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OPENING STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE
AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1970, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The reason for today's news conference is to announce the Department of Transportation's new policy involving persons to be displaced by Federal and Federally-assisted construction. The policy, basically, is that projects of the Department of Transportation, will not be approved if they involve the displacement of people, black or white, unless and until adequate replacement housing has already been built or provided for.

Such housing must conform with the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Each year, Department of Transportation projects displace 70,000 persons, some 50,000 by Federal highway construction alone.

To accomplish the new displacement housing policy, I have set forth three principal points in my directive to Department officials:

1. There must be specific written assurance that adequate replacement housing will be available (built, if necessary) before the initial approval of any project.
2. Construction will be authorized only upon verification that replacement housing is in place and has been made available to all affected persons.
3. All replacement housing must be fair housing -- open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

This policy is one that has received high priority with us for several months now. Originally it was conceived solely in connection with highway construction projects. We recognized quickly, however, that such a policy should be applied across our entire field of responsibility -- involving aviation, mass transit, railroads and Coast Guard activities also.

Construction of transportation projects can have long-lasting environmental, and other impacts on our way of life. We are determined that the great demand for construction capacity that faces this nation will be met, but that it will be met with full consideration given to the extremely important factors of environment and housing.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

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Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe today directed all units of the Department of Transportation to provide in advance for fair replacement housing for families displaced by federal and federally-assisted construction.

"Projects of the Department of Transportation will not be approved if they involve the dislocation of people -- black or white -- unless and until adequate replacement has already been provided for and built," Secretary Volpe said.

"It is my policy and the policy of the Administration that we shall do everything we can, in each individual case, to guarantee that the building of highways, airports, transit systems and so forth will cause the least disruption of human and natural resources. It is my sincere hope that this action by the Department will help make fair housing a reality in this nation and also contribute to our efforts in reducing the economic hardship on private citizens as a result of construction activity," the Secretary said.

"Each year, Department projects, including those federally-assisted, displace 70,000 persons -- some 50,000 by federal highway construction alone.

"I consider the new policy so important that I am approving procedures at this time so that you can make the necessary changes and place them into effect without delay."

Secretary Volpe outlined in a memorandum to the Administrators of the operating administrations the three principal points called for in the new Replacement Housing Policy of the Department of Transportation.

1. Specific written assurance that adequate replacement housing will be available (built, if necessary) before the initial approval or endorsement of any project.
2. Construction will be authorized only upon verification that replacement housing is in place and has been made available to all affected persons.

3. All replacement housing must be fair housing -- open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This is in addition to the requirement that replacement housing must be offered all affected persons regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The new policy directive went to the Administrators of the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Urban Mass Transportation Administration and the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

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