



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
AT THE HIGHWAY USERS FEDERATION SAFETY AND MOBILITY ANNUAL MEETING
WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOVEMBER 3, 1983

There's a story told about a Washington, D.C. cab driver, who was taking a family of visitors around the city when the youngest daughter suddenly noticed the National Archives building. More precisely, she noticed the inscription from Shakespeare's *Tempest* that is engraved on the front of the building: "What is past is prologue." She asked her father what it could possibly mean, but before he could reply, the cabbie explained, "Honey, that means you ain't seen nothing yet."

Well, I feel a little like that this afternoon. Let me tell you why.

Before you can build a road these days, you must first build a consensus. The Highway Users Federation set the stage for passage of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) of 1982. You were consensus builders who spent years pointing out unmet need on our highways and marshalling the strong public support that most certainly paved the way for the Act itself. We may not always be in total agreement on some of its provisions -- and thoughtful, well-meaning people never agree 100 percent of the time -- but the Act does give us the resources to move forward at a critical moment in our transportation history. And you deserve much credit for that impressive accomplishment. One of the reasons I'm here this afternoon is to say so publicly.

My compliments do not end there -- and neither do our common concerns. Your organization's efforts have formed the bedrock foundation of a national campaign for safe highways -- a movement I intend to nurture and strengthen as a partnership

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between the public and private sectors. Such partnerships form the heart and soul of much of this President's message to the American people. And I have a hunch that the Federal establishment could learn a lot about alternatives to heavy-handed regulation from groups like your Dealer Safety and Mobility Council, for example, which does an outstanding job of promoting safety through car, truck and tire dealers throughout America. As members of the community, they work effectively with local service clubs, church organizations, and schools to educate and inform the driving public. We know they're effective because we get glowing accounts of their success.

The same can be said for your continuing efforts to promote the greater use of safety belts. Your information clearinghouse on safety belt use programs is a natural complement to the nationwide campaign we are conducting to encourage more drivers and passengers to buckle up -- "get it together" whenever and wherever they drive. We believe the private sector can be influential in this regard but, failing that, mandatory state safety belt laws may need to be examined as perhaps a necessary alternative. It is, in fact, among the possibilities cited in our recent notice of proposed rulemaking on automatic restraints. Your advocacy of belt laws in selected states, to gain "real world" experience, is directed toward the same goal -- greater occupant protection at the lowest cost.

For nearly as long as there have been highways, you have made highway safety a national objective. I join you in that effort with all my heart and energy. And in that partnership of priorities, I'm glad to have your expertise and your commitment.

At the same time, I seek your support in looking toward future programs and priorities. One of the basic beliefs of this Administration is faith in the ingenuity, resourcefulness and involvement of the private sector. While we concede that government excels in some areas -- we have a reputation for being very good at spending money, for example, and at one time we weren't bad when it came to imposing restrictions on individual or corporate conduct -- we believe there are other things the private sector can do better. I think there is no question of your own expertise in providing a vision for the future, or nudging us to move more quickly toward its realization. Our highway system is one of the major accomplishments of this century. We want it to remain a national asset in the next.

With that in mind, we spent more money on highways and bridges last year than any other time in the history of the highway program. The nickel-a-gallon increase in the Federal gasoline tax, which went into effect last April, has resulted in a 56 percent gain in highway spending in FY '83 -- from \$8.2 billion in 82 to \$12.8 billion. This increase also translates into nearly 100,000 more highway construction jobs than last year's program created.

As you know, the Act did not become law until last January 6th. But already the story that emerges in its aftermath is an impressive one. The STAA has meant projects such as the I-20 and I-459 Highways in Birmingham, Alabama, the Papago Freeway in Phoenix and I-90 in Montana could move closer to completion. Because of the STAA Interstates from I-675 in Atlanta to I-394 in Minnesota and I-515 in Las Vegas will be completed sooner. By September 1st, more than 3,500 miles of resurfacing or rehabilitation had been started. Repair work has begun on 1,200 more bridges than last year at this time. When you consider that the Act has been in effect for less than a year, even that progress suggests that this is but a beginning and a modest one at that. More important than numbers, however, are the human results. One thing I like most about being Secretary of Transportation is the chance to work in a field that directly affects people in every sector of our economy. Roadbuilding is a good example. It's not

the miles of pavement that count but the improvements in commerce and trade, the increased safety and the gains in quality of life that accrue to a society which cherishes its mobility.

While we had the best year ever in 1983 and would like to do the same in 1984, we have not been able to apportion the new Interstate Construction and Substitution Funds. As you know we need specific Congressional approval of our cost estimates, which has not yet happened. We just hate to see this situation come up year after year. In our opinion, Congress should agree to the Senate approach, and approve two-year cost estimates so we don't have the same problem in the fall of 1984.

In a field as dynamic as transportation, there is no resting on our laurels. I realize the STAA of 1982 isn't a "be all" and "end all" to our highway needs. It's not premature to look at 1986 and beyond; not too early to assess future needs, and distant trends. The Highway Users Federation has a rich tradition for taking the long-range view of highway needs and user problems and I hope you will continue. During these next two years we will not only be busy laying concrete, but laying plans as well for legislation in '86 and on this I need your support. Tell me if our present course is sufficient -- where it is right and, as you see it, where it may be wrong. What roads need to be broadened? What turns to be taken?

I need, the nation needs, your most thoughtful answer to this question.

We are in a period of change, turbulent change, and we must accept innovation as the only safe harbor we will ever know. But that planning for the future, that creativity which is so truly and uniquely American -- if I may engage in a little flag-waving -- comes most naturally from the private sector. And therein, ladies and gentlemen, lies your challenge. Government can create an agency easier than an attitude. It can push paper with more skill than it promotes alternatives to the status quo.

In planning for that future, I seek your support, and I pledge to you my own.

Someone has said that it's the business of the future to be dangerous. Fortunately that's not the case for America. Ours will be a future made brighter by a dynamic change of course in economic policy and a lasting prosperity supplanting the stop and go policies of earlier years. President Reagan has taken a sputtering economy and made it hum. His recovery program has led us to 11 out of 12 monthly increases in the nation's primary economic indicators, a 9.7 percent growth in the GNP for the second quarter of this year, followed by a 7 percent growth in the third quarter, and the lowest inflation rate in 20 years. We've created 2½ million new jobs since the end of 1982. Nationally, civilian unemployment -- though still too high -- is down to 9.3 percent, while the number of Americans with jobs stands at a record high of nearly 102 million.

Truly, America's economy has moved beyond recovery to stand on the brink of more fundamental renewal. And with the changes in economic policy have come other experiments. Nearly as dramatic and fully as profitable, in fostering a stronger sense of responsibility at the grassroots.

The future you must help me chart will be one made safer not only by our joint efforts, but by the collective work and wisdom of millions of American who are a part of the safety movement. Many of us have been jolted by the knowledge of someone -- a relative perhaps, or a close friend -- killed or severely injured in an accident involving an alcohol-impaired driver.

Of course, as business people, concerned citizens or public servants, we all know that people look to us for the leadership needed to replace lax laws, strengthen enforcement of the laws we have, and halt this needless death and destruction. So I am glad you share my conviction that we cannot and shall not rest until every last drunk driver has been removed from our roads. I take heart from your involvement, and inspiration for the continuing challenge before us.

We must never forget the fact that if more people wore seat belts, the need for some form of automatic occupant protection would greatly diminish. But with an average of 24,000 front-seat fatalities a year for the past three years -- most of them drivers -- we must look at a broad range of alternatives including air bags or automatic belts. It's not Congress but our own conscience that demands such a review. We at DOT are soliciting public comments on this vital issue through December 19th. And we hope to have a final decision to announce on this long-pending issue by next April. Your inputs now, as in the past, will be most welcome.

With all of this in progress, we are also engaged in a nationwide effort, one -- I might add -- that enjoys extensive private sector participation and support, to encourage greater use of safety belts. Like drunk driving, this is another high pay-off area.

Let me suggest another way we can dramatically reduce the toll of fatalities and serious injuries to young children. If we can convince parents to buy child restraint seats and learn how to use them properly we can save lives. Forty states and the District now have laws on the books requiring child restraint devices. Like a car without gas, the statutes do no good unless we are successful in educating motorists about their importance.

As I have already mentioned, you have been in this battle longer than I. It began for me when I became Secretary of Transportation, and established a DOT Transportation Safety Task Force. I gave it the mandate to review safety across the entire spectrum of transportation but with particular emphasis on highways, where 92 percent of all fatalities occur.

As a result of the Task Force's recommendations, we have sent a proposal to Congress to merge the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration with the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety into a new safety super-agency which will consolidate and strengthen our effort. But this reorganization is more than shifting blocks on a flow chart. It will give my office better oversight of the Department's total safety mission. It will simplify relations with state safety agencies that carry out many of the programs we fund. And, most importantly, it will make it easier for you to work with us in improving all aspects of highway safety.

Let me emphasize that I want the new safety administration to complement your work and to be a tool and a resource you can use. We will seek out your input at the very formative stages of this new organization. So this is yet another area where you can be of value to the government effort and help us be more effective -- simply by giving us your insight and your views. My mind, like my door is open. And I'll look forward to the benefit of your counsel.

Yes, there is much progress to report. But the challenges of the future leave considerable room for more. Many questions go unanswered. You may ask: will we have "full funding" of the highway program to the levels authorized by Congress? In FY 83, we had better than full funding because of the urgent need to get on with critical

repairs to our highways and bridges and in order to create more jobs. In 1984, the highway program is funded to about 95 percent of authorization levels. Even at that, highway spending will be greater this year than last and we will see real progress in restoring our critical highway system to good operating condition.

Another question for today as well as the future is this: Should we focus greater emphasis on improving truck routes for the heavier trucks so that they can achieve the productivity intended in the STAA and at the same time maintain safety?

We have received tremendous cooperation from the states and the private sector in devising the final designation of the national highway network for use by large commercial vehicles. As you know the final comment period has closed and we have probably 95 percent of the routes designated on schedule with the tough statutory deadline. We believe the system will lead to greater trucker productivity while maintaining our number one priority which is, of course, safety.

Or, how about uniformity of truck regulations? I think it is incredible, the lengths to which truckers must go to comply with the states' patchwork quilt of differing registration requirements, fuel tax payments, operating authority rules and "third structure" taxes. All of us agree there is a need for some uniformity of state laws regarding registration and tax administrative procedures for motor carriers. Right now, to register a truck legally to run in all 48 contiguous states, a trucker must file 87 applications, get 84 stickers and submit about 205 quarterly and semi-annual reports. The administrative burden is monumental. Greater uniformity would undoubtedly result in significantly lower costs for the industry and a simpler, more efficient system for everyone. At the same time, we at the Federal level recognize that motor vehicle registration and taxation are state prerogatives. In no way do I wish to encroach on state turf. It has become increasingly clear, however, that we may need legislation to achieve some minimal uniformity. Discussions are going on within the Administration as to what direction this legislation must take and we will address this issue in more detail soon.

Those are only some of the questions you will have to help us answer in the years ahead. I urge you to continue your activist role. Speak out at both the state and Federal levels for adequate funding for highways. Support us in efforts to allocate costs among users. Explore ways to stretch the highway budgets through streamlined procedures and efficiencies without compromising safety. Join us in boosting safety efforts at the state and local level. Your support will be a source of both comfort and strength as we go about the business of dealing with a dynamic present and a dramatic, still-unfolding future. Or, in the words of that Washington cabdriver, "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

"Civilization," wrote Arnold Toynbee, "is a movement and not a condition; a voyage, not a harbor." Transportation, I suggest is both a movement and a voyage. I look forward to sharing the ride with you, and to smoothing the journey that leads to an ever-better, safer system of transportation -- the finest in our history.