



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY JAMES A. WASHINGTON, GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BEFORE THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, ADOLPHUS HOTEL, DALLAS, TEXAS, AUGUST 11, 1969.

It is indeed a pleasure to be here with my colleagues from all over the country. As many of you know, I have only recently been appointed to my post as general counsel by President Nixon. A job which I might add is not only interesting, but challenging!

During the next few minutes, I would like to talk with you about public transportation and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Many of you serve on local and state government councils, commissions and act in advisory positions; therefore, the following information may be beneficial in solving your own public transportation problems.

We are all faced with a transportation crisis throughout this country, and you realize this just as much as I do everytime we get in the car and drive across town or across the nation.

Fortunately, I can report relief is in sight. For as you know, just last Thursday the President sent a message to Congress requesting 10 billion dollars for public transportation during the next 12 years.

This is the plan: Five and a half billion will be used on the major systems, such as Los Angeles, Atlanta, Seattle, Pittsburgh, as well as others.

Existing major systems will get about 2.5 billion for improvements and expansion.

The medium and small transportation systems will receive about 1.5 billion for retention, expansion and improvement of their systems.

And, research and development, demonstrations and technical studies will get about half a billion dollars.

President Nixon knows it isn't enough money. We all know it isn't enough and will not solve all the public transportation problems that plague this great nation, but, let me point out . . . it is far more than has been spent by the Federal government in the past, and a dramatic step in the right direction. Do you realize more has been spent on the Interstate Highway System these past six weeks, than on public transportation for the past six years?

The day has passed when a representative of the Federal government must wage an uphill battle to interest an audience in attacking the nation's need for more public transportation. As our metropolitan areas grow and as our people become more mobile and affluent, the cities of America are choking on their own transportation and pollution. Cities ranging in size from New York City to Laredo, Texas, must have public transit to move their people efficiently, comfortably, and cheaply enough to attract riders.

Our urban areas desperately need money to build and improve public transit systems, technological expertise to keep these systems abreast of the unfolding wonders of new research, and planning resources to adapt these systems to the total community environment. Our public transportation assistance program endeavors to provide each of these types of aid.

The Department of Transportation - through the Urban Mass Transportation Administration - offers five different types of grants. The program to which we devote the largest sum of money is that for capital improvement grants. If a public body wants to buy, build, or improve mass transportation facilities and equipment, we can pay up to two-thirds of the bill, if the capital improvements cannot be financed from transit system revenues. The purposes of the capital grant program are threefold: (1) to help public bodies provide adequate transportation services for all parts of the population, (2) to encourage the use of new technology, and (3) to encourage the development and implementation of area-wide transit improvement programs in keeping with regional planning objectives. Capital grants are for capital improvements: such as purchase of equipment, repairs and maintenance costs.

Only this morning I had the pleasure of being briefed and taken on a tour of the Dallas Transit facilities. Dallas Transit received a grant from UMTA totaling 8 million dollars. It was used to purchase 310 new buses, a highly sophisticated two-way radio system and for construction and refurbishing of buildings.

For most projects, UMTA considers applications: First, which preserve existing transit systems that would otherwise be abandoned, second, which provide new services to groups who lack access to employment and other opportunities, and, third, which improve, upgrade, and expand existing services. For projects involving the building of new transit systems or major extensions of existing systems, we give priority to projects which meet immediate and severe local needs, show the best cost/benefit ratio, implement the UMTA research and development program, and can be completed with the aid of funds then available to UMTA.

A great part of our research and development program involves grants to public agencies and non-profit organizations for application to our urban areas. Our demonstrations are field studies of the operation of and public response to, new types of transit techniques and services. We intend demonstration projects to serve not just the participating localities, but to provide prototype solutions which other parts of the nation can adopt. A demonstration is a controlled experiment: if it succeeds and the applicant wants UMTA aid in implementing it, the applicant must apply for a capital grant.

In the search for ways to reduce pollution stemming from transportation . . . we are exploring the possibility of new types of engines which provide reduced amounts of pollution. For example, in California we are exploring the possibility of steam engines on buses and here in Dallas with the cooperation of the Dallas Transit, we plan to study the use of a freon bus engine. As I pointed out, if these experiments prove successful, the results will be adapted for use in other cities.

Aside from research which seeks technological solutions to the problems of urban transportation, we have other programs designed to demonstrate social and economic solutions to urban problems. UMTA's service development program works with organizations such as the Urban League, in an effort to use improved transportation service to link the urban under-employed to expanding job opportunities in the outlying sections of our metropolitan areas.

The technical studies program, covers that gray field between research and development and planning on the one hand and capital improvements on the other. Once a locality has adopted a comprehensive transportation plan to determine its basic needs and desires, it, or some related public agency can get UMTA assistance for the planning, engineering, and design of proposed projects and for other functional studies necessary to implement a coordinated urban transportation system.

Still another UMTA program is the government's attempt to attack the shortage of trained public transportation managerial, technical, and professional personnel. We are trying to get young ambitious people interested in transportation as a career. And this isn't easy in some cases, so section 10 of the Act authorizes managerial training grants for public agencies to provide fellowships for selected employees. UMTA can award 100 hundred fellowships each year.

The last program provides for university research and training grants. UMTA aids public and private non-profit institutions of higher learning in two respects: conducting comprehensive research in both the technical and social science

aspects of urban transportation and training personnel to conduct further research or work for related public or private groups. In making these grants, we give preference to those universities which have brought various social science and technical disciplines together to focus on the problems of urban transportation.

In a nutshell, that is your Federal government's urban mass transportation program today. Our work . . . and that of all urban America . . . has just begun, especially, with the excellent prospect of having our new \$10 billion Public Transportation legislation program passed by Congress.

We have got to have this legislation. Only a token effort has been possible up to now with UMTA operating on a 175 million dollar budget. Some cities have had to go it alone, or at least practically alone, with only meager Federal assistance. Take for example, the Bay Area Rapid Transit System in San Francisco, which has faced tremendous financial problems. We just haven't had the resources up to now to support them like we should.

I am sure those of you who support the public transportation assistance program before Congress, will want to encourage your Congressman and Senators to endorse this urgently needed program. We need your help to assure passage.

President Nixon and Secretary John A. Volpe are aware of the public transportation crisis. They have fought hard for a Federal program that gives more impetus to the public transportation requirements.

Although the Department of Transportation is still in its infancy (being only 2-1/2 years old), I think you will agree, this Administration is moving quickly and accomplishing a great deal in the transportation area . . . only last month the airways and airport legislation was introduced.

In closing, let me express my appreciation for having the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Administrator Villarreal deeply regrets his inability to be here. His presence was required on Capitol Hill today regarding the new public transportation assistance program.

Thank you.

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