

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE,
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, ON FY 1984 BUDGET BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, FEBRUARY 17, 1983

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee: I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before this committee for the first time as Secretary of Transportation.

Our Department's budget for fiscal 1984 reflects significant progress towards many of the goals established by the Administration two years ago. That is a tribute, in my view, to the exceptional legislative partnership that has existed between the Department, the members of this Committee and the Congress. The landmark aviation, highway, transit and related tax legislation enacted by the 97th Congress reduced Federal subsidies and generated a momentum for transportation progress that I will seek to the best of my ability to maintain.

In that regard, I look forward to every possible opportunity to consult with members of the Congress on transportation programs and matters of transportation policy. No issue is more relevant to either of those areas than our Department's annual budget.

The fiscal '84 budget moves us further towards several objectives that are very important to the goal we all seek: economic recovery for our Nation and reductions in the Federal budget deficit.

The budget we are proposing calls for increased spending for our highways, our airways and for greater transportation safety. It will enable us to move ahead more aggressively on the long overdue job of restoring our country's roads and bridges. It will

permit a significant investment in the modernization of our air traffic control and air navigation systems. It will allow us to provide greater capital assistance for public transit, and to build on the progress that has been made in reducing fatalities on our highways.

Yet while we are requesting an increase in budget authority, from last year's 25.9 billion to \$27 billion for fiscal 1984, we are asking for less from the Treasury's general funds account. As a result of the policy now well established, that those who benefit from government-supplied services should pay a fair share of the costs, fully 69 percent of the Department's requested budget authority for 1984 will be financed by user fees.

The budget we are proposing will also provide for continuing efforts already underway to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Coast Guard. It will maintain Amtrak at its present system and operational levels, and it will support further work on the Northeast Corridor Improvement Program.

Let me turn now to a discussion of the individual programs.