



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

STATEMENT BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE, DECEMBER 7, 1972

I just want to say how very grateful I am to have had the privilege of serving in public life -- as Governor of Massachusetts, and in the Administrations of President Eisenhower and President Nixon. I am looking forward now, with real enthusiasm, to continuing that public service as the representative of our Nation in Italy.

I have tried in the past four years, with direction and encouragement from President Nixon, to focus all of our Nation's great and diverse transportation interests on the central task of building a better, more effective mobility for America.

We have made a strong beginning. Public transportation is beginning to blossom again in cities and communities across the country. Our highways are a bit safer; our automobiles are safer. The passenger trains are running, more travelers are beginning to use them, and regular patrons are finding them cleaner and more efficiently run. Automation of the airways has been accelerated, and flight delays have been reduced.

We have seen the enactment of meaningful, long-term legislation by a Congress sympathetic and responsive to transportation needs. We have made the first technical and regulatory assaults on transportation-caused air and noise pollution.

And we have tried on every hand to put our country's critical urban transportation requirements into word and into action.

But whatever we have achieved to make the wheels of transportation progress turn faster and more effectively for more people, I take greater satisfaction in what we have been able to do to make transportation contribute to a better environment, to help the minorities among us gain full and equal opportunity to the realization of the American dream, and to lessen the risks of death and injury in every transportation mode.



As I said, it is a good beginning. Yet, some of our goals remain unaccomplished.

For example, we have not yet been able to utilize the full flexibility of the highway trust fund to enable our cities to meet their urban transportation needs, afford the highway user all the value to which he is entitled, and provide real solutions to the total transportation problems.

This, I am confident, will come together with other accomplishments. I see great promise in the leadership of President Nixon. I have confidence in the people in the transportation industries, great admiration and appreciation for the key men and women that I brought into the Department. I am grateful as well for the efforts of all those throughout the Department who have worked hard and well for our objectives. I have great faith in our country and in the capacity of Americans to work out a destiny worthy of our greatest traditions.

I want to express my appreciation to all representatives of the news media for the treatment I have received while a member of the President's Cabinet. I think I have been treated fairly, and no one has a right to ask more than that.

So, I leave you with a feeling of kindness and respect for your professionalism. And I hope that is reciprocated.

I go to my new post in Italy with pride in my Italian ancestry, but with a greater pride to be an American, representing our magnificent country as emissary of a President who has renewed our Nation's mission of friendship with all the peoples of the world. I go, also, with the fervent hope that America's total transportation system is better for my having been here.

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December 7, 1972

Secretary John A. Volpe leaves the U.S. Department of Transportation after four busy and productive years of what he has called "foundation work" in implementing President Nixon's initiatives for the renewal, redirection and revitalization of transportation in America.

In his first public statements, early in 1969, Secretary Volpe pledged strong Federal efforts to "confront and conquer the crisis of urban transportation," to promote transportation progress designed to "serve the fullest purposes of life in the United States," and to develop a "national, integrated transportation system."

Events of the past four years testify to the fruits of those commitments.

In public transportation, Secretary Volpe, with the active support of the President, has taken the lead in:

- Enacting and implementing the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1970, making the resurgence of public transportation a billion dollar-a-year Federal program;
- Encouraging the use of a portion of highway tax resources to fund urban transportation projects, as a means of relieving urban congestion and giving those who drive "more value for their money;"
- Saving or stabilizing public transit systems in some 60 U.S. cities;
- Fostering research, development and demonstration programs in such diverse and innovative directions as exclusive bus lanes, "dial-a-ride" curbside public transit service, "people movers," and tracked air cushion vehicle technologies.



In civil aviation, the Department of Transportation, under Secretary Volpe, has:

- Expanded airport and airway facilities, according to a ten-year development plan, and with user funds provided through the Airport Airways Development Act of 1970;
- Accelerated automation of the airways, reduced airline flight delays, strengthened the air traffic controller force, and quadrupled the resources available for airport construction and improvements.
- Taken successive steps to halt air piracy, by all possible technical, procedural and legislative means.

In rail transportation, Secretary Volpe has spearheaded action to:

- Convert the deteriorating and rapidly vanishing passenger train into a viable national asset by supporting the Rail Passenger Service Assistance Act of 1970 which established AMTRAK;
- Gain financial and regulatory relief for the surface transportation industry, through proposed legislation designed to enhance the competitiveness of the carriers, reduce their overhead, and permit transfusions of urgently needed capital in the form of guaranteed Federal loans.

In the areas of transportation safety, Secretary Volpe has:

- Achieved a reduction in the highway fatality rate and a drop in total fatalities, through intensive programs of driver, highway and vehicle safety improvements;
- Advocated legislation making the use of seat belts mandatory;
- Seen the development and testing of prototype experimental safety vehicles, designed to protect occupants in highway accidents;
- Extended the use of highway trust funds to include highway safety;
- Attained enactment of the Rail Safety Act, the Ports and Waterway Safety Act, and the Hazardous Materials Control Act.



In the protection of the environment, Secretary Volpe has:

- Enforced the billboard removal program, gaining compliance in all states;
- Including highway beautification as an approved expenditure of highway funds;
- Halted highway and airport projects which would threaten historic landmarks, disrupt neighborhoods, or tarnish scenery.
- Created the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Environment and Urban Systems.

In research and development, Secretary Volpe's budgets have quadrupled the Federal funds available for the research and application of technologies to public transportation needs.

Highlights during John Volpe's years as Secretary of Transportation include TRANSPO 72, a dynamic showcase of America's transportation vitality; strong support at the Federal level for enactment by the states of no-fault insurance; establishment of the Alcohol Safety Action Program with a vigorous crusade to get drunk drivers off the highways; development and application of a cargo security program to cut down theft and pilferage of goods in transit; and completion of the Nation's first definitive transportation "needs" report.

In reflecting on his Administration at the Department, Secretary Volpe attributed many of the accomplishments of the four years to the complete support of President Nixon, the bi-partisan support of Congress in legislative proposals, and to the effectiveness of his staff.

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