saved truckers \$84,000 a year.

Truckers also stand to benefit from our efforts to increase the efficiency of existing urban street systems.

One approach we are pursuing in this effort is to encourage the expanded use of public transportation, since peak-hour vehicle congestion can be reduced through an increased diversion of commuters from cars to transit vehicles.

While rail transit can provide effective relief in certain metropolitan situations, the fact is that most (about 3/4) public transportation is performed by rubber-tired buses operating on highways. Buses now provide, and in all probability will continue to provide, 100 percent of the mass transit services available in all but the largest cities.

President Nixon has asked Congress for a greatly expanded program of Federal assistance which would help finance improvements in both bus and rail transit systems. Since much of the public transit problem is also a highway transportation problem we are working with our sister agency, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, in ways to promote increased transit usage.

We have initiated demonstration projects which make bus transit truly rapid transit through the use of exclusive bus lanes or preferential lanes on freeways. To the extent that this service will bring more commuters to use buses we will increase the people-moving capacity of highways and thus reduce peak-hour vehicle congestion.

We also are assisting cities with a program for improved traffic operations using traffic engineering techniques which don't require

expensive new construction. These include such things as providing bus bays, left-turning lanes, channelized intersections, and traffic signal synchronization, and could include projects to facilitate truck loading and unloading operations.

This quick overview of what we are doing in the highway program would not be complete without emphasizing two very high priority considerations which figure in all our plans and decisions. These are highway safety and environmental protection.

Safety has been a primary responsibility of the highway program from its earliest days, and many of the gains made in cutting the death rate to one-third of its level of 35 years ago can be attributed to highway improvements and related traffic operational improvements.

Although we recently reorganized our safety programs within the DOT, the Federal Highway Administration will continue to be responsible for the highway and highway traffic segments of the safety system, and for the program of the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety.

We will intensify our efforts to improve safety in all these areas. This means greater emphasis on safety in the design of new highway projects and in the implementation of traffic operations improvements. It means a step-up in our program to correct hazardous conditions on our older roads, where more than \$1.5 billion in State and Federal funds have been programmed for more than 24,000 projects over the past six years.

It also means that the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety, under its new director, Dr. Robert Kaye, will redouble its efforts to increase the effectiveness of its regulatory and enforcement activities.

Just as we are heavily involved in safety, so are we involved with our responsibilities for environmental protection and enhancement. In the past fiscal year 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 of your Federal highway user tax money committed in just one year for such items as landscaping, beautification, control of erosion and siltation, control of noise and air pollution, and 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 and wider medians.

This emphasis on the environment will receive even higher priority in the future as the highway program responds to its social as well as its transportation responsibilities.

I believe the Federal-aid highway program has made an outstanding contribution to the social and economic progress of this Nation in helping to provide the highway facilities needed by all the many users of highway transportation.

One of the vital factors in the success of this program is the Highway Trust Fund, established in 1956, and financed entirely by taxes on highway users. The Trust Fund has provided the stability and

certainty needed for long-range planning. This is absolutely essential to the efficient management of so vast an undertaking, which includes construction of the Interstate System and improvement of Federal-aid highways all over the country.

As you may know, under present legislation the Trust Fund is scheduled to go out of existence in 1972. Work on the Interstate, which is now 70 percent open to traffic, will extend well beyond that date.

This will call for decisions this year on the future of the Trust Fund and on the near and long-term future of the highway program. These decisions are crucial to the whole range of responsibilities which the highway program bears -- responsibilities not only for safe and efficient transportation and economic progress, but also for social and environmental betterment.

You and I and our more than 200 million fellow citizens have a large and important stake in the decisions that will be made. For this reason, you have a responsibility to let your views be known to your public representatives as the question is being considered in the committees of Congress.

My view is known. I believe the Trust Fund should be continued as the best instrument for seeing the present Interstate program to completion and for assuring a smooth transition into essential follow-on programs.