



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

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

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE  
BEFORE THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF SURETY BOND PRODUCERS, DORADO BEACH HOTEL,  
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 1970  
9:30 A.M.

The transportation of people and goods in these United States accounts for more than 20% of our Gross National Product every year. In terms of cold hard cash, that comes to \$170 billion each year just to keep this country moving. And the way things are going, by the end of the Seventies, we will be spending a total of \$320 billion every year, just to move boxes and bodies in normal, everyday commerce.

Yes, we are committing a tremendous portion of our national resources to get people where they want to be, to get raw materials where they have to be, and to get finished products where they ought to be.

We are doing this with transportation facilities that are the best in the world; the best highways, the best airports, the best railroad network, the best pipeline system, and the best inland and coastal waterways in the world.

Yet we have problems.

We hear more and more, everyday, about congested highways. We hear about boxcar shortages and long-delayed deliveries. We hear about air freight making the Atlantic a so-called "six-hour ocean", yet we know

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that the figure is more like six days -- because by the time the paperwork is complete, those goods have been sitting on loading docks and in warehouses for three days on each end of the flight.

We hear about city buses and subways being crowded and dirty. We are faced with the fact that in recent years some 235 buses and transit companies have gone out of business.

We hear about pollution from automobiles and from aircraft. We hear complaints about noise from jet planes. We have seen our transportation network come altogether too close to the saturation point on altogether too many occasions.

And if you think things are a little sticky right now, just wait until your children are running the nation in another 20 or 30 years.

By then, America's population will be closer to 300-million than the 200-million we have now.

By then, close to 85% of our population will live in urban areas.

By then, our highways will be clogged with more than 150 million automobiles and trucks travelling bumper-to-bumper.

Maybe some of you flew to Puerto Rico on the new 747 "jumbo jet". Well, planes like that will be the rule, not the exception, in the near future; and we are faced with the problem of providing ground transportation when eight or ten of those planes show up all at once!

We have a net increase of more than 10,000 vehicles on our highways every day. Domestic airlines will triple passenger miles in ten years. Truck tonnage will rise 50% by 1980. The railroads with the aid of automation are accounting for 15 million additional ton-miles every day.

In fact, the demand for transportation services of all kinds is far outstripping population growth and most other forms of economic activity in this country. The result is obvious when you project the figures on the charts -- we have to double our transport capacity within 20 years. Let me put that another way. We must double what has been put in place since the founding of this Republic. Not necessarily twice as many highways, twice as many airports, or twice as many trucks, cars, buses, or planes, but nonetheless, one heck of a lot of construction!

Challenges such as this prompted President Nixon earlier this year to put into action his new approaches of reform, restoration and renewal.

He went to work to reform -- indeed reverse -- the momentum of Federal spending. He reformed the budget to take the heat out of inflation and straighten our priorities. We are now, consequently -- for the

first time in twenty years -- spending more for helping human beings than for national defense. He has reversed the course of the war in Vietnam and now we are bringing our boys back where they belong. Here at home, he has reformed our manpower programs so that job training is now available for millions of Americans. As part of his economy drive, he cut 57 programs that were outmoded -- a waste of the taxpayers' money. And his appeal to restore and renew our environment which he announced in his State of the Union message is one of the most significant programs of our Administration. As the President said -- as far as our environment is concerned, it is now or never. My friends, we have in President Nixon a man who recognizes the difference between activity and action -- between motion and progress. He wants to move ahead. He is moving ahead, and I am sure the Nation will continue to give him full backing and support.

I know the kind of support he has given me and my Department over the past 15 months. He understands, with us, the challenges of congestion, delay, pollution and mobility.

The President and I recognized very early that we didn't have time to wait for this crush. So we went to work. We submitted legislation to Congress to help solve the major immediate problems in aviation, and public transportation.

Our first piece of legislation -- the Airport/Airways Act of 1970, will provide \$15 billion over the next 10 years for manpower and equipment to up-grade our air navigation and traffic control system. That bill sailed through the House of Representatives by a vote of 337 to 6. It whizzed through the Senate by a vote of 77-0. I expect the bill to be on the President's desk in a week to ten days.

Our Public Transportation Bill is designed to provide our Nation's cities -- large and small -- with funds to help revitalize and up-grade public transportation systems. In just about every city and town in the Nation, public transit is in difficulty. The facts speak for themselves:

In 1950, there were 1400 transit companies. In 1967, only 1100 were left. 300 had gone broke.

In 1950, transit companies operated 87,000 vehicles. In 1967, that number decreased to about 58,000.

In the same period the number of passengers dropped 50% and operating income fell from a plus \$66 million to a minus of \$67 million.

These are some of the facts I presented to the Congress and these are some of the arguments that won us victory in the Senate.

The bill passed the Senate by an overwhelming vote of 84 to 4. And we are hopeful it will be successful on the House side, too.

The fact is we cannot provide the mobility this country needs in and around urban centers by relying so heavily upon the private automobile. If we were to double the capacity of every bridge, tunnel and freeway in the New York metropolitan region, for example, and if we knocked down enough buildings to provide as much road and parking space as they have in Los Angeles, still only 22% of all commuters could come and go by private automobile.

Even the attempt to achieve that 22% would destroy New York City as the center of American commercial and cultural life. Similar ratios hold true in all our largest cities, and don't forget that today's big urban concentrations will be much denser in another ten years.

No, the old methods won't do. We need new forms of transportation and better organization of existing transit lines within our commercial districts. We need vastly upgraded rail and bus commutation. We need rapid access to our airports in this age of mass air travel.

We must crack down on environmental noise. We must design and place our highways and airports so as to conserve land, preserve parks and ensure healthy, balanced development of surrounding areas, with full consideration for the environment. Both freight and passenger transportation should be integrated into one space-time network for maximum efficiency, convenience, comfort and safety.

To achieve these goals, we must stop viewing the various modes as independent and begin to see how they interlock. That, in fact, is what we in the Department of Transportation are doing as we prepare the master plan for national transportation that President Nixon asked me to develop when he first came into office a year ago.

Such a plan must rest in part upon the application of advanced technology to transportation problems. New concepts are rapidly evolving. A lot of companies have astutely recognized the potential of new high-speed ground transport systems.

We must move forward into the new and untried.

Gentlemen, this world and this Nation have too much technology, too much ability, and too much intelligence to be bound to the methods, the thoughts, and the solutions of 30, 40, or 50 years ago.

That is why -- as one example -- we appealed to the President, and received his approval, to take over NASA's Electronic Research Center in Massachusetts. This 750-man research facility is geared to space-age problems. It was being phased out by NASA, so we "phased it right back in" in order to apply to transportation the same kind of thinking the space program has benefited from. We take over the facility on

July first. It is being re-named the Department of Transportation Systems Center.

Ninety percent of all the scientists who ever lived are living now. The amount of technical information at our disposal doubles every ten years.

We have the know-how, the technology, the materials, the energy and the ability.

But in transportation, technology, materials, energy and ability are not the final answers.

No -- we must add to these a great understanding of our world; an understanding we have not long displayed.

We must utilize that which is new, but we must have a new respect for that which is finite and in limited supply. And it is equally important to reorganize conventional transportation methods to make better use of their potential with a minimum of capital output.

But we need one more priceless ingredient. We need it not only in transportation -- but in almost every facet of American life today.

And that ingredient is a spirit of building -- a spirit of working together -- a constructive spirit of improving our country, not destroying it.

I was a builder most of my professional career, as you well know. I know it is far harder to build something than to wreck it. Yet I know that our decision -- as Americans -- must be to build, not destroy. You gentlemen here today work hand in glove with the builders of America. You know their spirit of going forward.

Unfortunately, we have in our Nation these days a small vocal minority which has gained prominence through destruction -- through tearing down. But destruction solves no problems -- destruction cures no ills. I pray that these people will see the light, I pray that they will join with us and that we can move forward. The work of building our Nation is only beginning. We are not perfect. We have problems. So I say to those who are standing outside: "Join with us and build". Only in this way can we have a better America.