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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE BEFORE THE INSTITUTE OF RAPID TRANSIT, AT THE WALDORF ASTORIA, NEW YORK, NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 1970, 12:00 NOON.

Your theme of "Urban Transportation for a Better Environment" is an idea whose time has come. Jackson may have been the first American President to ride a train, but you can bet your last commutation ticket that Richard Nixon is not going to be the last. This Administration is committed to rail transportation -- and I mean urban rail as well as rail "roads" -- as essential to balanced transportation for this country.

My enthusiasm for rails today is based upon a hard-headed appraisal of the potential of rail technology.

We know how to make dramatic changes in the quality and dependability of public transportation in our congested cities.

People are starting to realize that our cities can be made both green and prosperous if we design the right access to them. They are beginning to recognize that mass transit can not only determine the prosperity of the commercial core, but can shape the growth of entire urban regions as well.

Just look at the plain facts of the matter. We know that the automobile carries only about one and a-half people on the average trip. 34 cars, with 34 internal combustion engines,

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carry roughly 50 people in and out of the city. Yet one bus, with only one internal combustion engine, can carry those same 50 people and the new buses we are providing grants for these days all must have anti-pollution devices installed. And, of course, one bus takes up a lot less space than 34 cars.

On the rail transit side, it's a well-known fact that the efficiency ratio between rail and expressway is about 20 to one. Transit uses only one-fourth the land, yet can move 5 times as many people. And costs far less to build, as well!

Public transportation -- whether bus, rail, a hybrid, or what have you -- conserves green space, makes less noise, and generates far less pollution.

Yes, public transportation is -- and can be -- a major environmental asset.

And beyond this, public transportation lends itself without question to the application of new space-age spinoff technology. Some of our newest concepts used to be looked upon as science fiction. Well, that day has passed. As I am sure you are well aware, we are applying these new concepts to provide a new kind of mobility for the traveling American.

Take the TACV, the Tracked Air-Cushion Vehicle for instance. We are convinced that in certain special applications the TACV will vastly upgrade our mobility.

We announced just two weeks ago, our intention to build a 16-mile Tracked Air-Cushion system to serve Los Angeles International Airport. I predict the TACV will carry exceptionally heavy, continuous traffic.

It will reach speeds of 150 miles-per-hour. It will be fast, safe, clean, comfortable, and above all convenient. It will cut into the aggravating traffic jams. In my opinion, the Los Angeles TACV will be the greatest breakthrough in the history of world railroading.

And it is just the beginning. We expect to test a 3-hundred mile-per-hour advanced version of the air-cushion train at our new test facility at Pueblo, Colorado within 3 years. Think what this will mean to commuters of the future in speed alone.

Obviously, however, our downtown core areas have start-and-stop needs that require a different, more flexible kind of service; service which is safe, clean, comfortable, fast, -- and if it's to succeed, even stylish -- but which above all is reliable.

Yes, the essence of public transportation today must be an emphasis on innovation and balance. No transportation mode can be a means unto itself. As I said when I testified before the House Banking and Currency Committee in March on our transit bill, public transportation is an essential means of getting access to jobs, to recreation areas, to shopping facilities, and to a host of other personal endeavors. It is a powerful factor in shaping the quality of urban life.

If urban America is congested and polluted, if there is unrest, if we are unable to deliver a better life to more Americans, one of the prime reasons is that we have not invested enough in rapid transit, bus and subway systems. Every day, literally millions of citizens -- and that may include a good many people right in this room -- have to ride to and from their work in transit cars and buses that should have been scrapped long ago.

The truth is we got a very late start. Only since 1961 have we had any kind of Federal program in public transportation. Only since 1964 have we had authority to make capital grants for new systems, stations and equipment. Only since 1967 has a Federal Department of Transportation been organized to bring all modes of transportation together.

However, in the last 18 months we have provided seed money for a number of important demonstration projects and helped existing systems retain public confidence during the interim period until broad-based Federal assistance came on line.

For example, we have financed about 1-hundred-million dollars of the new Bay Area Rapid Transit system in San Francisco that will use cars of a completely new design. In March we granted 21-million dollars to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) with 7-million dollars to follow for the purchase of 144 commuter cars for the Philadelphia region. We have financed extensions to the M-B-T-A in Boston, four new miles for airport rapid transit in Cleveland, helped open 15 miles of rapid transit in Chicago, gave 10.2 million dollars to buy 45 more "Jersey Arrow" self-propelled electric cars for the New Jersey Department of Transportation for use on commuter lines.

And just today I announced a grant of over 20-million dollars to New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority. This grant will be used to assist in the purchase of 60 pairs of those 100-mile-an-hour "Metropolitan" electric passenger cars for the Long Island rail road.

This is the first step toward full approval of the M-T-A's application for a grant of 56-million dollars to buy a total of 350 cars.

Conventional rail service, of course, is not the sole answer to urban needs. Just eight days ago, for example, Senator Scott and I announced an 8.7 million dollar matching grant to help design and construct a unique "Terl" (Transit Expressway Revenue Line) system for Pittsburgh. The project will ultimately cost close to 230-million dollars and will meld modern buses moving on exclusive bus lanes with a system of automated, rubber-tired, electric-powered vehicles operating on elevated but unobtrusive concrete guideways.

Even more important than the new technology to be introduced is the concept of the multimodal planning and coordinating of passenger services.

It is incumbent upon the transit industry -- in all cases -- to think of more than just the transportation of people from point "A" to point "B". You must -- and Pittsburgh is a good example -- think in terms of airport access, fringe parking lots, feeder systems, and circulatory systems in the central business district.

I think too we can get a great deal more mileage out of some of our existing systems, particularly the subways. The older lines -- in far too many cases -- do not meet modern standards of comfort, cleanliness, noise control, and reliability. Well, we're ready to take on that task too.

I am delighted to announce here the final approval of a grant that may well initiate a new phase in the history of the Institute for Rapid Transit as a trade organization.

It is a grant that will enable the I-R-T to respond to the new awareness of environmental challenges. It is a grant that will enable you, as a trade organization, to develop new environmental standards for modern, efficient subways. This is a sizeable grant: It amounts to \$1,385,000.

I think the foregoing remarks show our direction at the Department of Transportation these last 16 months. Mass transit ranks high on our priority list, as all of you well know. We have de-emphasized those perennial studies and analyses of so-called "ideal" systems and instead we are trying to develop realistic programs to help the cities right now -- today -- not ten or fifteen years from now when the problems may be insoluble. We must shorten the delivery time of transit improvements to the riding public.

However, there can't be any transportation improvements across the board in American cities unless our Public Transportation Assistance bill passes the Congress. Just since last August, when President Nixon submitted the bill, another 23 transit companies have folded up, bringing the total in recent years to 258. And more will follow unless we act swiftly!

This one piece of legislation would alleviate traffic congestion and air pollution, boost property values, promote business activity, stop community decay, and assure access to jobs, schools, medical care, and recreation for the millions -- the 25-percent -- who are too aged, too handicapped, or too poor to drive their own cars. It will open up a real choice for millions of drivers who would like to escape the traffic tangle.

The bill enjoys very broad appeal, as shown when the Senate passed it by a crushing majority of 84 to 4 last February. Few of us would have expected that kind of commitment a year ago. The bill is now in the House, hearings have been held by the Banking and Currency Committee, and I have every expectation that they will report the bill out shortly.

With your maximum support the House could act favorably by the end of the summer.

Without your support, the bill is doomed. So I say frankly that if you want this historic act to see the light of day -- and I know you do -- you will flock to tell your representatives in Congress the stark truth that your cities -- and their cities -- cannot survive without it. Tell them that every month of delay raises the cost of construction and impedes the task of recovering vital mobility in the hearts of our troubled cities.

Now I want to say a word about local matching shares. I am concerned over the failure of several cities to vote the necessary bonds for the one-third local share required by our two-thirds Federal matching grants. It appears to me that local

public officials, transit equipment manufacturers, and local planning bodies, need to do a much better job in getting their cities, counties and special districts to vote the money for their share of the cost.

The taxpayer can be persuaded. New York state was successful in voting a billion dollars for public transportation improvements in 1967.

And all of the constituent counties and local governments in Metropolitan Washington have voted "yes" for their share of the cost of the Washington Metro. The state of New Jersey has voted some 640-million dollars for transportation improvements. You can hardly expect Congress to fork over the Federal share of the financing if a city can't pay its own share of the tab.

The record on local transit bond issues is not a good one and deserves your most serious attention. Vital bond referenda have failed in Seattle, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. Your leadership is essential to persuade the public of the enormous private and public advantages of modern transit service.

I have confidence that you will supply this leadership. It is certainly vital if we are every to create better urban surroundings based on balanced transportation systems. We must re-assure the public that we see the big picture.

Since we serve no special interest except the public interest, we should seek always to integrate all transport modes into effective multimodal systems for moving people and goods.

Indeed, the systems approach is our only hope if we are to double the carrying capacity of our transportation system in the next 20 years. We must fully exploit the potential of each of the modes, and make sure that each one contributes to its community.

Mass transit, I believe, is the misplaced key to urban progress, the royal road to a better life for all.

The success of our fabulous interstate highway system shows that we have the national patience, skill and daring to make long-range transportation investments.

And we have done the same for aviation. President Nixon recently signed into law a 10-billion dollar package that will vastly upgrade our nation's vital airways and airports system.

Such actions should give us confidence that we can invest with equal foresight in public transportation. And public transportation deserves no less.

With your help, we expect the year 1970 to be a great turning point in national transportation priorities.

And with national transportation priorities in proper order, we will then have marked what historians may call a major turning point in our concern for civilization.

We have the capacity to ruin our world -- and we have the capacity to enrich it. Enrichment -- in the most ethical sense of the word -- can come if our cities and their transportation facilities reflect balance, harmony, and common sense.

With the continued concern of dedicated organizations such as the Institute for Rapid Transit, that goal can surely be met.

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