



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News: ✓

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Mari Maseng
Tele: (202) 426-4570

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
TO THE CHARLESTON TRIDENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
JANUARY 23, 1984

This is a 210th anniversary we celebrate, an occasion for both looking over one's shoulder and looking down the road. You are accomplishing here in Charleston what the Administration is trying to do on a national level and what I'm trying to do in transportation. Charleston, more than any other city, is expert in blending traditional values and a sense of history with very dramatic and positive change. Some of that excitement, that dynamic change and boundless potential, is what I'd like to talk about -- not just the technical changes but institutional ones as well. I'd like to suggest what these can mean for the future.

My Carolina roots, as you know, lie north and west of here, but I share your pride in this beautiful city -- its heritage, charm and boundless spirit. Charleston is a community with a proud past and a promising future. Your forefathers recognized the value of transportation as they endured the ravages of two wars, the devastation of fires, floods and earthquake, and rebuilt and restored this city time and again. Rudyard Kipling once wrote "transportation is civilization." The vibrancy of Charleston as a major port, railroad and trucking center confirms again the central role that transport plays in our lives.

It's been that way from the very beginning. For Charleston was the "gem of the South Atlantic" in the 1790's when ships from Europe stopped here on the West Indies route. Its bustling port and nearby rivers were the veins and arteries of early

-more-

commerce for the entire region. The first American-made locomotive -- the "Best Friend of Charleston" -- ran on what may have been the nation's first operative rail track in 1880.

The last three years represent a special kind of change -- to create opportunity, bring big government under control and renew the confidence of the American people in their institutions. Our progress toward those goals will be reported Wednesday in the President's State of the Union address.

The news he brings will, I'm sure, be welcomed. For 1983 was a year that many thought couldn't happen, at least not until the 1990's, and some said would never happen. Inflation dropped -- to less than three percent. The GNP rose -- to better than six percent. Civilian unemployment declined 2½ percentage points, while employment reached record levels. Industrial production increased 15 percent and consumer confidence soared. For the first time in recent memory, our economy achieved a favorable combination of consistent growth, low inflation and falling unemployment. This is truly good news for America.

Charleston, too, has changed. Local planning initiative, coupled with a traditionally strong commitment of state assistance, has placed this magnificent old port city in an excellent position to be one of the major commercial and transportation centers of the entire Atlantic Coast. Our maritime policy will add impetus to your growth and development, and I'll tell you why.

The maritime regulatory reform bill, for example, is especially important to Charleston because it will have a positive impact on the containerization industry. Already the third largest containerport on the Atlantic, Charleston is a prime candidate to gain from the expected growth in containerization. Your city has every potential as a major center for container traffic. Your \$1.5 billion port economy which translates into 48,500 jobs will climb even higher because of your wisdom and foresight in developing these outstanding facilities. The \$80 million Wando River container terminal and the highly sophisticated Orion computer system -- expertly guiding the flow of cargo -- are just two examples of the local effort putting Charleston in such an enviable position for future growth.

And this outstanding local effort will be aided by maritime regulatory reform. The maritime regulatory reform bill has passed both houses of the Congress and is currently being reviewed by a conference committee. Senator Thurmond, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a senior member of the Conference Committee, will lead the Congress in its consideration of the compromise bill. Now, as is characteristic of the legislative process, men and women of good will are negotiating a useful compromise. When this compromise is enacted into law, it will be the first major overhaul of international ocean liner legislation in nearly 70 years. It is as necessary as it is overdue.

I am confident the bill as finally passed will strengthen the U.S. merchant marine. I am equally sure the new legislation will ensure that U.S. flag carriers are not subjected to more restrictive regulatory rules than those governing their foreign competitors. It will also facilitate increased use of intermodal (land/sea) rates. That means shippers can move a container from a plant in the Carolina Piedmont to a

destination overseas using only one bill of lading. The benefits: increased security of transport and quickness of handling. Don't you agree that's a distinct plus for America's ocean shipping industry?

Let me turn now, from the sea to the land.

Charlestonians know a seaport isn't worth much without good land transportation systems to move goods to the dockside. Good transportation systems are more than rebuilding an actual physical structure, evident to the eye of any motorist. Good transportation exists only in a climate of competitiveness, efficiency and economy in transportation -- a climate encouraged by deregulation of our economy.

Deregulation represents a landmark move toward free enterprise. In transportation we have already completed most of the steps needed to untangle a fifty-year accumulation of red tape. What was originally intended to protect infant or potentially vulnerable industries was fast becoming a hardening of the regulatory arteries. Most of those industries are giants now, able to thrive in the competitive marketplace. The real beneficiaries under deregulation are consumers. Why? Because deregulation gives consumers access to cheaper, better transportation, for both people and their products.

As a result of economic deregulation and technological advances, new airlines are flying through our skies, thousands of new truck companies are delivering goods across our highways, and vans and small buses are offering service to communities that had none before. The once stagnant railroad freight industry is bustling with new profits and hope. Deregulation is breathing new life into America's transportation network, giving consumers more choices and lower costs.

Let me be specific. In trucking, response to the partial deregulation achieved under the 1980 Motor Carrier Act has been positive. With the free entry it afforded, there are now more trucking firms in business than ever before -- from 18,000 three years ago to 33,000 today. As the trucking industry continues to make the transition to the freedoms deregulation permits, those who adjust most effectively to a more competitive way of life -- by trimming operating costs, offering new services and developing new markets -- will prosper the most. For shippers, the evidence indicates a wider and growing satisfaction with the results of motor carrier reform. In small communities and among small firms, where some argued that service would deteriorate under deregulation, surveys show that shippers remain largely satisfied with their trucking service. In Florida, for example, a survey we sponsored indicated that among shippers reporting changes in service levels, the findings were three to one that service under deregulation was better. And this trend can only spell good news for a city with so much of its future invested in commercial transportation.

Last November, we sent a legislative proposal to the Congress for a working group of state representatives to recommend greater uniformity in truck taxing and registration procedures. This too is a form of deregulation. Right now -- and this is almost unbelievable -- to register a truck legally to operate in all 48 contiguous states, a trucker must file 87 applications, obtain 84 separate stickers and submit about 205 quarterly and semi-annual reports. As a result, many major trucking associations and

governors agree with the intent of our legislation and have offered to work with us in enacting a bill.

Before signing on as Secretary of Transportation I embraced safety as a continuing concern and constant commitment. That won't change now or ever. But over the last 12 months I have also focused on other priorities demanding our attention. One of those is the way we address how transportation affects our environment.

Many environmental safeguards are already in place. No Federally-assisted transportation project, for example -- be it a new highway or a bike trail -- can proceed without a review of environmental consequences. By the end of this year, the oldest and noisiest jets will have been weeded out of the U.S. airline fleet, and aircraft engine manufacturers are now required -- as of the first of this month -- to reduce exhaust emissions by 60 to 70 percent. We have developed strict oil pollution and hazardous cargo guidelines, as a further effort to protect the quality of American life.

All of this is well and good. But I am not satisfied that we have probed the limits of our responsibility. Or plumbed the depths of possibility. We should not tolerate excessive noise; we must find reasonable ways to reduce it. We should not excuse pollution; we must develop ways to prevent it. And we must not sacrifice history for progress; there is almost always a way to preserve our historic landmarks.

While transportation is not the environmental predator it once was, I am convinced we can do more to assure both transportation progress and environmental preservation. To hasten the process, I have formed a steering group within the Department headed by a Counselor on environmental concerns to examine the prospects for further environmental actions.

And, with the same strong sense of conviction we will be uncompromising in our deep and abiding respect for history and historical preservation. We are determined to preserve historic sites so that other cities reflect Charleston's own blending of the old and new.

Here, in the birthplace of the American preservation movement, we have worked closely with your State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to make highway projects compatible with preservation goals. We now know nationally what you have learned here, namely that restoration of existing public facilities can be cost-effective. One example right here in Charleston is the John P. Grace Memorial Bridge. We were able to extend the life of that bridge by 10-15 years through rehabilitation.

The transportation landscape is an everchanging one. We Americans are people on the move, by land, sea, and in the air, and our industries reflect our dynamism. It seems incredible to think that it took 29 days for news of the Declaration of Independence to reach Charleston from Philadelphia. Or that during the War of 1812 it took 75 days for a horse-drawn wagon to make the journey from Charleston to Worcester, Mass. America's transportation network has changed vastly since those days, and its changes have been for the better. Still, none of us can ever rest on our laurels. Your foresight has made Charleston a great port and commercial center; all of us are committed to rededicating our energies to the future growth of our great nation.

The President recently put it this way: "All of us share a dream. It's dream of a broad and open land that offers prosperity for all."

And it is the forge of our shared experience that strengthens the will of a nation. I think of a woman, a daughter of the South, whose spirit and example inspired millions. Her name was Helen Keller -- and she summed up her philosophy in a single sentence. "One can never consent to creep," she wrote, "when one feels an impulse to soar." Many generations of Charlestonians have nurtured the impulse to soar. As much as I appreciate your hospitality, I appreciate your ingenuity and strength of purpose even more.

Thank you very much and God bless you all.

-###-