

STATEMENT BY ALAN S. BOYD, SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION,
BEFORE THE 1968 DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS AND
PLATFORM, TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 11:10 A.M., PRESIDENTIAL
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Transportation is essential to the well-being of
the United States and of every one of its citizens.

Americans depend on transportation for food and
clothing. They depend on it to find jobs and to hold
them; to run profitable businesses; to get an education
or take a vacation; to read a daily newspaper. They
depend on it for national security, for national
prosperity; and for international trade in goods and ideas.

Without reliable transportation, the people of an
industrial society would live in economic and cultural
shackles.

Our system of transportation is, by any standard, mammoth. It represents an investment of some \$500 billion. It meets the needs, with varying degrees of effectiveness, of 200 million people. It accounts for one of every six dollars in the economy; provides jobs for 9 million people; and unites a continent.

Yet the increasing demands on this system already strain its capacity in some areas and the growth to come - compounded by concentration of that growth - could bring it near collapse. Take the year 1975 as a yardstick of growth - a good year because it is so close you can almost reach out and touch it.

By then, the number of private aircraft will have nearly doubled. Commercial air travel will have tripled. Automobile traffic will be up by 40 percent. Railroads, which now haul 750-billion ton miles a year, will be hauling one-trillion ton miles. Trucks, now carrying 400-million ton miles, will carry 50 percent more. In fact, if the demand for transportation continues to match America's economic growth, we will have to double in less than two decades the capacity of a system that has taken the lifetime of a nation to build.

President Johnson and the 89th Congress read the danger signals of increased delay, congestion and cost two years ago. They called for more intelligent planning, more research and development and more prudent investment of transportation funds. And they created the Department of Transportation and gave it responsibility for leading the effort to make this country's transportation system conform to the needs of the people rather than forcing the people to continue to conform to the system.

This was just one of many actions by this Administration to give Americans safer, more efficient and more convenient transportation. They include the country's first autotomobile and highway safety programs; research on high-speed ground systems; efforts to control air pollution and aircraft noise; the start of an investigation of auto insurance; programs to restore fast and attractive public transportation to the cities; a gas pipeline safety program; and legislation to preserve the nation's outstanding air safety record.

But the job of coordinating and improving service in a network as massive and complex as that of American transportation will require analysis, research and comprehensive planning on a scale never before undertaken in this country. And on that job we have only begun.

The amount of money invested in transportation research, basic or applied, is meager. Even in the Federal Government, most transportation research has been the by-product of work in defense and aerospace. Until the Department was created, no effort, private or public, had been made to draw a long-range transportation plan that would cover air, rail, highway and waterway.

The need for increased research and planning cuts directly across all lines in transportation. It affects safety, speed of travel and shipment, design, congestion, delay, pollution and the impact of transportation systems on people and their environment.

The urgency for such planning is dictated by the long lead-times and life-times of transportation projects. It took ten years to plan the Interstate Highway System and when it is completed it will have been nearly 20 years in the process of construction. An airport requires five to eight years to build. Once finished, however, such systems are with us for years to come.

Because transportation planning and construction have fundamental impacts on society and on the economy for long periods of time, we would urge the highest priority for commitment of resources to this aspect of transportation. This expanded program of research could take many forms. One which we have considered would be the establishment of a national transportation research center which would mobilize people from all levels of government, from the transportation industries, equipment suppliers and universities. The center - operated as a mutual effort - would conduct basic and applied research, development, testing and evaluation and make it available across-the-board. It would make it possible for Government and industry to work toward common goals and would permit research efforts on a broader scale than either could accomplish alone.

We would also urge a national commitment to a program that would provide fast, comfortable, reliable - and above all, attractive - public transportation in every major American city by 1975.

During the past 28 years, the number of people who use public transportation has declined by 700 million; service has deteriorated in nearly every city. We believe it is imperative that this service be restored, for the poor who cannot afford private transportation; for the elderly who cannot use it; for commuters who now have no real alternative in many American cities to driving at peak hours.

The United States can afford to rebuild its public transportation network. In fact, if it is to prevent intolerable levels of congestion in its cities, it can't afford not to. Where possible, mass transportation systems should be privately-owned and operated.

Where private operation is not financially feasible, and service is necessary, we believe service should be supported by private and public partnerships.

It is obvious from various studies that the bus cannot compete with the automobile for commuters when it must compete with the automobile for space on metropolitan streets and highways. More widespread use of reserve lanes and loading turnouts must be encouraged in order for surface transit systems to maintain attractive schedules and we intend to continue our efforts in that direction.

The highway and the automobile are the backbone of American passenger transportation, but we have only begun to make full use of the system. We have begun studies in cooperation with the Congress to determine the next major phase of highway construction once the Interstate System is completed. We hope to expand a program under which we share with cities the cost of installing computer-controlled traffic signal systems, special turn lanes, and making other adjustments in street networks which studies have shown will increase their capacity by as much as 25 percent. We believe there should be a commitment to continuing these and other experiments in safer highway design, electronic guidance systems and other programs which will further increase the efficiency of this country's superb highway network.

Judging from our mail, from letters to the editors and other signals which the American public raises periodically, Americans miss the good old days of the passenger train.

This Administration has begun an experiment to determine whether a new generation of Americans will, indeed, ride a new generation of trains. We also hope to learn whether it will be possible to ease the strain on airports in corridors of dense population by providing high-speed train service.

Two new-generation trains - one powered by jet engines, the other by electricity - are now undergoing final tests before being accepted for service between Washington and New York and Washington and Boston. In tests, these trains have traveled at more than 150 miles an hour. In service, they would reach top speeds of 125 miles an hour and cut the present travel time on their assigned runs by a full hour. We would urge continued support of this program. We would also urge investigation of the possibility of extending high-speed train service to other parts of the nation if the experiments in the northeast corridor prove there is a market for the service.

Traffic accidents cause some 50,000 deaths a year and injure 10,000 people a day. Even more appalling is the fact that traffic accidents are the largest single cause, by far, of death among young people. The number of motor vehicle deaths for people 15 to 24 years of age exceeds the combined total of the next five causes of death for this age group.

Under President Johnson's safety program, we feel we are making progress in dealing with this national tragedy for the first time in our country's history. On the basis of the limited hard evidence so far, we estimate that within ten years the various safety measures already taken or contemplated can reduce traffic deaths and serious injury by 70 percent. An achievement of that magnitude can come only with further intense investigation into such areas as better vehicle design, freeway design, alcoholism and emergency medical services. We believe this program should have the highest priority in future allotments of research funds and urge such a commitment.

The United States leads the world in trade. Its merchant fleet should make it a maritime leader as well. We believe the American fleet should be the largest and best which this nation can operate economically and should be adequate to all of its defense needs. Subsidies for the fleet should be clearly related to national purpose both for construction and operation.

In aviation, we project fantastic levels of growth for the next several years. But growth in aviation has been consistently underrated in the past. And it may be that unconstrained demand will outstrip our present forecasts as well.

We estimate that by 1975, one-million Americans will board a plane somewhere in the country every day. By 1980, our estimates show that more than seventy percent of them will be boarding through airports at 21 major cities. The dimensions of the problem are clear. There will be greater concentration of more airplanes flying at higher speeds. To meet this challenge, we will require more airports, an automated traffic control system and more personnel to man the system.

The planning or installation of computer-based control systems is already underway. At issue now is the financial base for supporting this modernization program and for providing more airports to accommodate increased growth in aviation.

We ask that you make a commitment to a modern system of air traffic control and airports - adequate to anticipated growth - and coupled with financing based on equitable user charges.

We believe that, wherever possible, the price paid for travel and for shipment of goods should be directly related to the actual cost of transportation and that rate-making should be based on this concept.

This would promote competition and gain the advantage offered by each form of transportation.

And this can be achieved by having shippers and travelers, to the maximum extent possible, bear the costs of operating whatever system they choose to use.

We would like to see it become a matter of policy that the government should work toward a more general application of the principle of user charges in all forms of transportation.

We think you should consider a change in traditional methods of financing transportation for the cities.

We believe Federal programs should be made more responsive to the actual needs of the city, particularly in transportation where investments tend to produce installations that will be in place for at least a generation.

We think that cities should be permitted to define and attack the transportation problems that seem to them most urgent and do so with Federal assistance free from rigid program categorization.

Today, mayors are severely restricted in what they can do with Federal transportation aid. Billions of dollars are available for highway construction and a few million dollars are available for mass transit. Yet, freeways and mass transit are only two ways of dealing with urban transportation problems.

A city should be free to decide that its transportation difficulties can best be met by new highways or by mass transit or by more fringe parking, better access to its airport or a computerized traffic control system.

Too often today, a mayor finds himself with Federal assistance available only for projects that, on balance, he does not really need.

Finally, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, we believe this Administration's commitment to conservation and to protection of the American environment should continue to receive the strongest support from the Democratic Party.

We have made genuine progress in this direction in the relatively short time the Department has been in operation through noise abatement legislation; by new concepts in the design and location of urban freeways; and by following a policy which says that transportation values such as speed and comfort are only part of a total set of community values.

Efforts to preserve parks, secure cleaner air and abate noise deserve priority attention. We would hope for a commitment to planning and research devoted to assuring that transportation systems are compatible with the environments through which they move.

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