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REMARKS BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA
GOVERNOR'S TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE AT THE HOTEL
WADE HAMPTON, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1967, 12:30 PM.

Every time I visit South Carolina it's a little like coming home again.

Like any visitor, I am always overwhelmed by your hospitality - it would make the coldest man feel at home.

But beyond that, I do have roots of sorts in South Carolina. I was born in Macclenny, Florida - in my day, a metropolis of some 600 people - located just south of the Georgia border and not many miles southeast of the Okefenokee Swamp.

The other notable thing about Macclenny is that it was originally settled, so I was told, by refugees from the laws of Georgia and the Carolinas.

So I don't feel like a total stranger - and I appreciate your hospitality all the more.

I am particularly happy to be here on the occasion of the first general Transportation Conference in the history of South Carolina.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of working with your Governor, Bob McNair, not only on transportation matters of great concern to South Carolina, but on national transportation matters as well.

He really knows transportation.

This conference, which he has sponsored, brings together not only representatives from the various transportation modes but leaders in the political and economic fields in South Carolina.

In doing so, it reflects the same kind of awareness that on the national level led to the establishment of the Federal Department of Transportation; the awareness that, in our cities, in our states and in the nation as a whole, we cannot meet our mounting transportation needs if we continue to deal with each form of transportation in isolation from all others - or as competing with others rather than complementing them.

As we have begun to understand, where one form of transportation ends, another must begin.
If it doesn't, we're in trouble.

We've also begun to understand how profoundly transportation affects and influences - for good or ill - our health, our attitude, our pattern of life, our physical and social environment.

Its impact is as deep and direct upon the air we breathe as it upon the way we live.

The Federal Department of Transportation is the product of this new awareness.

Its purpose is to give us, for the first time, a national framework for developing a coherent and cooperative approach - involving all levels of government and all segments of our society - toward insuring a transportation system that meets the total needs of that society.

The new Department is not, let me assure you, simply another example of expanding Federal bureaucracy, of another attempt on the part of the Federal Government to extend its sway over areas more properly reserved to other levels of government or to private enterprise.

President Johnson intended - the Congress intended - and I intend the new Department to be a working example of the approach the President has termed "creative federalism."

That approach rests upon the conviction - in the President's words - that "to survive and serve the ends of a free society, our Federal system must be strengthened - and not alone at the national level. . . .

We began as a nation of localities.

And however changed in character those localities become, however urbanized we grow and however we build, our destiny as a Nation will be determined there."

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Not too long ago you could divide most American opinion rather neatly into two parts.

There were those who viewed our Federal government as at best a necessary evil which we needed for delivering the mail and defending the country, but which otherwise exhibited an inordinate appetite for expansion which had to be ruthlessly resisted.

And there were many who felt that our states and localities had long since either outlived their usefulness or abdicated their responsibilities as effective political instruments for meeting the critical needs of our citizens.

I know there are some today who hold one of these extreme views. But their number - and their influence - has drastically dwindled.

The partisans of Federal effort have come to understand that Federal programs - no matter how ingeniously fashioned or amply financed - cannot succeed except through the state and local governments, the private institutions and individuals, which alone can make these programs relevant and responsive to local needs and local conditions.

And the partisans of States' rights have come to understand not only the need for greater emphasis on States' responsibilities, but also the need for broad Federal programs to help attack a whole host of problems so acute and widespread that they have long since passed beyond the boundaries of purely state and local concern.

Most of us have come to appreciate the very simple truth that an effective Federal system requires that every level of government be strong and supple, and that all levels of government share jointly the common task of improving the lot of our citizens.

Let me repeat here what I have said many times in recent months:

I believe there is some truth to past charges that the Federal Government has sometimes acted in ways that can only be considered arbitrary by State and local officials.

I do not believe it is possible to sit in Washington and come up with programs custom-tailored to the particular needs of cities and counties and states hundreds and, sometimes, thousands of miles away.

All too often, I believe, it has been the practice of too many Federal officials to ask State and local officials to conform to national standards established without regard for the frequently very different needs of very different areas of the country.

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But I can assure you that - under President Johnson's leadership - we are working, in my Department and throughout the Federal government, to end these practices and amend these attitudes wherever they exist.

But it is not simply a matter of changing Federal attitudes. For the problem has not been simply overweening arrogance at the Federal level - the problem also has been, and to a great degree still remains, the relative inability or unwillingness of state and local governments to meet their responsibilities.

There have been a whole host of reports and studies in recent years on the need to modernize state and local governments - and many of our states and localities are doing a great deal, often in the face of great difficulties, to make themselves more responsive and relevant to the needs of their citizens in a rapidly changing world.

I for one - and I assure you most of my Federal colleagues share my view - am convinced that, purely as a practical matter, we have gone about as far as we can go in enlarging the role of the Federal government in our national affairs.

I do not mean there will not - or should not - be any new Federal programs.

I do mean that Federal programs of any sort - new or old - simply won't work except through states, cities, local institutions and private citizens.

And this is particularly true in transportation.

The reason is very simple: the transportation problems of South Carolina and California and New York, of Columbia and Dallas and Chicago, are as different as are the states and cities themselves.

And the solution to the transportation problems of these diverse states and cities must come essentially from within - and it must come in the form of a total system suited to the unique needs of each state and each city.

This conference is an excellent example of how well you in South Carolina recognize that fact.

Many states have created their own departments of transportation to provide closer coordination among agencies concerned with air, sea and land travel - and I would recommend this possibility for your consideration.

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For without this kind of close coordination, it is virtually impossible to make intelligent choices among transportation alternatives which must be made to produce a balanced system.

I would go one step further:

Transportation decisions, as I have suggested, are local political decisions - they must be made by the citizens of our states and localities and by the officials they have elected to run their governments.

The Department of Transportation can and will show the decision-makers how to build better, faster and less expensive systems.

But it cannot - and should not - decide whether or how these systems should be adopted.

This means, for one thing, that our political leaders - Governors, Mayors, and others - are going to have to take far firmer hold of the decision-making reins on transportation issues within their jurisdictions.

It means that we must cease asking our Governors and Mayors to operate under outmoded and fragmented jurisdictional arrangements, with inadequate financing, and often without the authority to make the most elemental decisions.

It means, in short, that we are going to have to give our citizens - primarily through their elected officials - a far greater voice in the transportation choices that so deeply affect their lives.

In that regard, I think the so-called freeway revolts around the United States have been a healthy thing.

There has been a great deal of re-thinking in state capitols and in Washington about values that cannot be measured by the cost/benefit formula.

Much of the re-thinking has been underway for some time, but the recent disputes over freeway routes, particularly in and around cities, has done nothing to slow it down.

We are now rewriting our procedures for federal approval of highway routes to reflect this new awareness that the best judges of routes and designs are the people who will have to live with them.

We are developing methods for measuring the resource values that so beyond the standard cost/benefit analyses.

We intend to require in the future that state and highway departments get the views of all interested departments in city, state and Federal governments before highway routes are submitted to the Bureau of Public Roads for approval.

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If there are objections to a proposed route, we will want to know what they are, in detail, and we will want a well-documented case from the highway department when it believes a route must be approved despite the objections.

These reports, under the new procedures, will be made available for public inspection.

We have submitted these proposed new procedures to the states for their suggestion and comment.

We are ready to put them into action soon as the returns are in.

In addition, we intend to require two hearings on each proposed highway route.

The first would concern itself with the broad highway corridor. The second would involve the specific highway alignment within that corridor.

The two-hearing procedure will permit objections to a route to be voiced before costly commitments are made and while change is still practical.

One of the primary aims of these various new procedures is to insure, as much as possible, that route selections reflect local desires and are consistent with local goals and objectives.

Where controversies arise, we hope they can be settled at the local level with the fullest and widest public discussion.

But for cases in which it is necessary for Washington to become involved, we are establishing a basis for informal discussion among the Departments of Transportation, the Interior, Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development in order to assure that we have all of the factors and all of the viewpoints we need to make a sound decision.

I intend to take one more step before we give approval to disputed highway routes.

I will ask the governor of the state in which the conflict exists to become personally involved in the case.

I realize that in your state, and in others, the responsibility for approving highway routes and design is out of the governor's hands.

But his jurisdiction over other vital programs affecting, or affected by, highway construction is an essential factor in the resolution of highway controversies.

In our highway program - as in every program, every policy, every standard we develop - we intend, in the Department of Transportation, to work closely with our State and local officials throughout the nation, and with those who operate and those who manage our transportation system.

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Our job is not to tell you what the answers are.

Our job is to find out from you what your problems are
and how we can help you find the answers.

And we will give you all the help we can.

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