



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT A MEETING OF THE GREATER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 1969, 12:30 P.M.

My friends, the Statehood for Alaska which the late, beloved President Eisenhower endorsed and helped bring about is a matter of great pride and satisfaction for all Americans.

All of us in the "lower forty-eight" take a tremendous amount of pride in Alaska. My visits in Juneau, in Fairbanks, in Prudhoe Bay and in Barrow have been terrific, and you people have a confirmed Alaska booster on your team once I get back to Washington.

I want, also, to bring you greetings from President Nixon. I am making this trip at his request. He wants direct information of Alaska's transportation problems and he asked me to get it for him.

My purpose in coming to Alaska this week is to study and learn -- specifically about your State's transportation requirements and challenges. I have learned much already -- and some of this new information is surprising.

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I have been impressed most of all by the youthful outlook of you Alaskans. But it is more than that. The spirit here is young. The word is "can-do". The future is bright and very near. And everywhere there is hope. Your spirit is as big as the land in which you live. I congratulate you.

There is in Alaska today great excitement. The fabulous oil discoveries on the north slope, the copper deposits at Bornite and the prospect of other mineral discoveries indicate that Alaska will shortly be turning the corner -- that, finally, the great inherent richness of the State will be realized.

I share this optimism. I, too, firmly believe you are on your way. The moment is near. And we are prepared to help.

The immediate interest of my Department in Washington concerns the transportation improvements and additions that are needed to bring about Alaskan development. Our interest is not abstract. The Department of Transportation -- through the Coast Guard -- is now at work assisting in the exciting "MANHATTAN" project -- in realizing the fantastic dream of opening a Northwest Passage.

Two of our Coast Guard Icebreakers -- the WESTWIND and the NORTHWIND will be assisting the MANHATTAN; we have Coast Guard oceanographers on board; and Coast Guard aircraft will be accompanying the vessel.

We are also drawing up plans for a possible study of a transportation corridor leading from the Fairbanks area to the north. This will also include a spur to the west.

This would be a multi-million dollar study, and I can tell you today -- we are just in the process of working out the final funding details. A formal announcement on the transportation corridor study should be along in the very near future.

I want to stress the phrase "transportation corridor." We are thinking not only in terms of extending the Alaskan Railroad or of a highway, we are looking to utilizing the most advanced technology and the best transportation planning to provide a truly integrated and balanced transportation system. The corridor would include not only a track bed and highways but airport facilities at regular intervals and communications and transmission lines. It will also include connections with potential river transportation.

I don't want to give way to too much optimism. We have our doubters and our skeptics. Some argue that the physical obstacles are too great. They cite the hostile weather and the difficult terrain. But I have spent most of my professional life in the construction business and I know these challenges can be met. I know, too, that this is the age of Apollo Eleven. I have also learned since I have been here of another asset which I mentioned earlier. That is you Alaskans yourselves. I've learned they just can't make a problem big enough to stop you.



The challenges in our planning go beyond the sheer physical problems. We must meet the questions of efficiency and economy. What is the best way to do this job? What will be the effect if the MANHATTAN Project is successful? What will be the significance of the new pipelines? What are the advantages of each alternative? What are the penalties? What are the indirect, long term benefits to Alaska and the rest of the Nation? This latter question is of particular interest.

I remind my staff that in all these considerations of Alaskan transportation needs we must look beyond today -- to look at the needs of the whole State. We should make a great mistake if we were to consider our plans solely in terms of newly found copper or oil.

I want to emphasize one thing about these future transportation developments. It is my personal conviction -- and the law requires -- that any potential transportation development shall be brought about with minimum harmful effects on the environment. You Alaskans are proud of the natural beauty and wonders of your State. So are we. We shall work together to preserve them.

This Alaska transportation planning we are doing represents a full, across the board Departmental effort. It involves our Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration. It involves our Assistant Secretary for Policy Development as well as our Assistant Secretary for Urban Systems and Environment. And the people involved know Alaska. Our top railroad man, Reg Whitman, is a former General Manager of the Alaska Railroad and ever since his stay in Anchorage, he's become a real North Country buff. Just mention the word Alaska and he's ready to make a speech. We've also had your neighbor John Manley down in Washington for the past month and he's ready to go tooth and nail for all things Alaskan. Our FAA Administrator, Jack Shaffer, was here in Alaska in June on an inspection tour. Admiral Hammond, Commandant of the Seventeenth Coast Guard District, is also a great Alaska booster. And D'Orm Braman -- the former Mayor of Seattle who is now our Assistant Secretary for Urban Systems and Environment -- is well acquainted with Alaska. And his recommendations will carry great weight not only with me, but at the White House as well.

I think the best summary of our work to date is to say that we have taken Alaska transportation problems down from the top shelf and put them on the front burner. We are not talking. We are moving. And my few days here in your State have already indicated to me that perhaps we have not been moving fast enough.

I remind you, also, that for the first time this planning of Alaskan transportation is being done in one unified Government Department whose sole job, and major interest, is transportation. Formerly, the various Government agencies concerned with your problems were scattered among a number of Departments or were independent agencies. The planning now is being done by people who talk the same language. You will see better results.

As I noted earlier, I came to Alaska to listen and to learn. I have learned more -- and of far more significance -- than I ever expected.

Back in Washington, the challenge everywhere is to meet tremendous demand created by the combination of an expanding population and a tremendously expanding economy. The problems are shortages and insufficiencies.



These challenges are demanding right now -- today. When we look ahead just a few years -- however, the statistics and figures take on astronomical proportions. Let's look at the matter of minerals, as an example. Doctor Bill Pecora, the very able Director of the United States Geological Survey writes: "As we attain progressively higher standards of living we require increasing amounts of mineral raw materials. Between now and the year 2000, U.S. demand for minerals is expected to increase 350 percent; thus acquisition of adequate supplies of minerals will be a challenge to the minerals industry and society in general."

I am sure you understand the impact of that forecast: We shall be using three and one-half times as much minerals as we are today! And here is Alaska with the greatest mineral potential in the Nation!

A rapidly advancing technology must be driven by power. And here again, Alaska is rich in promise.

But all this information perhaps has not been fully understood or appreciated in Washington.

Wally Hickel has spoken many times in the past of what he called the barriers between Alaska and Washington. I can tell you those barriers are coming down. Wally is working on it. So is your fine Congressional delegation.

These men are making it very clear in Washington that there is a need for a new way of thinking about Alaska. The old prejudice was that the Government must be interested in Alaska for the benefit of the people living there. I have no quarrel with this view. But I don't think it goes far enough. Equally important, the development of Alaska is in the best interest of the whole nation. Progress in Alaska will mean progress for every American. This is the biggest lesson of my trip. This is the message I shall bring back to President Nixon and the men of his Administration. This is the word I shall bring to the people of the south forty-eight. Again, I thank you for moving your regular meeting day from Monday to Thursday so I could be with you. I appreciate your hospitality and your interest, and am confident that here on America's forty-ninth frontier you are headed for a future bright with promise.

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