



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
JOHN A. VOLPE AT THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON OF THE MONTGOMERY-
GREENE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM,
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1969, DAYTON, OHIO

The Montgomery-Greene County Transportation and Develop-
ment Planning Program is one of the pace-setting programs of
its type in the Nation. The work that has been done here is
of high caliber, and could well be a prototype for similar
planning across the country.

But there is one thing about planning -- and the boys
back in my shop in Washington know how I feel about this. You
reach a point, in a good planning program, when the time comes
for action. A plan is only as good as the commitment that
follows, and I hope that in some way our visit here today can
light the spark of action that is your next logical step.

You are located here at the crossroads of America's
heartland, in a State that has a proud history as a leader in
transportation growth and development.

Yet if transportation was necessary to progress and growth
in the past, it will be even more necessary in the years ahead.

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Even today, our transportation network is in trouble. It suffers from imbalance, shortages and obsolescence. And this Administration intends to do something about it.

Let's take a look first at public transportation. I know that is of interest to you people, because just one month ago -- on November fifth -- our Urban Mass Transportation Administration approved a 23,500 dollar technical study grant to the T-C-C to:

- Examine the need for public transportation in the Dayton area;
- Assess the adequacy of existing service;
- And to recommend a transit improvement program for the area.

We are confident that the results of the study will help you in your overall action program.

Public transportation problems are not peculiar to Dayton alone, I can assure you. Some 235 bus and transit companies across the Nation have gone out of business in recent years. In too many cities, ghetto residents are jobless because they had no way of getting to jobs in the rapidly-growing suburbs.

In addition, we feel that job training centers for drop-outs, health facilities and clinics for mothers and babies, and even recreational facilities for disadvantaged youngsters really won't be of much use unless there is some way to get to them that is inexpensive and efficient.

We take the position that public transportation -- like public safety and public welfare -- is a community responsibility.

Yet we also recognize that the problem of public transportation is a multi-billion dollar problem that must be solved on a long-range basis. We knew that the cities and the States would never be able to cope with the crisis by themselves -- or even with Federal help -- unless the plan adopted was of long duration.

As a result the President submitted to the Congress the Public Transportation Act of 1969, calling for a 10 billion dollar, 12 year effort to save public transportation.

The Bill calls for the immediate obligation of 3.1 billion dollars for the first five years of the program, a compromise that we worked out only within recent weeks with the Senate Subcommittee on Housing and Urban Affairs. As the Bill stands now it will benefit:

- The large cities, helping them avoid total strangulation;
- Smaller and medium-sized cities which must rely on expanded and more sophisticated bus systems in the growth years ahead;
- The suburbs, which will have improved access to the urban centers;
- The poor, who will be able to get to jobs, social services and better housing;
- The affluent, who will have transportation alternatives;
- The automobile driver, who will have less congestion on the highways;
- The transit industry and the automobile industry, both of whom will benefit in the long run from a more sensible transportation system;
- And the world we live in itself, as we finally turn the corner in concern for our environment, a factor that is receiving high priority at the Department of Transportation.

Now let's turn to another critical area in American transportation -- air travel.

Transportation by air is growing by leaps and bounds. In the past four years, air passenger miles have doubled. They are expected to triple in the next decade.

We are critically short of controlled air space, and woefully short of airfield space. As I told several Congressional Committee sessions, "We have one heck of a lot of catching up to do." To meet this problem, we have proposed a 10-year program, financed largely by user charges, to bring our airfields and airways up to standards.

The philosophy behind the financing is that those who derive the bulk of the benefits should carry the bulk of the burden.

We propose to spend 2.5 billion dollars over the next 10 years for improvements to our air traffic control system -- radar, computers, personnel and instrument landing systems -- that are essential to safety in the air.

At the same time, we will put up a similar 2.5 billion dollars in Federal funds to be matched by local appropriations for the expansion of about 2,700 existing airfields and the construction of 900 new ones.

This Bill has already passed the House by the respectable margin of 337 to 6, and we are extremely hopeful to get an identical -- or near identical -- Bill through the Senate and onto the President's desk in the near future.

These are our two major pieces of legislation. We feel they are essential to transportation progress if this Nation is to continue to grow and prosper.

Other areas of concern, which I'll mention just briefly, are rail safety, boating safety, international trade facilitation, railroad passenger service and a study of regulatory practices as they affect the American transportation industry.

But this is just the beginning for the greatest challenge is yet to come.

When I accepted my present assignment, President Nixon asked me to prepare a long-range plan for the development of the Nation's transportation system.

The dimensions of this task are staggering. In order to meet the demands of a growing population and an even faster growing economy, the United States must double its transportation capacity in the next 20 years.

We must, in the next two decades, add as much transportation capacity as we built since the founding fathers first carved out the Boston Post Road along the New England coastline. This task is going to require imagination, daring and experimentation. Our research people are at work already. We are looking into new uses for the seemingly commonplace city bus. We are testing the use of laser beams for hard-rock tunneling. We are working on the use of communications satellites for aircraft navigation. We are investigating tube transit vehicles that travel in tunnels and derive their momentum from a combination of gravity and pneumatic pressure.

These are not matters of science fiction. They are travel modes of the future -- the very near future. I look to the

introduction, soon, of the tracked air cushion vehicle. I foresee underground systems with vehicles traveling at 250 miles an hour -- not just between cities but across the continent.

Yes, the ground traveler of the future will move at speeds and with comfort that were formerly thought possible only in the air. There will be guided track systems for our automobiles and rapid transit systems will be operated entirely by automated control.

We have the technology to do all this, but there are barriers and social and institutional obstacles. Society resents change, you know. Your own great Charles Kettering -- one of your favorite sons -- said it best. He wrote: "The world hates change, yet change is the only thing that has brought progress."

The barrier then is this simple human resistance to change.

And that is part of the reason I am so delighted to meet with you here today. You members and friends of T-C-C -- the transportation and development program for these two progressive counties -- have by the very nature of your organization demonstrated your willingness to try that which is new.

Your planning for a new Transportation Center -- your interest in multiple uses of rights of way -- your demand for a transportation mix to serve your airport -- all these are indicative of your interest in the future and your willingness to try the new.

I congratulate you on your imaginative approach with your programs, and wish you luck. I want to thank you sincerely for your efforts in behalf of our legislation. I appreciate your help. I admire your spirit and your foresight, and only wish there were a hundred more organizations such as yours.

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