



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

# News:

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ABBREVIATED OPENING STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
ON THE FY 1987 BUDGET  
BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
FEBRUARY 19, 1986

The important theme of our budget is the need to reduce the federal deficit, while at the same time ensuring a safe and efficient national transportation system.

Through our transportation programs, we are already making a difference -- a positive difference -- for millions of Americans. For example:

- \* Our alcohol-drug rule for the railroads ended 12 years of debate and will prohibit on-the-job drug and alcohol abuse.
- \* Rule 208 has spawned safety belt use laws in 17 states and the District of Columbia. For the first time in the 15-year history of Rule 208, lives are being saved.
- \* And I am institutionalizing our extensive air safety monitoring program initiated in 1984.

This budget defines the proper federal role in transportation, focusing attention and resources on a national transportation system that is safe and efficient, well maintained and effectively designed to meet the needs of the American people. State and local authorities must assume more responsibility for matters that are truly local in nature. This budget anticipates returning to the private sector those transportation functions best managed in the free market. In short, federal funds should be devoted to those needs that are truly national in scope, such as defense and facilitation of interstate commerce and others that cannot be met by state and local authorities. This approach will move the nation closer to a balanced budget and produce a transportation system more responsive to the people who use it.

Briefly, the 1987 Department of Transportation budget provides a vision for the future and an integrated approach to national transportation policy. The Department of Transportation budget is a model of how federal responsibilities can be maintained while the deficit is reduced. By focusing on federal responsibilities, the Department will be able to function in fiscal year 1987 with a budget request of \$21.7 billion. That's \$5 billion less than last year -- a 19 percent reduction.

- \* There is no diminution of our commitment to safety;
- \* There is emphasis on the importance of transportation users paying the full cost of the benefits they receive. The budget proposes that 84 percent of requested budget authority be covered by user fees, including fees for many services currently provided free of charge by the Coast Guard to commercial and recreational boaters;
- \* We encourage an expanded role for the private sector in providing transportation services, by proposing the termination of both federal government restrictions, such as excessive regulation of motor carriers and programs, such as subsidies to Amtrak, that compete with private transportation providers;
- \* We seek to increase the flexibility of state and local governments to use federal trust fund resources through a combined interstate and primary highway program. And we hope to give local governments the ability to better meet their needs through a block grant program for urban and secondary highway systems, bridges and transit projects.
- \* Within the limits of trust fund receipts from the public, we are committed to maintaining the quality of the Federal-Aid Highway system and improving the National Airspace System.

The budget protects safety across all transportation modes. In fact, there have been significant increases in particular programs. The budget provides for additional air traffic controllers, more aviation inspectors and an increase in the number of truck safety specialists. It provides a 200 percent increase in the motor carrier safety program and continued support for railroad safety enforcement. We have also made certain that adequate funding is available to support our ongoing hazardous materials and pipeline safety programs and the Coast Guard marine safety inspection and drug interdiction programs. Finally, in the area of highway safety, \$194 million is included for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration programs ranging from occupant protection to intensified efforts to combat drunk and drugged driving. My Safety Review Task Force is taking a systematic and objective look at each of our safety programs. The Task Force's recommendations have gone to the very core of the way the programs work and -- as a result -- significant improvements in these programs have been instituted, thus ensuring that our strong commitment to safety is continued.

The budget reflects the theme of privatization. It assumes the sale of the government-owned freight railroad Conrail. We have already transferred the Alaska Railroad to the state and we favor transferring Dulles and Washington National Airports to a regional authority. We also anticipate complete deregulation of the trucking industry and transfer of residual rail and bus functions assumed through sunset of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

There is no question that DOT's budget -- like the President's budget as a whole -- is a bold initiative. It makes tough choices, and we believe the right choices, to reduce the Federal deficit and maintain the proper Federal role in transportation.

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