



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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NEWS

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REMARKS BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT THE BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM DEDICATION, LAKE MERRITT STATION, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1972.

Let me borrow a phrase from a former California football coach who now works in Washington, D. C. -- George Allen of the Washington Redskins. George has gotten a lot of mileage out of the phrase "the future is now." And that's exactly the way I feel about the BART system.

This is my third visit to the facilities of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District. Today, as on each of the preceding occasions, I am extremely impressed. The accomplishments of modern transportation technology know no bounds -- and the BART System stands as proof of that.

This morning I have had the pleasure of exploring a large part of the System -- from the yard complex at Hayward to the beautiful Fremont Station to the control center here at Lake Merritt.

We traveled today on a BART train and I can't remember when I've enjoyed a ride more. Not only are those cars comfortable, but you can actually hear yourself, and the people around you, talk. It's a far cry from the discomfort and noise the public finds too often in today's mass transit systems.

The things I've seen today more than justify the faith I have always had in BART and its ability to meet the transportation challenge in the Bay Area.

It would be easy to use my time here today praising the job accomplished by BART. The flattering adjectives spring easily to mind and they are numerous.

But I have a better purpose in being here.

Slightly more than a third of the BART System is in operation. And my good friend Bill Stokes tells me that this initial section is carrying about 20,000 passengers a day. By 1975, the total system -- 75 miles long, must be capable of carrying ten times that number -- 200,000 passengers per day -- if BART is to meet the transportation needs of the Bay Area.

The 250 cars now on order will not be sufficient to carry those 200,000 passengers without considerable crowding and delay. The System's growth would be inhibited -- it wouldn't reach the potential for which it was designed.

Several days ago in Washington, I took measures to assist BART in reaching its full potential. Today I am happy to announce that under my Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration Capital Grant Program, we have made available to BART more than \$27 million to purchase an additional 100 rapid transit cars. This grant is in addition to the 38 million dollar capital improvements grant announced here by President Nixon during his recent visit. It is the seventh UMTA capital grant we have made to BART. It brings the Federal Government's financial investment in BART to \$207 million in direct capital grants which covers about 15 percent of BART's 1-1/4 billion dollar system costs.

Federal assistance to BART is part of President Nixon's program to provide better urban transportation for all citizens. When the President signed the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1970, he noted it was the legislation that would turn the corner for transportation in large cities.

With the financial tools provided by that Act, we now are pumping a billion dollars a year into nearly every mass transit system in America to help provide the mobility which today's commuters demand -- and to which they are entitled.

Our UMTA Administrator Carlos Villarreal, who does such an outstanding job of keeping that cash flowing to urban transportation systems, is here on the platform with me. Carlos reminded me just a little while ago of the other financial assistance we've provided in the Bay Area. More than \$42 million in grants have been made to fund transit improvements in San Francisco and Berkeley and demonstration projects at the Diablo test track.

That brings our investment in this area to nearly a quarter of a billion dollars. And that total reflects a constant aim by the President over the past few years to stimulate the economy while at the same time providing much needed public services through selective, carefully-designed capital grant programs.

Last year approximately 4,500 workers were employed on various BART construction jobs alone, with weekly payrolls of close to a million dollars. This has made BART one of the largest contributors to the economy in the Bay Area.

BART also will certainly have long-range favorable impact on the urban vitality of this area by providing convenient, comfortable access to jobs, schools, shopping, and social and recreation facilities.

This is the first major new rail transit system in this country in nearly 65 years. And while I am justifiably proud of the role the Department of Transportation has played and will continue to play in BART's success, I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the citizens of the Bay Area who backed transportation progress with their votes and their dollars.

Those people who brought the BART System into being were visionaries and they backed their convictions to the hilt. It is appropriate that they be recognized this week -- a week when our Nation honors another visionary, a man whose national heritage I am proud to share. Christopher Columbus was not content with the limited horizon of the European continent and so he sought an expanded horizon and the shores of a new world.

The citizens of the Bay Area were not content to be hemmed in by congested freeways, streets and bridges. They sought improved mobility and safer, cleaner, faster public transportation. They had the determination and willingness to build this system from the bottom of the bay to the aerial track structure.

The work is by no means finished. But the foundation has been laid for a viable system that can meet the transportation challenge. The resources you need will be there too. This Administration has given its promise to foster the growth of modern, convenient, economical, safe transportation systems. We are keeping that promise. We will continue to do so.

One of the great rewards of being Secretary of Transportation is to see a project like BART come to life. Thank you, you've all done a magnificent job.

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