



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

43-5-69

EXCERPTS OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE, AT UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA MEETING IN FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1969, 10:30 A.M.

Gentlemen, let me say at the outset that it is a distinct pleasure to meet with you this morning. There are only a very few places left in the world -- not to mention in the United States -- where there is still a frontier, where there are still great challenges against that frail thing called "man."

After only some 48 hours in Alaska, I think I can say that a substantial part of the reason for Alaska's success is the extra dose of spirit and enthusiasm that is so evident here.

I came to Alaska to listen and to learn. I want to find out, firsthand, what the problems and the potentials of this great State really are.

One thing I already know. I recognize full well -- as Alaskans have maintained all along -- that transportation is the master key to the future. Your highways, railroads, landing strips and pipelines will determine the rate and direction of growth in this State.

But it is crucial that the necessary transportation facilities be planned and emplaced in time to shape the direction of Alaskan growth and not simply reflect it, as has happened with sometimes disastrous results in other States. You are actually drawing on a blank slate. What you

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decide will determine whether Alaska comes to look some day like the Northeast Corridor of the U.S., or instead maintains its unique character and special attractions.

With an integrated, balanced transportation system this State could not only enjoy great prosperity, but at the same time keep environmental damage to a minimum. You can learn from the mistakes of the other States. From what I have seen here, Alaskans are acutely aware of the immense power of highways, railroads, and airports as tools for regional planning. You are determined to keep this State a fit place to live in. We are equally determined to help you do so.

Right now our Federal Railroad Administration has requested funds for a multi-modal economic and engineering feasibility survey of a surface transportation corridor to serve the North Slope. As I understand the facts from my conversations thus far with many of the leaders of this State, a joint transportation corridor would entail three major benefits. First, it would open up the bulk of the State to year round access and development. Second, it would make more efficient use of funds than separate corridors for a road, railroad, and pipeline. Third, it would minimize damage to the fragile ecology of the Arctic.

This last consideration is perhaps the most important of all. Protecting natural resources is not a matter of appeasing "bird watchers." It is vital for the survival of the human race, which depends upon the balance of nature. Alaska's resources of unspoiled land and wildlife can be a permanent heritage. They can be enjoyed long after the mineral deposits are all played out. So I know you will have the wisdom to protect them.

This State is in the fortunate, once-in-history position of starting almost from scratch in building a transportation system for a modern industrial structure. What better destiny could there be than setting an example of progressive common sense for all of us in this time of full-speed-ahead technology? I want to assure you that the Federal Government is interested in your plans -- and that includes both Wally Hickel and myself among others. We are prepared to listen to your problems and to give you every reasonable assistance you will need in the coming months.

We feel certain you can realize your great potential as a model for planned growth and environmental management.

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