



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS DELIVERED BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CLAUDE S. BRINEGAR BEFORE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF STATE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA, JUNE 1, 1973

The lessons to be learned in Williamsburg are perhaps not all from the pages of history. The transportation system in use here -- with fringe parking and convenient shuttle bus service to the principal points of visitor interest -- may be a page out of the future. Certainly the charm and culture of historic Williamsburg could not be preserved if the streets of the original city were not kept free of automobile traffic. It is today a peaceful and pleasant place to visit, and I doubt that it would be so if transportation services had not been taken into account in the overall planning for the restoration of this city.

I understand that since the first of these meetings between the states and our Department -- in September of last year -- three more state governments have established departments of transportation. I think that's great. Our purpose at the Federal level is to bring all the modes, and all our planning for their development, under the umbrella of a coordinated national transportation policy. We are hopeful that the states will do the same. We have encouraged, and we continue to encourage, the establishment of state transportation departments as the most effective way to coordinate transportation plans and programs with other statewide actions and activities, and to implement Federal-aid programs.

John Hirten briefed me on your February conference in Miami. While I know some of you by sight and many of you by reputation, this is really the first opportunity I have had to meet with my state counterparts in person. I look forward to getting better acquainted. We have our share of mutual problems, to be sure, but we are not without mutual resources, ability and determination needed to overcome those problems.

May I say I am particularly pleased to see Dr. Matsuda here today. Dr. Matsuda is the first non-Federal official to receive our Award for Exceptional Service, presented to him during National Transportation Week. Dr. Matsuda is not the only state leader to recognize the importance of an integrated transportation system, but he was one of the first. Under his direction, Hawaii became the first state to have a truly statewide transportation plan, and the Oahu Transportation Planning Program has become a model of total community development.

I hope that others here today will be future winners of our Exceptional Service Award -- not because the Award itself is important but because the achievements it denotes are.

As you know, it has been President Nixon's policy that, wherever possible, decision-making authority should be returned to state and community levels, along with appropriate funding, if needed, to help put those decisions to work. Ours is a joint responsibility -- to deal decisively with the transportation issues that confront us. If we do not control the issues, they will surely control us.

I believe that in supplying the Nation's transportation needs we must give deeper consideration to the allocation of resources, which in our great country are ample but not inexhaustible, and which -- in the interests of efficiency -- should be used in the ways that will best serve the particular state, city or community.

In 1972 America's total transportation "bill" was some \$200 billion. Did we get our money's worth? Did the transportation services available supply all our transportation needs? Efficiently, equitably, and intelligently?

While clear-cut answers would be hard to come by, and subject -- in any event -- to some differences of opinion, I submit that by and large we did not get full value for our transportation dollar in 1972.

We enjoyed a surplus of capacity in some modes and in certain areas, while we continued to have freight car shortages and urban traffic jams, as well as costly side-effect problems in safety and noise. The number of two and three car families increased, but still some 25 percent of our population -- citizens who don't or can't drive -- couldn't always find or pay for needed transportation.

About 80 percent of our \$200 billion transportation expenditure last year involved highways, directly or indirectly. And indeed, our highway work is not yet done. But our pre-occupation with highways over the last 25 years or so, has produced 3.4 million miles of roadway and 115 million motor vehicles. This long-term concentration on highways and automobiles has also produced some very undesirable by-products -- smog, urban congestion, noise and 57,000 deaths a year -- excesses that can no longer be justified in the interests of personal mobility.

Our excessive dependence on the car has also brought us close to a gasoline shortage, since the industry has not been able to keep pace with demand. Last year our cars and trucks consumed 95 billion gallons of gasoline and the rate of consumption is increasing six to seven percent a year.

That rate could go higher. Emission-control devices already have reduced fuel economy, and one expert has calculated that in order to meet the 1976 clean air standards, on the basis of existing technology, the 1976 model of one of the more popular luxury cars in America will be able to deliver only about four miles to the gallon. Clearly, we must sustain our mobility, but on far more efficient terms.

We have the means to cope with all of these transportation problems; to generate all the capacity we need; even to improve our living and traveling standards while we improve the complexion of our cities. We could do it if we sort out our objectives and get on with it.

That is one of the reasons why in our 1973 Highway Bill we recommended that 20 percent of the Highway Trust Fund be made available to our major cities for the development of urban transportation systems which may or may not include conventional highways but could include busways or even rapid rail systems. We continue to believe that cities must have a flexibility not now available to cope with transportation dilemmas highways alone cannot solve.

The outcome of our bill is in doubt. The principle has been accepted, though not the funding. But whatever emerges from the Conference Committee, I believe there is a growing awareness (1) that overdependence on the motor vehicle may now be working against, rather than for, an efficient, comprehensive national transportation system; and (2) that a failure to willingly pursue alternatives to the car today may lead to involuntary restraints later, as cities become totally saturated in traffic or as the fuel shortage takes on crisis dimensions.

I find we are near a showdown situation between our transportation indulgences on the one hand, and our environmental preservation and energy conservation goals on the other. Looking ahead, we may expect some slight modifications in the EPA specifications, but no real weakening of that agency's position. So we must accept the fact that improvements to the cleanliness of the internal combustion engine or an alternative is essential to the future of the motor vehicle in America; and, further, that some relative change in the role of the motor vehicle in the urban environment is equally essential if our cities are to survive and to thrive.

You cannot, alone, decree what is best for the various urban and rural communities of your state. But a responsive and responsible transportation agency at the state level is in the best position to coordinate state and local transportation objectives into an overall program. Yours is a creative, constructive, pace-setting role, in enriching and extending the process by which transportation needs at all levels can be met. Think "intermodal" should be your watchword.

My office is open to you, anytime we can be of assistance in helping you fulfill that vital responsibility. We are kindred souls in the evolution of transportation policy. I hope we will continue to meet together, think together, and work together to put into practice the reforms that will make our national transportation system the composite of 50 outstanding state systems.

I appreciate your listening to me at this luncheon. I expect to be doing the listening this afternoon. Certainly, I will try to answer your questions and respond to your suggestions. But I am most interested in what you have to offer. Also, perhaps we can discuss the Northeast rail problem.

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