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TESTIMONY BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROADS
OF THE HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE, DECEMBER 5, 1967
10:00 A.M.

(SLIDE NARRATION)

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the development of the Interstate System in the District of Columbia.

The 1944 Federal-aid Highway Act established the 40,000-mile Interstate System. The designation of the System has never been, or will it ever be, until it is finally completed, a System, so firmly fixed that no adjustments will be possible. This is indeed fortunate and permits the State highway departments and Federal Government to review the designated locations at various times and make appropriate revisions necessary to attain the best locations possible and be amenable to the current environmental conditions.

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The first designation of the Interstate System was made on August 2, 1947, and represented 37,700 miles of the initial 40,000-mile System. The remaining 2,300 miles were retained for routes into, through and around the urban areas. The routes included in the original System connected the principal cities of the Nation and extended through the urban areas along the existing traveled ways.

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The original designation of the Interstate System for the District of Columbia made on August 2, 1947, included a through North-South route, I-95, a radial route to the Northwest which is designated I-70S, and a route westward which is designated as I-66.

Subsequent to the initial designation of the Interstate routes in 1947, planning for the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area was underway. This planning provided much valuable data for the determination of the Interstate System for the District of Columbia.

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Two of these planning efforts are worthy of mention here. On April 1, 1950, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (now the National Capital Planning Commission) prepared a comprehensive plan for the national capital region. The principal thoroughfares included in the plan were an inner loop, an intermediate belt and an outer beltway at a location approximating the present I-495 Beltway. The intermediate belt crossed the Potomac River in the vicinity of Nebraska Avenue. The major expressways appearing on this plan are New York Avenue, the Anacostia Freeway, the Palisades Parkway along the east bank of the Potomac River, and the inner loop.

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The second planning effort we cite is a 1952 report by the Regional Highway Planning Committee for Metropolitan Washington. This plan shows a network of major arterials which were based on the 1948 origin and destination survey. Included in this network were an intermediate loop, the Capital Beltway and the George Washington Parkway along the east bank of the Potomac River. This plan did not envision a freeway-type facility for the south leg of the inner loop. In the Northwest quadrant widening projects were proposed on 16th Street and on Connecticut Avenue. It was proposed that Rock Creek Parkway be extended northward as a 4-lane divided roadway from Connecticut Avenue to the D.C. - Maryland line.

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On September 15, 1955, the Secretary of Commerce allocated on a nationwide basis the 2,300 miles reserved for urban area additions. The Interstate System in the Washington metropolitan area as envisioned at that time included the Capital Beltway and the Anacostia Freeway - Kenilworth Avenue segment with a connection to downtown along 11th Street, Southeast. Interstate 70S, as then envisioned, followed along the east bank of the Potomac River. The system proposed at this time was in general agreement with the thoroughfares included in the 1950 National Capital Regional Plan.

These Interstate routes formed the basis for the first Interstate cost estimate prepared during 1957 and furnished the Congress in January 1958.

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The Federal-aid Highway Act of 1956 raised the Interstate System limitation from 40,000 miles to 41,000 miles. There was also substantial mileage available for new routes from savings resulting from adoption of more direct locations of routes previously designated. On October 18, 1957, the Secretary of Commerce announced 2,102 miles of new Interstate routes were to be added. Mileage added in the Washington metropolitan area included a Potomac River crossing at Key Bridge now identified as Interstate Route 266 and a short section in Maryland at the junction of Interstate 495 with Interstate Routes 70S and 270.

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Next in the chronology of significant events leading to the present status of the Interstate System in the District of Columbia was the Mass Transportation Survey approved on November 7, 1958, by the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Capital Regional Planning Council. The basic freeway plan included in this study was the inner loop, crossing the river at Three Sisters the intermediate loop/and the Capital Beltway. The plan also included as radials the parkway along the east bank of the

Potomac River, the North Central Expressway in the vicinity of 5th Street, Northwest, and Georgia Avenue, and a third radial between these two in the general area of Wisconsin Avenue termed the Northwest Freeway.

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On June 30, 1960, the Bureau of Public Roads approved descriptions for Interstate routes for purposes of preparing the 1961 Interstate Cost Estimate. These descriptions reflected substitution of 11th Street, Northeast for the Anacostia Freeway - Kenilworth Avenue and New York Avenue segments.

A specific location for Route 70S between the Capital Beltway and the Inner Loop was not shown, however, the Wisconsin Avenue location was selected for purposes of determining an estimate of the cost. Other locations considered for the Interstate route included the parkway along the east bank of Potomac River and the proposed North Central Freeway.

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In 1962, the National Capital Transportation Agency recommended a freeway and parkway system to complement the rapid transit system then proposed for the Washington metropolitan area. The National Capital Transportation Act of 1960 included a 5-year freeze on new freeway or parkway

construction greater than two lanes in width west of 12th Street, Northwest. In view of this restriction, the National Capital Transportation Agency highway system deleted the sections of both the Inner and Intermediate Loops that were located in the Northwest quadrant of the city. The Three Sisters Bridge was also not included and the East Leg was moved to the east bank of the Anacostia River. The North Central and Northeast Freeways were joined as a single route in the B&O Railroad corridor.

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On April 14, 1964, the Bureau of Public Roads approved descriptions for Interstate routes for purposes of preparing the 1965 Interstate Cost Estimate. This proposed system included the addition on June 20, 1961, of the Southwest Leg (I-695) of the Inner Belt. Similar to the National Capital Transportation Agency proposal a combined routing for I-70S and I-95 in the B&O Railroad corridor from the Inner Loop to Fort Drive was used in computing costs. These are the Interstate routes currently approved for the Washington metropolitan area.