



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

02-S-77

OPENING STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION BROCK ADAMS TO THE  
TRANSPORTATION TOWN MEETING, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, APRIL 21, 1977

Good afternoon. I am gratified by the attendance today and by the number of requests we had for a place on the agenda. I attribute much of the success of these "town meetings" to the fact that we have come here from Washington to listen, not to talk - and when you've been in politics as long as I have that's not easy to do!

We held the first of these meetings in Boston where all talk centered primarily on urban transportation. Then last week I was in Wichita to join Senator Pearson in a town meeting on rural transportation. San Jose, perhaps, is the appropriate place for me to take soundings on the problems and potentials of suburban transportation. This city has long enjoyed a reputation for progressive government, municipal spunk and a concerned citizenry. And for a community with a distinctively suburban life-style, San Jose has shown remarkable support for public transportation. The transit system here is not the nation's largest, but it is surely one of the best.

This meeting was originally scheduled for April 20. But when that date coincided with the delivery of President Carter's energy message, I asked that our visit here be delayed by one day. For those of you who heard the President's proposals for energy conservation, you know that some of the major programs he is recommending require adjustments in the ways we use our automobiles and the rest of the transportation system.

Today, you have the opportunity to provide the first comments on the President's energy policies as they pertain to transportation.

It is clear that we face a difficult challenge, in working not only to retain but improve our mobility - and at the same time meet growing demands for passenger and freight transportation - under a policy of energy thrift and conservation.

We have to look ahead - and perhaps not too many years - to the time when our transportation choices will be determined more by the realities of land use, energy considerations and environmental circumstances than by the factors of economics, convenience or personal preference. In its transportation aspects, the President's energy program impinges on the private motor vehicle for the simple reason that our cars and trucks and recreational vehicles account for about a fourth of our petroleum energy consumption.

I do not expect that we will easily abandon the freedom of our cars, nor do I suggest that we must give up the mobility the automobile has given us. The private car has made suburban living possible. It is - for the time being, at least - the most convenient and versatile means of personal transportation. We have an obligation to preserve the motor vehicle's utility by taking every legislative and technical means possible to improve motor vehicle fuel efficiencies.

But the bottom line is unmistakable: if we don't use our cars wisely, eventually we won't be able to use them at all. That's why the President's energy policies, and the actions I can take as Secretary of Transportation, must require some greater measures of conservation in the ways we build and use our cars.

The restraints may not be easy to accept, especially in California where the motor vehicle is both indigenous and prolific, but our task will be easier if we voluntarily conserve gasoline by observing the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit, by carpooling and by making fewer car trips. The latest polls indicate that 37 percent of the American people now accept the reality of a permanent energy scarcity. If we act accordingly, we can do much to curtail fuel consumption and, in doing so, off-set the inflationary effects of rising energy prices.

I promised a brief opening statement and I do not want to pre-empt any of the time reserved for the scheduled speakers. We invite your comments on any transportation subject. If those who could not get a place on the agenda will give us a brief issue paper, I assure you we will respond to them as quickly as possible.

I hope, then, that you will give us the benefit of your ideas, your experience and your thinking on ways we can work together to provide better transportation for more people at lower energy consumption rates.

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