



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 10, 1977

DOT 27-77  
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Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams will actively seek the help of the public in developing national transportation policy and solving national transportation problems.

In his first major speech since assuming office, Secretary Adams today told the Consumer Federation's Assembly, meeting in Washington, that he plans a series of "Transportation Town Meetings" in a city within each of the nine federal regions.

He announced the first meeting will be held in Boston on February 23rd.

The Secretary said the meetings are being planned "so that we can talk to the government officials at the state and local level, the shippers and users of transportation and the people who travel the roads, the airways and the railways that are the department's responsibilities."

President Carter has urged that meetings with the public be given precedence over more formal speaking engagements, and I find that an easy recommendation to follow, the Secretary said.

"Certainly, transportation has its special interests -- more so, perhaps, than any other field -- but the overriding special interests, in my opinion," he said, "are those of the American consumer. When we satisfy those, we will have served the nation's greatest needs."

On the issue of deregulation of transportation industries, Secretary Adams said the concept has been sold on the theory that it would protect the consumer by allowing market forces to work more effectively, and, in theory, lower prices and better services would result.

"I have not accepted this theory," he said, "because the whole history of American transportation has been one of having to regulate industry with monopolistic tendencies. This regulation was designed to prevent powerful economic forces from controlling transportation, using it to obtain competitive advantages, or from dominating a transportation mode in order to force smaller competitors out of business.

"There is no question," Secretary Adams said, "that the system, over time, has become too rigid and often becomes dominated by those who are being regulated. But the answer to this is to correct the faults of regulation and not remove protection for the consumer."

In another facet of his address, Secretary Adams suggested a new approach to financing federal transportation programs by the adoption of a "combined transportation account."

"I learned as chairman of the Budget Committee the worth of the congressional budget process in setting priorities for spending within realistic estimates of revenue," the Secretary said. "This process permitted us to look at federal spending in terms of broad functional categories, rather than in a series of ad hoc decisions on authorizations and appropriations for individual programs.

"I believe," Secretary Adams said, "we in the Executive Branch must begin to think in the same terms. Such an approach will enable us to decide how to shift the federal investment in transportation as our national needs change with time, rather than simply adding up the requests of each interest, even if they conflict."

Within a combined transportation account, a form of financing for each transportation mode can be found which most suits it and is fairest to the user and the taxpayer, the Secretary said.

"For example," he said, "mass transit should not be considered a service to commerce but part of urban development -- a public service needed to restore our cities. The farebox will clearly never pay the costs of mass transit and private enterprise does not want to be involved unless subsidized.

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