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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
TO THE COAST GUARD OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 13, 1984

I am delighted to be here today and thank you for the chance to meet so many members and friends of the Washington Coast Guard Officers' Association. I appreciate your invitation and your hospitality.

Over the last thirteen months I've come to know and admire the Coast Guard. You take justifiable pride in being our country's oldest continuous seagoing force, dating back to the very early days of our nation, and your reputation for lifesaving is well known throughout America. But since becoming Secretary of Transportation, I feel I have come to really know the Coast Guard -- not just your many missions but your marvelous people and the spirit that motivates both. I take great pride, as you may have heard, in telling audiences that I'm the first woman to head a branch of the U.S. armed forces. As time goes by, I discover more and more just what a great honor that is.

Admiral Gracey has called the Coast Guard "a fine jewel, unequalled by any country but envied by many." I share his view. No other nation has a military organization with such clearly defined peacetime missions. Nowhere does another service display greater responsiveness or a similar capacity to operate on adrenalin and dedication 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No group I've encountered is as willing to assume new responsibilities. And speaking of that, I will soon sign a new maritime defense zone agreement with the Navy. Coast Guard area commanders will have a major role to play in directing the defense zone concept. So I just want you to know that I'm pleased to have the Coast Guard in the Department of Transportation, and immensely proud of your accomplishments.

You play a large part in the responsibility that has my highest priority -- transportation safety. We share a commitment to protect lives -- to keep all our citizens out of harm's way. Your search and rescue efforts saved nearly 6,000 lives last

year, and your vigilance prevented \$600 million in property losses. No one does search and rescue better. Your National Search and Rescue School is recognized as the best in the world, and your new boat crew training program -- begun last year -- further improves your effectiveness. What you do so well at sea and on our waters I am attempting to do across all modes and in every aspect of transportation.

Just recently I formed a Safety Task Force within the Department with a single mission: to probe every nook and cranny of Federal transportation authority to see what more can be done to reduce the risk of accidents. We're even going a step further by involving the private sector and encouraging a partnership effort to emphasize the importance of reasonable safety precautions.

More than 90 percent of all transportation fatalities occur on our highways, so it's not surprising that much of our attention should be focused there. And we're seeing signs of progress. The 1983 highway death toll was the lowest in 20 years. The death rate -- for miles traveled -- is at an all-time low: 2.6 per hundred million vehicle miles.

Building on the groundswell of public outrage that began a few years ago, we've raised the level of public concern over drunk driving. The demand by the American people to do something about the drunk driver has never been stronger or more visible, and the response has been equally dramatic. Over the last two years nearly every state in the union has passed or proposed tougher drunk driving laws.

While the motor vehicle driver is the focus of our attention, the highway is not our only target for alcohol countermeasures. We're developing a proposed regulation to deter alcohol abuse by train crews. We're considering a more stringent blood alcohol level limit for aircrew members. And the Coast Guard is already engaged in alcohol education programs for the nation's 40 million plus recreational boat operators. In addition, the Coast Guard routinely explores the possibility of alcohol involvement in commercial vessel accidents.

Thus we share a commitment to improved water safety. Your work with state boating officials, boat manufacturers and public interest groups has helped bring the national boating death rate to a new low -- fewer than eight deaths per 100,000 boaters in 1982. We hear a lot about auto recalls, but no one knows how many lives were saved or emergencies averted as a result of your 183 boat recall campaigns last year. And let me thank members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary for educating the public through boat safety courses and for examining some 300,000 motorboats last year alone. That's a tremendous task.

But what you could never achieve alone, administering and enforcing recreational boating safety nationwide, you are achieving through your excellent relations with the states. Last year you allocated nearly \$12 1/2 million to 54 states and territories to assist in boat safety education and enforcement programs. Our 1985 budget proposal requests an increase -- to \$15 million in financial assistance -- for a coordinated national recreational boating safety program. I recently accepted Admiral Gracey's invitation to serve as Honorary Chairperson for National Safe Boating Week June 3 through 9. This year's theme, "Think, before you drink," emphasizes our growing concern over alcohol abuse.

But while safety gets a large share of my attention, it is by no means my only concern. In looking back on my first year as Secretary of Transportation, I find that we

have made what I consider to be encouraging progress at almost every point on the transportation compass. Here are some examples:

Modernization of our air traffic control system is proceeding on schedule. Highway funding is at record levels. We are asking for nearly a billion more in FY '85, to keep our road and bridge programs moving. And I continue to be optimistic about the sale of Conrail, the Federally-owned freight railroad we're planning to transfer to the private sector.

We are seeing more proof everyday that airline deregulation is working. And Congress last week gave final approval to maritime regulatory reform legislation. The provisions of that bill give shippers and carriers more freedom to negotiate rates and services, enabling U.S. flag operators to compete on a more equal footing with foreign-flag lines. It should help revitalize our ocean liner industry, and that is good news for the entire maritime community.

Not the least of our Department's accomplishments is one belonging solely to the Coast Guard -- and that's drug interdiction. An important factor in our concern over the dangers of drunk and drugged drivers is the access that drivers -- particularly young people -- have to those substances. Last year you seized 164 vessels, confiscated two million pounds of marijuana and thousands of pounds of other drugs, preventing more than \$2 billion worth of illegal drugs from entering America's cities. You save lives on our streets as well as our waters -- and I, for one, salute you for your exceptional service.

On the personnel front, as most of you know, I have been promoting programs within the Department to improve career opportunities for women. I must confess when I arrived, I was amazed -- and somewhat chagrined -- to discover the percentage of women employed at DOT had not changed substantially since the Department's origins in 1967. I am determined to improve that percentage through our program. And I'm pleased to say that the President himself has been most enthusiastic in his support.

So have many others. Some of whom I'm looking at right now. I want to thank Admiral Gracey and all the members of the Coast Guard for your own commitment to the program. Admiral Cueroni has graciously spoken at several of our Seminars for Prospective Women Managers. The participants have benefited a great deal from his insight and tell me he is a very compelling speaker.

We have had good representation from the Coast Guard at these Seminars and I am especially glad to see our military women also participating. There are other parts of this program in which the Coast Guard has excelled. Thirty-eight percent of the trainees in other management training programs have been Coast Guard women. Forty-six percent of all your upward mobility assignments have gone to women. You are breaking new ground with your Career Enrichment Program, a special training session for women in grades GS 5-9.

Finally, nearly half of all the undergraduate students recently brought into the Coast Guard through the cooperative education program are women. And I am pleased to note your pursuit of the graduate co-op program as a way of bringing more women into the Department itself.

All is evidence of a commitment by the Coast Guard to the advancement of women on land and sea. I look forward to working with you to make even more progress in the months ahead.

To carry out all our various missions, the President has proposed a fiscal year 1985 budget of \$28.6 billion for our Department. That's \$1.2 billion more than last year. At the same time, a larger share, some 72 percent in all, will be financed by user fees.

The proposed budget for the Coast Guard, let me point out, is \$2.6 billion -- or about \$80 million more than appropriated for FY 1984. Over the past three years the Coast Guard has received \$1.75 billion in capital appropriations. That's a 93 percent increase over capital funding in the preceding three years. That speaks loudly, I believe, for this Administration's commitment to a strong national defense and to the importance of up-to-date equipment.

Our emphasis again in our 1985 budget proposal is on modernization of Coast Guard ships, helicopters and facilities. We ask much of the Coast Guard. All who use our waterways depend heavily on you for lifesaving, maritime law enforcement, vessel safety and national defense. My message, then, is one of gratitude for past achievements and present service. Even more, however, it is a challenge to seize future opportunities that are everywhere within our view. More important, they are within our grasp.

"The seas lie all around us," Rachel Carson wrote 33 years ago. In her book she chronicled the influence of the oceans on our weather, our commerce and the very patterns of our existence. "For all at last," she said, "returns to the sea -- the beginning and the end."

Throughout our history, the sea has been important to Americans. It shielded a young nation, prospered a growing nation and -- today -- helps sustain a mature nation engaged in international trade and the global defense of freedom.

For all of that history, the Coast Guard has been a stabilizing force. It has proved to be a guardian of commerce, protector of lives, and a friend to all in need on our seas and waterways. We know we can depend on Coast Guard people. We can trust Coast Guard competence. I conclude my time with you as I began -- with pride in the work you do, and in the workers who do it so well.

Thank you very much.

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