



DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
CLAUDE S. BRINEGAR TODAY FOLLOWING ACTION BY THE HOUSE RULES
COMMITTEE IN REPORTING THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT FOR FLOOR VOTE

Today's action by the House Rules Committee in scheduling
H.R. 5385, the Surface Transportation Act of 1974, for a vote brings
a badly needed regulatory reform and financial assistance bill to
the floor of the House.

The Surface Transportation Act is the product of extensive
Congressional and Administrative efforts, over several years, to
rectify deeply-rooted problems undermining the ability of our freight
carriers - especially our railroads - to operate at maximum efficiencies.
The bill authorizes the loan guarantees rail carriers need to modernize
their facilities, improve their physical assets, acquire new freight
cars, and catch up on long-deferred maintenance and equipment renewal
needs. The Act proposes funds that will accelerate development of a
national freight car utilization system, to reduce operating costs and
increase the productivity of rolling stock.

The Act also contains the seeds for long overdue regulatory reform.
While certain amendments are still needed in those portions of the bill
dealing with regulatory modifications, I am confident that timely floor
action can produce acceptable and genuinely-effective legislation.

I commend the members of the Rules Committee and the leadership of
the House in bringing H.R. 5385 to the floor. I know that time is short,
but I recommend this legislation to the Congress as urgent business --

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important to the well-being of our railroads, to the Nation's energy conservation efforts, and to the increased efficiency of our freight transportation system.

I hope, further, that favorable action in the House will be followed by consideration and approval in the Senate, to assure passage of the Surface Transportation Act by the 93rd Congress.

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December 3, 1974